

## LENT 2007 GOD GUIDES

## KNOWING GOD'S WILL

**Psalms 77:11-20**

- SLIDE We are heading into spring  
That's when the geese start filling our skies  
to make the 2000 mile trek back to their birthing place.  
What guides them?
- SLIDE In 2005, scientist put a transmitter on Lydia, a Christmas Island Frigate bird and followed her flight for 26-days. Her flight took her over the 3000meter mountains of Java and included a 9 hour night flight, as she was making a near perfect beeline for Christmas Island from Borneo."
- SLIDE The Arctic tern is under two pounds,  
lives seven degrees south of the North Pole, and is circumpolar.  
The arctic tern migrates 11,000 miles to Antarctica and returns to the place from which the bird began, 7 degrees south of the North Pole.  
What guides these birds?  
Some Scientist say by polarized light.  
Others by the sun and stars.  
What guides them?
- SLIDE The Atlantic salmon leaves its birth place, swims downstream as a silver streak in the sunlit stream and makes it way 900 miles out into the ocean.  
Then it makes its way back to the exact tributary it left to spawn the next generation.  
We don't know the details of it navigational guidance system.  
Some scientists say it is the slight chemical differences at the mouths of different streams.  
What guides them?
- God guides them.  
It was his guidance system built into their creation.  
And if God guides geese, terns, birds and fish.  
Friends, God desires to guide your life as well.
- SLIDE **The question today is: Are you allowing God to guide your life?  
And what is the process by which he guides?**
- There seem to be two approaches to God's guidance.  
**ONE view emphasized the direct guidance of God through constant intervention. Hotline.**  
God is always one the job ready to respond  
Like an ever present parent to take your hand and lead you from the danger.  
From one parking lot to another,  
From one crises to another  
From one prayer request to another.
- The SECOND view emphasized a slow road**

God has given us his word and his spirit.  
 And as we read and recall the past faithfulness of God's acts,  
 We discover what God requires,  
 And how what we sow we reap.  
 How obedience is rewarded.  
 And we live as God's people have lived  
 Since the beginning of time.

Both paths demand keeping in touch with God.  
 Both include prayer and reading God's word.  
 Both include being a part of the family of Faith.

**Personally,**  
 I tend to believe that God guides us both  
 Through the Hotline, and through the slow road.

**SLIDE    GOD GUIDES US**  
**I. BY GOD'S OWN PROTECTION.**

We see that God protects us from dangers we have never seen  
 and do not even know exist.

You and I have no idea what dangers we have avoided,  
 Accidents missed, diseases escaped  
 What sins we have passed,  
 What spouses we might have married  
 Because of God's hand was upon us.  
 He knew exactly what we needed.

**SLIDE** We see this clearly in the Exodus experience of Israel.  
 Other than the resurrection of Jesus,  
 Nowhere in the Bible do we have the story of God's more  
 active presence with his people than when they  
 Were led out of Egyptian captivity.

Think about it.  
 After 400 years of captivity, the Hebrew slaves just walked away.  
 They not only walked away but the Egyptians requested they leave.  
 Not only were they requested to leave,  
 But they were paid to leave. They took Egyptian silver, gold, and clothing.

**SLIDE    The Lord had made the Egyptians favorable disposed toward the people , and they  
 gave them what they asked for so they plundered the Egyptians. Exodus 12:36  
 They gave them all their wealth to be rid of them.  
 From slaves that had nothing.  
 To slaves rich beyond imagination.**

**SLIDE    God protected them by the route they were to take. (Map)  
 Not the easy way.**

**But the long way through the wilderness.**

**Why?**

**SLIDE** **“God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near’ for God said: “Lest perhaps the people change their minds when they see war, and return to Egypt.” Exodus 13:17**

**Sometimes God guide us through detours because we were not ready to face enemies we do not even know exist.**

How many times have we found ourselves surrounded with obstacles because we took our way rather than God’s way?

