



The Scroll

Spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ and equipping the People of God through the written word.

Word of the Quarter—My Sheep Know My Voice: Rightly Dividing the Word of God

Editing Team

In this issue of *The Scroll*, we conclude the overarching theme “Discerning Truth: Learning to Recognize the Character and Word of God in a Sea of Information.” In the fall issue, we started with the subject “My Sheep Know My Voice: Your Road to Emmaus.” In the winter and spring issues, we continued with the topics “My Sheep Know My Voice: Transaction vs. Transformation: Relationship Building Beyond Routine Behavior” and “My Sheep Know My Voice: Checks and Balances (Check it Against the Word of God and the Example of Christ).” In this issue, we finish the overarching theme with the topic “My Sheep Know My Voice: Rightly Dividing the Word of God.”

When the editors were asked to share their thoughts, one shared the following:

I think that knowing the voice of God is also likened to knowing the character of God. When you develop deep familiarity and intimacy with an individual, you tend to be able to still recognize them and point their voice or body out, even in the midst of chaos. I remember being at a concert as a young adult. There had to have been 300+ people there singing and praising God together but there was such a distinctive, “Hallelujah.” I looked, and I said to the person sitting next to me, “My mother is here.” Sure enough, she was sitting in the rear of a section nearby.

In another moment, someone reported the language of a dear friend of mine that was uncharacteristic of what I know

to be true about them. Without knowing the whole story, I denied that my friend said what was reported. I was confident that it was too inconsistent with my friend’s character to be true. When I checked in, I was right.

In a similar format, through reading the word of God, learning the context, and witnessing the consistent character of God throughout the Bible, we can develop a confidence in the voice and character of God in moments where it is misrepresented or mistaught. It is hard for this confidence to exist when you don’t read and study the word for yourself and instead just go by hearsay. I have learned how to distinguish the voice of the Holy Spirit in my life when what I hear consistently lines up with the character of Christ in the scriptures.

Knowing the voice of God requires proximity, intimacy, relationship, and familiarity. It requires seeking to know God better for ourselves and being open to seeing our living God in fresh and new ways through the power of the Holy Spirit. It requires intentionality. It requires us to lean in when we hear Christ calling us to draw near to Him. It is an invitation to go deeper than religious practices and into spiritual relationships. And this knowledge continues to happen in community — not on an island. From the church of Acts to present time, where two or three

are gathered in Christ’s name, He is there. So deeper knowing also comes through deeper and sacred community seeking to know God more and see God clearer, together.

In 2 Timothy 2:15, Paul tells Timothy, “*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*” Timothy was raised by his mother (Eunice) and grandmother (Lois). He was also mentored by Paul, so he had a strong foundation and solid doctrine. Even so, in his second letter to Timothy, Paul encouraged Timothy to hold fast to sound doctrine and to avoid and reject foolish conversations.

The same is true for us today. With so many voices coming at us from television, social media, and the rabbit-hole of the internet, we must be grounded in the word of God for ourselves. Our greatest defense against false teaching and doctrine is having God’s word in our heart.

As we conclude the overarching theme “Discerning Truth: Learning to Recognize the Character and Word of God in a Sea of Information,” we encourage you to know the character and word of God for yourself. Timothy could not live out his faith through his mother, grandmother, or mentor, he had to live out his faith for himself. And so must we.

Editor's Corner—My Sheep Know My Voice: Rightly Dividing the Word of God

Sister LaTonja Brown

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Our greatest witness is not in the words we say but in the behavior we exhibit.

Each year, the editing team meets to put together an editorial calendar for the calendar year. As part of the process, we create an overarching theme. We talk about what is happening in the world and what is in our hearts. A year ago, our conversation led us to “Discerning Truth: Learning to Recognize the Character and Word of God in a Sea of Information.” While this issue concludes the theme, the importance of being vigilant against false information is as important as ever.

