

## **Spirit Led**

### **By David Feddes**

We've been looking at some major themes in the Book of Acts. First of all, Jesus only—he's the only way of salvation. He's preached all through the Book of Acts as the only Savior. Then we were thinking about being Spirit-filled in a previous message. Today we're going to focus on being Spirit-led. Then I hope in future messages to look again at the Book of Acts on being Spirit-gifted and Spirit-transformed.

Today we want to think about what it means to be led by the Spirit, guided by the Holy Spirit whom the Lord has given us. And so we're going to begin by reading Acts 13:1–4.

"Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch), and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.' So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off. The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus" (Acts 13:1–4).

And that was the launching of the first great missionary journey of the apostle Paul.

Now, when we read the Book of Acts and think about being Spirit-led, one of the things that is very striking is all the times that miraculous, very striking, amazing forms of guidance come to lead God's people on their way. That comes in a variety of ways: through signs and very visible things that are happening, through voices that they hear, visions that they see, angels who come and communicate with them, and sometimes through prophecies that are spoken. These are dimensions of being led by the Spirit in the Book of Acts.

At the day of Pentecost, there was the sound of a mighty rushing wind, tongues of fire on their heads, they're speaking in tongues—and nobody has to wonder, "Is something happening here?" They all knew something big was happening because the Holy Spirit was showing himself through signs (Acts 2:1–4).

And when the apostles were given power from the Holy Spirit to do miracles, these were signs that God was at work in them, that the Lord was speaking through them. Over and over, the apostles' teaching and activities are accompanied by these signs.

When the Holy Spirit comes on some other people who weren't expected to be believers, the Holy Spirit would sometimes send the gift of tongues to them as a sign. For instance, when Peter spoke to Cornelius, a Roman army officer, and his household, while he was speaking the Holy Spirit came on them and they started speaking in tongues. And Peter said, "Well, I guess I know now that God doesn't show favoritism," that he's welcoming Romans and Gentiles just like he's welcomed us (Acts 10:44–48; Acts 11:15–18). So he had no doubt in his mind because of that sign that God had sent in filling them with the Holy Spirit.

Sometimes it wasn't just the signs of miracles and extraordinary things like that, but also voices that they would hear. An angel spoke to Philip, and Philip was told, "Now go to the desert road" (Acts 8:26). Then, when he goes where the angel tells him, the Holy Spirit told Philip, "Now go to that chariot and stay near it" (Acts 8:29). You get this voice that tells him, "That's the chariot I want you to go to." So he goes to that chariot and witnesses to that particular person, who happens to be an official of the queen of Ethiopia, and is going to be converted by the Lord.

So the voices will communicate. Sometimes God would send a voice not just to guide in different directions but to say, "Okay, you're in the right spot." The apostle Paul is in a situation where he's in deep trouble, and he's believed that the Lord wants him to go to Rome, but he's sitting in a Jerusalem jail. And the Lord stood near Paul and said, "Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome" (Acts 23:11). A voice tells him what's going on.

And that voice is what we noticed in the Scripture we started with—the voice of the Holy Spirit said, "Set aside for me Paul and Barnabas," or Saul and Barnabas. "Set them apart for that work I'm sending you on" (Acts 13:2). They heard a voice, and that voice directed them.

Along with voices directing, sometimes there were visions. Of course, the really big vision in the Book of Acts is when Saul is still a murderer and somebody who's hunting down Christians. Jesus Christ appears to him in a blinding vision and calls Saul out of being a persecutor and into being a missionary (Acts 9:3–6). He gives Saul that vision, but then he also gives a vision to another person, much less famous, named Ananias. And Ananias has a vision that he is supposed to go to Saul and pray over him so that he can get his sight back and be filled with the Holy Spirit. It's a vision from the Lord Jesus Christ that tells Ananias to do that (Acts 9:10–12). And so he does it. He goes and calls him "Brother Saul," even though he's been a killer, and lays his hands on him. Saul receives his sight back, is filled with the Holy Spirit, and ready to go for mission (Acts 9:17–18). So visions play a very important role in all of this.

When Cornelius, that Roman army officer, was praying one day—he wasn't yet a believer in Jesus, he didn't know that much—but he believed in the one God of the Jews and was praying. And God had made him a seeker of God and somebody who also was becoming generous in sharing money. One day, while he's praying, an angel appears to Cornelius and says, "Now, you're in the town of Caesarea. Send some people to Joppa, a town not that far away. There's a guy there named Peter. Send your people there. Get him to come to your household" (Acts 10:1–6).

