

Diving Deeper into Discipleship for July 31, 2022

Pastor Pete Fowler

All God's Creatures: A Talking Donkey

Sermon Reflection Questions:

- How often do you think or act based on fear, perhaps seeing some of the Balak's reactions in your own life?
- Are you tempted to resist the guidance of God in favor of the prestige of influential people, or the allure of wealth, or the desire for more control?
- Have you been frustrated—or even outraged—with your circumstances recently? Have you stopped to consider what God might be trying to teach you?
- Bring your weaknesses and inadequacies to God, release them, and invite the Holy Spirit to use you to help "open the eyes" of other people to God's presence and power.

Devotional Reading and Reflection

- **2 Timothy 1:7** | When confronted with fear, what three things does the Spirit give us to consider and receive in response?
- **1 Timothy 6:6-10** | What kinds of consequences can befall us if we are "trapped" by the love of money?
- **Proverbs 16:9** | What does this verse teach us about the balance between the path of our heart's desire and the path of God's desire for us?

Weekly Spiritual Practice

July Practice: Corporate Guidance | Painstaking Reconciliation

(from *The Journal of Missional Practice* by Al Barrett)

- In order to receive the blessing of corporate guidance, we must retain a unity and harmony within our Christian community. In order to achieve this, we need to practice painstaking reconciliation in ongoing and intentional ways.
- Community-building is messy. Making friends despite various kinds of differences, allowing new voices to speak into our lives, receiving the sometimes-difficult gifts of others—all of this means that making mistakes, stepping on toes, is inevitable. And so, we have to constantly engage in the painstaking work of reconciliation—of saying sorry and receiving forgiveness, of receiving the apologies of others and offering forgiveness in turn.
- This kind of community-building strengthens the Body. When we trust each other more deeply, we are more willing to seek corporate guidance, and more open to how God may want to use others to help us take the next steps of faith.