Unfortunately, the word of God has always been weaponized and politicized, which is a rabbit hole I will not go down in *The Scroll*. However, I think as Christians it is something we need to be mindful of. As a user of social media and the internet, I am constantly amazed about how much misinformation I encounter daily. The church world and word of God has not been immune to this. The Bible has been taken out of context to benefit a few while negatively impacting many. All we must do is look at history (and the present for that matter) to see this.

When it comes to our faith, we all have access to the same information. As Minister Felix recently preached, we are not in the Old Testament and living under the (Old) Law. We have direct access to the word of God and direct access to God in prayer for our petitions and requests for forgiveness. I advocate seeking wise counsel from trusted people when needed, however I am also mindful that the Bible tells us to work out our own soul salvation with fear and trembling, which means we need to know what the Bible says regarding matters of our salvation.

As mentioned in the “Word of the Quarter,” Paul encouraged Timothy to rightly divide the word of God and to shun profane and vane babblings. He was trying to protect Timothy from

those who were leading others astray with false doctrine. People may not purposefully lead us astray, but we must know when something or someone is leading us away from our purpose and the word of God. Luckily, we have the Holy Spirit to help us recognize the Spirit’s work in and around us. It is up to us to respond to it.



If you want to know how God feels about something, do a Bible study about it, and pray. Rather than focus on a list of “thou shall nots,” I try to focus on Mark 12:30-31 which says, “*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these.’*” For me, it is as simple as that.

Our greatest witness is not in the words we say but in the behavior we exhibit. In a world that shows hate, our ability to love is what is needed for those who are hurting. We are global, so the word *neighbor* extends broad and wide. To love your neighbor as yourself is a tall order, but for me it merely points to the golden rule that I treat others how I want to be treated.

As we wade through the sea of information at our fingertips, remember to weigh it against the word of God and the character of Christ. Literally ask yourself, “What Would Jesus Do?” To know the answer, it is important to read the Gospels and know what Jesus said and what He did.

Jesus’ capacity to show love and to give is what legends are made of. Jesus lived out His purpose. He showed love. He used His gifts. He fulfilled His earthly purpose. My goal is to silence the voices around me and live my life in the same manner.

From the Archives: Mount St. Helens: A Lesson that Comes from Within

Sister Toyia Taylor

As we carpoled down I-5 South, I chuckled reminiscing back to July 30, 2015. It marked the first time I hiked Mount St. Helens. The day had been extremely hot, almost one hundred degrees. With no trees to provide shade, I and three other hikers climbed over boulders while pumice and ash sunk beneath our feet and the sun showed no mercy. It took over 10 hours to reach the summit. As we descended, our guide warned us that we had to hurry to reach the base before dusk. As I hiked (blisters on both feet and night approaching faster than I could travel), I began to pray, “Lord, if You get me down this mountain, I won’t ever go back up.” Yet here I was again heading toward the mountain to set up camp and do it all over again.

We camped overnight and began our ascent at 5 a.m. on a Friday. As we always did before a hike, my friend Clarence Henderson prayed, and we began to hike before sunrise. My mind immediately began to churn around the multiple disasters that could occur on this 11-mile hike (8,366 elevation). Moments of doubt started to plant seeds. “What if I am hiking too

slowly? What if I get scared climbing the boulders or looking over a ledge?” All these things were real in my mind, but as we approached the mountain, I began to remember that I had done this before and lived. I knew the path, and more importantly, I had to trust myself and so began my journey.

As we climbed, we approached the boulder fields. The year before, our tactic was to walk along the narrow trails and climb the steeper boulders. This year, I decided to go directly through the boulder fields, straight to the summit. As I looked up, I immediately mapped out my pathway, approaching each boulder like a ladder or stair step rather than a barrier. Each boulder

Coming down the mountain, I realized fear was always going to make an appearance, but I must look beyond the fear and focus on the journey.

became an obstacle course built to test my endurance physically, mentally, and spiritually. I stretched my legs and twisted my arms to conform to the rocks. When my legs started shaking, I reminded myself to rely on my

upper-body strength. When my arms gave out, I mastered creative



ways to leverage my hiking poles to relieve my back and put less pressure on my legs. Each step, I focused on breathing and talked myself through tight spots, burning legs, and moments of doubt. The whole time, I kept my eyes on the path I was creating.