And so, through a vision—in this case, an angel communicating through a vision—Cornelius sends three guys to go get Peter.

Meanwhile, Peter in Joppa is having a very strange vision of a sheet let down from heaven, full of animals that you're not supposed to eat. And a voice says, "Take and eat. Kill and eat." Peter says, "Never done that. Never gonna." And the voice says, "Don't call unclean what God has called clean" (Acts 10:9–16).

That happens three times. Peter is scratching his head and pondering, “What in the world is that vision about?” And right while he’s wondering, the Holy Spirit tells him that three men are outside, and “You go with those three men, and you’ll understand what the vision’s all about” (Acts 10:19–20). He goes with them, meets this Roman army officer, preaches to them, they’re all filled with the Holy Spirit, and he says, “Yeah, God is saying, I used to think of all those people as unclean, but God is welcoming them and sending the gospel to them” (Acts 10:34–48).

Not only are there the messages, then, of angels speaking and the visions, but one of the big visions that is another turning point in the Book of Acts comes in Acts chapter 16.

"It says Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas" (Acts 16:6–8).

That sounds kind of strange—that you're itching to preach somewhere, and the Holy Spirit won't let you. That you're wanting to go somewhere else, and God won't let you. So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. They're on this traveling journey where they've been to various towns, and they were going to try to go up further into that province of Asia, and they just couldn't do it. They're kind of stuck in Troas wondering, “Okay, now what?”

"During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us.' After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them" (Acts 16:9–10).

So this vision that Paul has of the Macedonian asking him to come is how the gospel goes into Europe. A lot of us who are of that ancestry can be very thankful for that vision, because God launched the gospel into yet another area of the world through that vision. Just as he sent an Ethiopian in the direction of Africa, he sends Paul in the direction of Europe—and he does so through this vision of a man speaking to him and appealing to him.

And as we've already read, sometimes the Lord will speak in all these different ways. He speaks to Paul in the town of Corinth. Sometimes the Lord gives a vision: “Hey, you've got to move. Here's where you've got to go next.” Other times he sends a vision and says, “Here's where you've got to stay.”

"One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: 'Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city'" (Acts 18:9–10).

He hasn't won them over yet. They aren't even converted yet. God says, “I have them. You're going to get them.” And so Paul spends the next year and a half in Corinth evangelizing and bringing the gospel to people and teaching them, because he's had this vision to stay put, because God knows who he's got there.

Well, angels play a big part in all the communication. When the apostles, early in the Book of Acts—Acts chapter 5—get locked up, then "an angel of the Lord came during the night, opened the doors of the jail and brought them out. 'Go, stand in the temple courts,' he said, 'and tell the people all about this new life'" (Acts 5:19–20). Following the angel's direction, they leave the prison, of course, and then they go back to the temple and go to preaching.

Peter gets locked up in prison and is scheduled for execution, and God sends an angel. Peter thinks he's having a vision, but this isn't a vision. This is an angel showing up, taking off his handcuffs, leading him right out of the jail and out the outer gate and out of there, and then he tells Peter what to do in that whole process. This time, it's time for Peter to get out of town. But again, he's rescued by angels, receives guidance from angels.

Another form of guidance: the angels come to Paul in a very dicey situation. He's in the middle of a two-week-long horrible storm. He's been through three shipwrecks already in his various journeys, and now he's about to have a fourth one.

"But now I urge you to keep up your courage, because not one of you will be lost; only the ship will be destroyed. Last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me and said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you'" (Acts 27:22–24).

And so Paul tells everybody, "Hey, I've got this message. We're all going to make it. Let's all eat some food. Let's get ready because we're going to have a wreck—but we're all going to make it." And so the Holy Spirit, through angels, communicates with the apostle.

There are also prophets. And the prophets don't always give encouraging news. Sometimes it's tough news. Paul is on his way to Jerusalem, and some prophets say, "Don't go." And the Bible says they're speaking through the Holy Spirit. But that's not actually the Holy Spirit saying Paul shouldn't go. He's letting Paul know what's going to happen. He lets those prophets know what's going to happen, and they conclude he shouldn't go because bad things are going to happen. But the Holy Spirit has told Paul, "Bad things are going to happen, and you need to go anyway" (Acts 20:22–23). So sometimes that leading through the prophets about what's going to happen doesn't necessarily tell you, "And therefore make a U-turn so the bad stuff doesn't happen." Sometimes it's just to confirm, "You know what you're getting into."

And so you have those prophets who are speaking that way.

