**Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation**

**By Parker J. Palmer**

**Chapter 1, Listening to Life**

“The life I am living is not the same as the life that wants to live in me.”

1. Palmer described vocation as; “Vocation does not mean a goal that I pursue. It means a calling that I hear. Before I can tell my life what I want to do with it, I must listen to my life telling me who I am. I must listen for the truths and values at the heart of my own identity, not the standards by which I must live—but the standards by which I cannot help but live if I am living my own life.” Have you had experiences of connecting to your heart in exploring your vocation?
2. “In our culture we tend to gather information in ways that do not work very well when the source is the human soul: the soul is not responsive to subpoenas or cross-examinations... The soul speaks its truth only under quiet, inviting, and trustworthy conditions.” How have you heard your soul speak? What helps you to allow the “wild animal” of your soul to emerge?

**Chapter 2, Now I Become Myself**

“Today I understand vocation not as a goal to be achieved but as a gift to be received. Discovering vocation does not mean scrambling toward some prize just beyond my reach but accepting the treasure of true self I already possess.”

1. Palmer related a story about his granddaughter and how she was after her birth by saying “She did not show up as raw material to be shaped into whatever image the world might want her to take. She arrived with her own gifted form, with the shape of her own sacred soul”. As you have grown in life, how have you been molded and how has your gifts been exposed. Which is most comfortable?
2. Consider the following definition about vocation: “True vocation joins self and service, as Frederick Buechner asserts when he defines vocation as ‘the place where your deep gladness meets the world’s deep need.’ Buechner’s definition starts with the self and moves toward the needs of the world: it begins, wisely, where vocation begins—not in what the world needs (which is everything), but in the nature of the human self, in what brings the self joy, the deep joy of knowing that we are here on earth to be the gifts that God created.” What brings you deep joy?