This time when I reached the top, it was different. I was different. Within one year, I had grown to trust myself, slow down, breathe, and be patient to map things out. I discovered how to use everything I am to achieve that final goal, and more importantly, enjoy the moments, even through the hardships. Coming down the mountain, I realized fear was always going to make an appearance, but I must look beyond the fear and focus on the journey. Focus on the challenge and the success that comes with it. This time, I walked down the mountain and thanked God for the opportunity to breathe calmly and seek clarity. I took in the view and smiled at the realization that God was constantly giving me the opportunity to complete what I thought was impossible. I simply had to use every part of myself and remember to create my own path and to appreciate that it may take more than one time to learn the true lessons that only come from within.

Prayer Requests:

- ♥ Pastor and Minister Jo Ann
- ♥ National and local leaders
- ♥ Military and their families and veterans
- ♥ Youth, families, singles, and marriages



Women of the Bible—Anna

Sister La'Shandra Perkins

Name: Anna

Meaning: Favor or grace

Her Character: She was dedicated to serving God.

Her Sorrow: She became a widow at an early age.

Her Triumph: She was able to proclaim Jesus was the Messiah.

Key Scriptures: Luke 2:36-38

Anna was a prophetess. She was not just any prophetess. She was the daughter of Penuel from the tribe of Asher. She was already connected by lineage, but Anna went deeper. From what I understand, Anna was married to her husband and then he passed away. With no children to carry on his legacy, in this era, Anna could have gone back to her father's house and remarried, but she chose not to. Anna could have let guilt, shame, and jealousy (of the women who had husbands and children) harden her heart, but she had a heart of gold. She chose to worship God night and day and to be happy and filled with joy.

Anna is one of a handful of women called prophetess. She could see and hear things that others could not. Anna's age is important because we know she was married to her husband for only seven years. This was during a time when Jewish girls were married off between the ages of thirteen and fifteen. This shows how long she had been praying, worshiping, and listening to God's voice for the redeemer to come. The Jewish people had been waiting for the redeemer to come and set them free once again and to move them from law to redemption.

The more I research Anna, the more respect I have for the prophetess.

Jesus was brought to Jerusalem by His parents for Mary's purification. By law, the firstborn male had to be dedicated to the Lord. Another person to meet Jesus as a baby was a prophet named Simeon (Luke 2:21-40). Simeon was also a prophet who lived for God and sought His face constantly. He was also told by the Holy Spirit that he would live until the redeemer came. The Holy Spirit told Simeon to go to the temple the same day of Mary's purification. While being at the purification was the end of an era for Simeon, it was the beginning of one for Anna.

When Anna met Jesus, I believe she was delighted. Her heart was overfilled with joy and delight. She had dedicated her life to the service of the God. Anna was a believer who knew God's voice, and she proclaimed that Jesus was the Messiah. After that proclamation, all the other priests, deacons, and deaconesses in the temple came and worshiped Him.

Anna knew she had a purpose, and she lived and pursued that purpose.

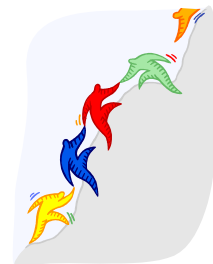
Anna knew she had a purpose, and she lived and pursued that purpose. I love how God brought things full circle with Mary. Mary was told of the good news that she would conceive a child that would be the rising and falling of so many Jews. Mary was a child

and didn't fully comprehend what she was going to go through being the mother of the Messiah.

Anna was older and wiser when God spoke to her. She sought God's face for discernment and understanding so that she could comprehend all that Jesus was going to be and how He would change everything that the Israelites stood for. Anna also stood at the forefront of change. Her proclamation steamrolled change; change that was in effect twelve-years later when Jesus went and started teaching in the same temple that the proclamation was declared in.