There's a prophet named Agabus who is very dramatic. Earlier in the Book of Acts, Agabus predicts a famine, and so the churches take a big offering for the famine victims—who aren't yet famine victims. The offering is ready before the famine even hits because Agabus has told them this thing's coming (Acts 11:27–30). Kind of like Joseph in the Old Testament foresaw a famine in Egypt, so they were ready for it when it happened.

At any rate, Agabus later again appears, and he takes Paul's belt and ties himself up with it and says, "This is what's going to happen to you when you get to Jerusalem" (Acts 21:10–11). And so all the people are saying, "Oh, please don't go. Please don't go." And Paul says, "Why are

you sitting around here bawling and breaking my heart? I've got to go. The Holy Spirit tells me in every town I go, I'm going to run into trouble. Why would this trip be any different?" (Acts 21:12–14).

So he just makes a beeline for Jerusalem anyway.

The point here, though, for our purposes, is: there were prophets, even in that group in Acts 13 at the very beginning. These were people who were prophets—who sometimes had a message from the Lord about what was going to happen next. And that was part of the Holy Spirit's supernatural guidance for them.

So when you think about being Spirit-led, there are these striking cases in the Book of Acts: of signs, of voices, of visions, of angels, of prophecies. And it's really very interesting reading—and very dramatic.

And when we think about guidance, we may say, "Well, that's how the Spirit guides." And it's true. That's one type of means that the Spirit uses to guide: the very striking, miraculous, supernatural way of guiding.

Some frequently asked questions:

Should I always find out God's detailed individual will before I make a decision?

Over time, some Christians have turned stories into a system. And the system is that, because God gave specific guidance at times in the Book of Acts, you should never make a decision unless you've got the nudge and the go-ahead and the clear leading of the Lord. And God has an entire map laid out for your life, and your job is to find out the next step on the map and take that as it's revealed to you. Is that how it works?

The short answer is no. God does not promise that you will always know what's coming next and therefore you will only get God's second best or third best if you haven't figured out what that next step of God's perfect plan for you is going to be.

The Bible is very plain that we don't know the future. Writing to Christians, James says, "You do not even know what will happen tomorrow" (James 4:14). He doesn't say, "Therefore, try really hard to figure out what's going to happen tomorrow and then make your decisions accordingly."

So we do not have to figure out the exact map of the future or the next step and then wait until we know what that step is from the Holy Spirit directly before we take it.

On the other hand, there may be times of very striking, miraculous leading. And someone senses that—or maybe somebody talks to you about that. You say, "Well, I know what that means. That means they're a little off." If somebody claims miraculous leading today, is there a screw or two loose? Are they mentally unstable?

Not necessarily. The Holy Spirit who guides his people may still guide in quite extraordinary ways. And we shouldn't be too quick to dismiss extraordinary leadings from the Holy Spirit.

A third question: Should I expect the Spirit to lead me by all the same methods that he used in Acts—through signs, voices, visions, angels, prophecy, and so on?

Well, there I would say yes and no—because there are more ways, and we're going to look at those in the Book of Acts, that the Holy Spirit uses to guide people—not just the miraculous, “Whoa! That was amazing and unbelievable, how direct and how striking that is.”

A couple of things to keep in mind. One is: What is the Book of Acts?

Well, it's a history of the church's foundational period. It is a unique time that ended after the apostles died and the New Testament was finished.

Now some people take that fact and turn it into a system too and say, “That was a unique age, and therefore we should not expect very much to be similar in the age we live in.” Those signs and miracles and wonders were done to accompany the apostles and their close associates, and we ought not to assume that everybody who's not an apostle, not an associate, not living in that special age of the church before the New Testament was finally written down completely, is going to need the same kind of guidance that they got back then, when they didn't yet have the full New Testament.

And there's a lot to be said for that position. The Book of Acts is describing a unique period of laying the foundation. And there aren't more apostles today in the same sense that those apostles were eyewitnesses to Jesus Christ and directly taught by the Holy Spirit to speak infallibly, without error, and to write without error the books of the New Testament. That was a unique age. The foundation's not going to get laid all over again.

On the other hand, it is the launching of a new age. And so Acts is a portrait of what a lively church and mission looks like in the new covenant age of the Holy Spirit. And that age, launched by the Spirit, is still ongoing. It continues until Jesus Christ returns.

Both of these facts need to be kept in mind when we're thinking about the gifts of the Holy Spirit, but also the guidance of the Holy Spirit and being Spirit-led.

