

FCCMA – June 2, 2017 – Inspirational Speech

1. Here to encourage – not to condemn / convict.
2. God is with us always – working in our good times and bad –but our attitude/faith based on a foundation don't believe in coincidence.
3. First, I always say that those of us in local government are wired to do it! Why? Service, high tolerance for pain and disruption and sometimes chaos! I wouldn't do anything else!
4. Well guess what? God wired us this way! Jeremiah 1:5 – “Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you!” Oh, I guess that's why we love the craziness so much!
5. God has a plan for our lives and for however long, God has placed all of us in these public positions of responsibility – coincidence. Isaiah 58:11 – The Lord will guide you always in the midst of a sun scorched land, he will satisfy your needs Deut 31:4 The Lord himself goes before you...
6. Sometimes we mess up God's plan, or He allows us to go through difficulties to correct, improve, prepare us. So when “bad things” happen, I now ask, “what am I supposed to do”? or “what am I supposed to learn?”

- How will we respond? Good times or bad? Remember – Corin 10:13 – “He will not test you beyond what you can bear – and when you are tested, He will also provide a way out.”
- P&G – unhappy, didn’t want to sell fat.
- St. Pete Beach – “In transition” – painful – rejection, opened a wound that would take years to heal. But, I learned to be a better City Manager and while I was in transition, had time to cast, direct and star in an Easter production at my church with over 80 volunteers - never had time to volunteer before. God had other plans for me.

Cape Coral – healing continued – worked with great people – biggest test was towards end – City Manager had left, I was appointed A.C.M. – only to be back to Assistant by political appointment of a non-C.M. to be City Manager. My verse kept me strong – Joshua 1.9 – I commend it to you – “Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid, do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.” Also Romans 8:31 “If God is for us, who can be against us?” for all sorts of circumstances. So after the C.M. appointment in the Cape, while everyone around was acting like they were in mourning because I wasn’t appointed, I was at peace. God had other plans for me.

I also love to look back – after a difficult time, and see how God worked in that time and the result – where I ended up or what I ended up doing different.

How do we know these things? Read the Bible and listen to our pastors and our Godly friends, but I have experienced that God speaks to us directly “still small voice” – Do we listen? God speaks to me through circumstances – and certain decision points in my life.

Direct communications from God have never been audible, but either a series of occurrences that affirm a direction and/or physical feeling. The key is to “listen and watch” – after a moment of unknowing to knowing. Doesn’t happen every day.

- Time to move from R.H. – on vacation in Florida
 - SPB job pursuit – 3 pages of testimony on sign
 - Cape Coral Job Pursuit
 - Mike Roberto
- How do we deal with all that goes on in our lives – especially at work? Stay focused on God. In Matthew 14:29, Peter steps out of the boat and begins to walk on the water towards Christ. But what happens? “When he saw the strong wind and the waves, he was terrified and began to sink.” Do we experience strong winds and waves (storms) in our lives? Focus on God and he will lift you up – comfort in the midst of the storm.

- So when we are afraid, depressed, frustrated, angry, when the storms we face in our public service are distracting and overtaking us, what should we do?
- Be strong and courageous. Remember, who can be against us when He is with us always? He goes before us!
- Stay focused on Him! A closing thought, at the end of a difficult day or week – or a particularly challenging Council Meeting – Matthew 11:28 – “come to me, all you who are weary and over loaded, and I will give you rest.”