Anna was not told by the Holy Spirit that she was going to die upon meeting the Messiah. That was not her fate that was Simeon's. Anna surpassed Simeon with her dedication. She listened to God's voice, and she continued to live and thrive. She is the only woman called a prophetess in the New Testament. We do not know how or when Anna passed, but I'm sure her final moments were in the presence of God doing His work.

Empowered by God to Empower Others



Men of the Bible—Samuel

Sister Cassandra Broomfield

Name: Samuel

Meaning: *Because I have asked him of the Lord*

His Character: *He was honest, upright, righteous, just, and fair.*

His Sorrow: *He made Saul king.*

His Triumph: *He was a leader of Israel.*

Key Scriptures: *1 Samuel 2:1-36, 1 Samuel 3:2-20, 1 Samuel 8:1-6, 1 Samuel 8:7-22, 1 Samuel 15:35*

Samuel was a man set aside for the purpose of God. He was an answered prayer and a fulfilled promise. His father (Elkanah) was married to two women, but the wife he loved (Hannah) was unable to bear children. While visiting the temple with her husband and family, Hannah prayed to God for a child. She promised God that if He granted her request, she would give the child back to Him. God answered her prayer, and Hannah conceived and bore a son. Once the child was weaned, she took the child to Eli, the priest at the temple, and left him there for Eli to raise and educate in the temple. Eli did not know that because of his own disregard for God's law that he was raising up his replacement.

Samuel received his calling one night while asleep. He heard his name being called and assumed that it was Eli. Samuel went to Eli on three different occasions to inquire of him as to why he was calling. Eli finally realized that God was calling Samuel and bade Samuel to go back and lay down. Eli instructed him that the next time he was called, to answer requesting

that God speak while preparing to hear. I find this passage of the scripture to be very humbling. We often talk to God, but rarely do we hear what God is saying to us. Samuel did hear from God, and what he heard would reveal who God called him to be: a prophet.

Eli had been given the responsibility to serve the people of God. He had the authority to declare who would live or die. Eli exacted justice on others, but he was unwilling to hear what God had declared in his home for his children. Eli was raising a child that was given to him as an offering to God. He trained the child in the knowledge of God. After instructing Samuel to hear and answer God, Samuel went to Eli with a judgment against him and his sons. The penalty for disobedience was death. Samuel grew in grace and in favor with God. He became a seer, priest, judge, prophet, and military leader.

Samuel ruled Israel. Like Eli's sons, Samuels's sons became wicked priests. They took bribes and misused the church offerings for their own pleasures. The people grew tired of

We often talk to God, but rarely do we hear what God is saying to us.

the repeated offences against them. They felt that Samuel was too old to do anything about his sons' behavior or to be of service to them. The elders came together and met with Samuel. They requested him to give them a king to judge them because other nations had kings and seemed to

prosper. Therefore, they wanted one. Samuel tried to dissuade them, but God said, "No," give them a king. God told Samuel that they had not rejected Samuel; they had rejected God.

As if we were eavesdropping on an intimate conversation between God and Samuel, we hear the sadness in the heart of God. He revealed to Samuel how He had been with them since bringing them out of the land of Egypt. He revealed how they had always rejected Him and chosen other gods. God told Samuel that just as they have done to Him, they would do to him also. God told Samuel to give them a king, but let them know what kind of king they would get. The king would take the best of everything they had, including their sons and daughters. He would use them to pursue his agenda. He would take their fields, vineyards, and orchards and use them for his pleasure. They would no longer have a say in their own lives. Samuel laid out all the atrocities that would befall them under a king, and they still wanted a king. The Lord told Samuel to give them what they had asked and that when they begin to cry out to the Lord, He would not hear them.

Samuel was the mediator between the people and God. They prospered and grew in numbers and wealth, but because they were listening to people of other nations, they decided that they wanted to be like them. Despite what they would lose, they wanted a king.

