

✚ The announcement last week that I would be leaving Island Baptist Church left us all in an odd place. We are not where we thought we'd be or doing what we thought we would be doing. All of us were left shocked and confused, as opposed to being clear and confident on the road we thought we were on. In fact, if we are thinking right, we shouldn't be shocked or confused when things don't go the way we think they should. We know nothing about tomorrow, but the Savior knows the way for us as He is the Master chess player. He moves His pieces around as He sees fit, the chess pieces don't get to vote and are out of line anytime they throw in their two cents. They are playing chess with the "One," who is holding all the atoms and molecules together in infinite order and detail. He knows the name and location of every star; He knows the number of every hair on their heads. We know nothing about what's coming next. There's not another absolute about tomorrow except the Savior, "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," declares the LORD. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts." **Isaiah 55:8-9.**

1. When it comes to finding the real answers, beware of yourself.

- ✓ Don't lean on your own understanding because you don't have any! **Proverbs 3:5-6.** One of the worst things that we can do is make decisions from a position of emotion or desperation. There are things that are far more intoxicating than chemicals; the most intoxicating is "you" hopped up on emotion (excitement, fear, discouragement, etc.). This type of intoxication leads to far worse decisions than any chemical intoxication.

2. When it comes to finding the real answers, beware of any sense of urgency.

- ✓ Beware of the "we need to do something" syndrome; a.k.a. "we need an answer, and we need it now." Sometimes the urgency of a situation makes us think there is no other answer but the one that's in front of us, and we wind up doing the wrong thing. The people thought they had Jesus cornered because they thought there could be no other answer, yet they were wrong. Uh oh!, **1st Samuel 8:4-5.** Desperation and urgency rarely end well. They were desperate for a king (watch it when you feel desperate, you may wind up with a Saul!), **1st Samuel 9:2.** The Israelites' pushing for an answer was wrong, and what they wound up with was definitely the wrong one; Saul's poor leadership. Saul's leadership would later turn into paranoia and maniacal behavior, which left Israel under a bad cloud for the next 40 years. Had they waited; God was preparing a young shepherd in the fields near Bethlehem, but their submission to the tyranny of the urgent meant that God's intended king was on the run and outcast for years. There is no urgency in Heaven. Down here, we are impatient, fearful, uncertain about the future, and confused about the present. We wring our hands, we have FOMO (fear of missing out). None of that exists in Heaven! Sometimes the best thing to do and the hardest thing to do is wait, **Psalms 27:14.** "I shall not want" in **Psalms 23:1** is a determined attitude, which equals "I'm not going to let myself do it." Waiting on the Shepherd is life or death for a sheep. "The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters. He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness. For His name's sake." **Psalms 23:1-3.** When does He lead me or guide me? When does He make me and restore me? When He decides to, and not before then. The sheep that makes an urgent decision or draws an urgent conclusion is a dead sheep. Life is like a game of chess, but in this game, we are sheep, and sitting across from us is a wolf. One of the wolf's main ploys is to tell us we've got to make a quick decision. There are thousands of ways to lose, but only one way we can win. Sheep have to wait on the Shepherd; sheep that don't wait on the Shepherd become wolf food.

"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil." Ephesians 6:10-11. "And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints," Ephesians 6:17-18. Why all that armoring and arming ourselves in order to pray? Just in order to stand there? Some of the most successful days in our lives are the ones in which we give no ground. We know nothing about tomorrow for certain except for the Savior.