**Sometimes God leads us down the long road To protect us from our own timidity, or low self esteem?**

**Sometimes God leads us down different paths to demonstrate his own victory in our lives.**

The Hebrews went out into the desert away from the Egyptians.

But Pharaoh recanted and went after them.

They were pinned down between the Egyptian army

And the Gulf of Suez which is 160 miles long and averages 30 miles wide.

Its depth ranges from nine to 14 fathoms.

Yet this was the very location where God parted the sea and rescued the Israelites.

They would not have experienced Gods’ wonderful victory had they not taken the detour.

**Sometimes God guides us down the long route for our own maturity.**

God is more interested in our character than our arrival.

God is more interested in our being what God wants us to be than our getting where God wants us to go.

**It took God 40 years to change the Israelites into the characters he wanted he wanted them to be.**

Let’s remember God makes no unnecessary use of God’s miraculous power in our guidance.

It is through his word,

Through circumstances,

Through people and their experiences in the body of faith, that we discover our own routes and directions.

Sometimes people hear voices, see visions, experience miracles.

But most of us are led of God by his word, in his own way,

For his own reasons.

But if we don’t follow the word God has already given us,

Why should he trouble us with more?

**SLIDE** **GOD GUIDES US**  
**II. BY REMEMBERING GOD’S PAST GUIDANCE.**

The bible is full of the faithfulness of God that we cannot forget.

**SLIDE** **When the Lord brings you into the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Hivites and Jebusites—the land he swore to your forefather to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey- you are to observe this ceremony in this month. Exodus 13:5**

We are to remember.

**Joseph was 110 years old when he died.**

He was of the fourth generation of those who had received the original promise to Abraham of land for God's people.

So When Joseph was dying he made his people promise to take him back to the land of promise after his death.

So Moses kept the Promise.

**SLIDE** **“And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he had placed the children of Israel under solemn oath, saying, God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here with you. Exodus 13:19**

Joseph died with the certainty that God would keep his promise.,

When they came out of Egypt the Israelites carried the bones of all the patriarchs.

Scholars believe they carried as many as 75 embalmed bodies

They carried out of Egypt.

They carried them for 40 years in the wilderness.

Across the Dead Sea, up to mount Sinai,

How would you have liked to have had that old bone detail?

But they carried them because they were a reminder of God's faithfulness

That God is a promise keeper.

The promise was to inherit a **NEW LAND FILLED WITH MILK AND HONEY.**

That is the same reason we visit the graves of our loved ones.

Especially those who had a resilient faith and lived it before us.

We tell our children of their obedience.

And they testify to us from the Grave that God is faithful.

**Morris Ashcraft, a seminary professor,**

Interrupted his college days to take lessons as a naval aviator.

Then he was given a single engine carrier aircraft.

He said they were trained to fly in formation

Sometimes 3,6, 12, or even 18 airplanes.

He said the training prepared them for flying into clouds with no visibility.

They would fly with one wing overlapping the wing of the next plane so that in low visibility they would always see the wing of the plane next to them.

“While we were in the clear, we trimmed the controls of the plane,

We got all our aircraft on course and steady, and in formation before we entered the clouds. Than in zero visibility in formation with wingtip over wingtip, props spinning 1800 rpm, we stayed in formation. Held steady on course. **The way we entered the clouds was the way we came out.”**

**Friend that's why its so important to get on course with God.**

**When the going is good.**

**Trim your wings when the wind is calm.**

**Set your course when the sun is shining.**

**Then** when the clouds of difficulty appear

When the storm of Grief, illness, arise,

And the winds of loss, doubt and confusion blow.

Friends the way you go in will be the way you come out.

We can count on Gods past remembered faithfulness to give us future guidance.

Three years ago we started a capital campaign that called for decision.

We had to look ahead into the unknown,

Of inflation, rising interest rates,

Weather, material availability.

But we made a decision for the future based on Gods faithfulness in the past.

And we broke ground.

Today we're moving to finish the vision God gave us.