Your Money Matters—Who is Speaking into Your Life?

Sister LaTonja Brown

They say knowledge is power, but it is dangerous when the information you are gathering is incorrect. It is easy to go adrift in the sea of information at our fingertips. That is why it is important to limit who is speaking into your financial life.

We live in a society where everyone — including this writer — has a lot of opinions about a lot of things. However, if I am seeking financial advice, the last place I would start is with someone who was broke. I would start with someone who I inspire to emulate. One person that comes to mind is my coworker, Christine. We would walk downtown together after work, and we would talk about a wide range of subjects. It was through a conversation with her that I began diligently building an emergency fund.

At the beginning of the year, *U.S. News & World Report* published an article “Where to Find Free Professional Financial Advice.” This could be a good article to search for if you need financial advice. Be sure to vet the organizations with your own research.

The article begins with referencing the often referred to poll that says almost half of Americans would have a hard time finding the money to cover \$250 in emergency expenses. High inflation has led to higher prices for food and gas, which adds more stress to people already living paycheck-to-paycheck. There are some resources we can reach out to for advice to help with money management.

Your Bank or Credit Union

Most banks and credit unions offer financial advice with their products. Their services are regulated, and

chances are you may have a go-to person at your local financial institution.

Your Job

Many jobs offer 401’s or 457’s through investment companies. For example, my organization’s representative comes to the office throughout the year, and we can schedule in-person appointments with him. He is also available via phone or email to answer questions. For a small (yearly) fee, he will manage a portfolio. Also, if your employer has an employer match, take advantage of that!

Financial Advisors

Cost can be a factor, so it is important to know an advisor’s fee schedule. If you are looking for a financial planner, the Financial Planning Association has a database of planners that you can search.

Word of mouth is always good. For example, I really like my advisor.

Pro-Bono Groups

There are financial professionals who provide free or low-cost services to low income, military veterans, abuse survivors, bankruptcy filers, and people who have faced major life events.

Two organizations that are shown in several articles in my research are **Financial Planning Association** and **Savvy Ladies**. The latter is geared toward women and helps with budgeting, managing debt, saving for retirement, etc. via webinars, blogs, and in-person events.

Government Programs

Local, state, and federal governments offer services to assist consumers.

You must qualify (income, age, etc.) for some programs.

During tax time, **Volunteer Income Tax Assistance** is offered by the IRS to provide free tax help to those who make \$60,000 or less, have disabilities, or speak limited English. **Tax Counseling for the Elderly** is offered for taxpayers 60+ and specializes in retirement-related issues unique to seniors, including pensions.

The **Department of Housing and Urban Development** provides counseling services on housing-related topics, such as home loans, foreclosures, and eviction procedures.

Having a financial plan is important so you can be financially secure in the future. Whatever you do, be sure to do your own due diligence. Personally vet financial advisors and organizations before providing any sensitive information! Start with the **Securities and Exchange Commission** or the **Financial Industry Regulatory Authority**.

The bottom line is that you must do what is best for you in the long run. For example, I like Dave Ramsey’s 7 Baby Steps, but I also know people who don’t agree with his philosophies. What works for others may not work for you and that is okay. The key is to find out what does. If you need help, seek people who can give you wise counsel. My only advice is to not ask some one who doesn’t have “two nickels to rub together” how to become a millionaire.

High inflation has led to higher prices for food and gas, which adds more stress to people already living paycheck-to-paycheck.

Fit for the Kingdom—Who is Speaking into Your Life?

Minister Demetrius Robinson

We all have a way to reset or recharge our lives or our sense of wellbeing. For example, after a vacation, I feel recharged: physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Getting any type of exercise during the day, such as a quick walk, helps me recharge, and hiking is one of my all-time favorite things for resetting or recharging. There are other things that improve my day like taking a moment to play with our dog.

The resetting phase is a time that I connect physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Doing something physically active helps with my body conditioning. While exercising, my emotions are being surveyed, and I can really reflect. I can ask myself, “How am I doing?” This time gives me a moment to clearly think about my mental and spiritual health as well.

Study after study has shown our physical health and mental health are closely connected, so we know physical activity has well established mental health benefits. Exercising helps reduce the risk of anxiety and depression. While out on a walk, we can pray, process events of our day, or ponder on certain circumstances in our lives, family, relationships, work, home, etc. Exercise also helps improve sleep and overall quality of life.

As we process life circumstances, who do we turn to? Who should we

listen to? The answer can be found in God. *“Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me or seen in me – put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you,”* Philippians 4:9 ESV.

About half of all people in the United States will be diagnosed with a mental health disorder at some point in their lifetime. Mental health disorders affect a person’s ability to participate in health-promoting behaviors. In most cases, anxiety and depression disorders are the most common. I recently read an article stating anxiety is about fear of the future and that depression results from over-dwelling on the past.

Our thoughts drive our emotions. Which voice are you listening to? Are you so concerned about the future (and losing yourself there) that you have extreme levels of anxiety? Are you so concerned about the past (and losing yourself there) that you have extreme levels of depression? Are you concerned about the future and the past (torn between the two) that you have both anxiety and depression?

The good news is that even anxiety and depression can be responsive to physical activity. Just a small amount of physical activity is known to reduce anxiety in adults and older adults. Regular physical activity can reduce the risk of developing depression in children and adults.

We can also use meditation to help us, including meditating on the word of God.

Just like we need air to breathe, our brain needs activity to function. We must adjust to thinking better and hearing the right voice. We must listen to wise counsel when making life-changing decisions. We must listen to our bodies when we need a checkup. We must listen to our minds when our heart aches, but we do not know how to handle it. We must listen to professionals who are skilled in helping to navigate special circumstances in life. We must listen to the voice of God, who speaks to us as we listen and read the Bible.

He will listen and answer. Jesus paid it all, so we do not have to succumb to fear. We can go to Him in prayer and cast our cares on Him because He cares for us. Whom the Son set free is free indeed. Free in our bodies; free in our minds; and free in our spirits.

Recommended Reading:

- I Samuel
- Luke 2

The good news is that even anxiety and depression can be responsive to physical activity.

In Remembrance: Deacon John Matthews, Jr.



Deacon John Matthews, Jr. was born to John Matthews, Sr. and Mary Matthews in St. Matthews, South Carolina. He was the oldest of 13 children.

Deacon Matthews was devoted to his wife of 62 years, Mother Yvonne, and his family. He always saw God’s favor over his life and the lives of his family. His love for God and his family will never be forgotten.

Deacon Matthews was ordained as a deacon in 1979. Over the span of 50 plus years, he faithfully served in many areas of the church and was actively involved in the choir. He had a harmonious tenor voice and loved spiritual uplifting music. Some of his favorite songs to sing were “Because He Lives,” How Great Thou Art,” “It is Well with My Soul,” and “To God Be the Glory.”

Deacon Matthews was a dedicated member at Pentecostal Covenant Church. He consistently showed up with an infectious smile, warm hug, and a dance in his spirit!

Deacon Matthews worked for the Boeing Company, and he retired in 1990 after 34 years of service. Most of his career he worked in more than one job. He received his certification from Molar Barber College in 1965. He had a barbershop in the basement of his home where he would cut hair for family and friends. He was also an entrepreneur and opened his own janitorial business, Supreme Janitorial. He continued the janitorial work until May 2017 when he officially retired from employment.

Deacon Matthews had many varied interests and hobbies. One that he was well-known and praised widely for was his gardening. He enjoyed planting beautiful flowers around his home and church.

His favorite scripture was Psalm 91:1. It reads, “*He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.*”

Please continue to hold the Matthews family in prayer!

Pentecostal Covenant Church

10033—55th Avenue South
Seattle, Washington 98178
(206) 725-7469
pccchurchoffice3@gmail.com
www.pentecostalcovenant.org



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