So that we will have, for our children a building

that not only glorifies God though the many new ministries

But a building that stands as a demonstrates to them that when we trust God

He will guide us so that together we can accomplish

that which is impossible to do alone.

GOD GUIDES US BY REMEMBERING THE PAST.

### **GOD GUIDES US**

#### **SLIDE III. BY SUPERNATURAL DIRECTION**

**“And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night. Exodus 13:21**

You CAN read about God's guidance

In the Psalms, in the Prophets, and even in the New Testament.

**SLIDE I will remember the deeds of the LORD; yes, I will remember your miracles of long ago. Psalm 77:11**

That pillar of cloud and fire burned its way into their memory.

**SLIDE He spoke to them from the pillar of cloud; they kept his statutes and the decrees he gave them. Psalm 99:7**

The crossing of the red sea was written about in their songs.

**SLIDE Your path led through the sea, your way through the mighty waters, though your footprints were not seen. You led your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron. Psalms 77:19-20**

The miracle of God in their midst.

Was never forgotten.

God's guidance and intervention would never have occurred had they not obeyed.

**God will not do by miracle what he expects us to do by obedience.**

So when he does intervene everyone knows it is God

Everyone knows it is His miracle.

**A few years ago a railroad magazine carried the story of a twelve-car train containing the** members of a Sunday school in eastern Missouri bound for a picnic fifty miles away. As they traveled a thunderstorm came with rain falling in torrents. The engineer fearful the terrific downpour might cause a washout or spreading of the rails, slowed down to thirty-five miles an hour. As the train swung around a curve and approached a station it was to pass through, the engineer, saw 'in a break in the rain, that the switch ahead was open. It meant a terrible disaster. Instantly he hits the brakes, and shouted to his fireman, "Better stick to it, hundreds of children are on board. "God help us all!"

His last words were drowned by a terrific flash of lightning and a crash of thunder that struck the ground just ahead of the engine. The next thing they knew they were past the station, still riding safely on the main-line rails. The train came to a stop and the engineer and conductor hurried back to discover what had happened. They found the lightning had struck squarely between the switch and the rail and had closed the switch. "Purely It was the act of God," -- J. M. Farrar

God's guidance will always be marked by unity.

When they were arguing about what to eat.

The Manna and Quail brought them together.

When they were divided about surrender to Pharaoh's army..

God opened the Red Sea and they crossed over.

**Just like the pillar of cloud and pillar of fire were not two entities.**

But it was one cloud with a pillar of fire within.

And it covered 600,000 men plus women, children and animals,

Over a 12 square mile area.

And enormous cloud in width and heath.

**Because Psalms 105:39 says, It covered them.**

It covered them from what was behind,

And it covered them from what was ahead.

And so they moved with confidence of God's guidance.

SLIDE

The vision for our present church

Was but a dream 100 years ago.

But our fore-fathers trusted God.

And in 1908 this building rose out of the ground.

We recall their faithfulness.

And remember how God guided them.

5 years ago this church dared to dream again.

SLIDE      And today we see this dream rising out of the ground.  
              In our New Community Life Center.  
              Because we too are trusting God's guidance.

              And in the same way in 50 years  
              People will look back at what has been done.  
              And give thanks for your faithfulness.  
              And because God guided and provided for us.  
              They will believe he can guide and provide for them.

              Yes, it will take sacrifice.  
              And it will take commitment.  
              You and I must take up our cross and follow Christ.  
              That means making a ministry that vital and alive here in Aberdeen.

              In this season of Lent, we are reminded,  
              That Jesus was willing to take up his cross.  
              Not for himself,  
              But for you and Me.  
              For the whole world.

              He did not hesitate.  
              Because he knew God's faithfulness would sustain him.  
              Will you take up your cross?  
              Will you be obedient?  
              So that others in the community and state  
              Can see your faithfulness and follow our savior

              Watch our drama team as they close our service today  
              And let's be in thoughtful meditation as they do  
              And prepare ourselves for communion  
              as we consider the cross we will take.