If you're not involved very much in God's mission, but you would like direct leading about a good decision so that it doesn't turn out badly—you wouldn't want to buy a house in a neighborhood that's going to go down a lot in the next five years—so, “Lord, please, send me the Macedonian message. I want a vision so that my new purchase doesn't bomb.”

Now, that doesn't mean you shouldn't pray about a house purchase. It does mean that you are not exactly on the pioneer edge of mission, with people shooting at you and God sending reassurances and specific directions on where to go next to carry on his mission. And so, not only are we in a different era, so to speak, but also the kind of guidance that God's giving in Acts is guidance to lead his people in his mission.

He might—yeah, I hate to say this because I know some people who've just bought houses that may turn out beautifully. They may skyrocket in value and be everything you ever wanted—beautiful house. It may be that he put you in that neighborhood with having no reason whatsoever almost, to the abode—you're it. It might be the people he wants you to meet when you're in that neighborhood, and it may not have much to do with your financial standing at all. He may want you there, but for reasons quite different than the ones we weigh when we make our purchase.

At any rate: What is Acts? It's unique and foundational. But at the same time, it is the launch of the ongoing age to acquaint us. And so I believe we should read the Book of Acts with a view toward understanding the work of the Holy Spirit, many—if not all—dimensions of which are still going on today.

And when we think about the Spirit's leading, I just want to give a very quick overview about where he leads.

He leads you to know, love, and trust Jesus. He's called the Spirit of Christ. He's called the Spirit of Jesus. Jesus said, "I'm going to send you the Counselor, and he's going to bear witness to me. He's going to take from what is mine and make it known to you" (John 15:26; John 16:14).

The Holy Spirit is always leading you to Jesus.

He leads you to relate to God as your Father. "The Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, 'Abba, Father'" (Romans 8:15). The Spirit moves us to cry out "Abba, Father" and know that our Father loves us.

He's called the Spirit of truth, and one of his major works is simply to help us understand and relish the truth of God that he reveals (John 16:13).

He's the Holy Spirit, which means he convicts us of sin, leads us out of sin, makes us reject it, repent of it, and pursue holiness instead (John 16:8–11).

The Holy Spirit is called the down payment on the future, and so he causes us to long for that future—that full future when everything is made new and heaven comes to earth (Ephesians 1:13–14; Romans 8:23).

He's the Spirit who intercedes for us. "The Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans" (Romans 8:26). He's the Spirit who helps us to relate to God and have a prayer connection with God.

And yes, he's also the Spirit who does direct our steps into the unique purposes that God has for us as individuals. He does have plans for your life, and he will reveal some elements of those plans or give you some guidance as needed to lead you along the path of those plans.

I want to think with you about how he does that particular purpose—how he leads you into the unique purposes that he has for you. And that's what I want to focus on for the remainder of the message: how the Spirit leads.

We've looked at the last one—he guides miraculously—but that is going to be the last one I teach, and I'm not going to say a lot more about it. There are other ways that he uses in the Book of Acts, and I want to be very alert to those.

He applies the Scriptures to our lives. He gives the Bible and then he helps us to know what the Bible means and what it means for us. He speaks, he leads people, but often he does that in the context when they're praying and worshiping in his presence. When they're open to him and delighting in him, they're a lot more likely to hear from him.

He directs through a leadership body—we'll see that in Acts. He arranges events for his purpose. Some of his guidance just comes with, "Okay, this stuff happened, and it plunks me in a certain situation, and now I work from there." Sometimes he speaks to our spirit and through our spirit, and we have thoughts and a sense of what he wants. And it's like an inner voice. You might not hear a voice with your ears, but he gives you certain thoughts that seem to have the quality of coming from God.

And not only specific thoughts, but even more importantly, he gives you the mind of Christ—or what the Bible also calls the mind of the Spirit—to just make you a wise, mature person whose very instincts and way of thinking is so in tune with Christ that you don't need a pile of specific guidance. You just think and feel and react the way Christ would. I think, as J. I. Packer says, that you almost develop a "Christ instinct." That's what is involved in the mind of Christ.

And then, not to dismiss or in any way knock the miraculous guidance—because sometimes the Holy Spirit may still use that today.

Now when we think about these, the first is simply Scripture. And I would say ignore all the other six that come after it if you haven't gotten this one down. If you're not listening to Scripture—if you're not listening to the Bible—you're wasting your time hoping for God's guidance. He may give it anyway, but don't count on it, because the main way in which God makes himself known and communicates is through the writings of the Bible.

When you look at the Book of Acts, that might be easy to overlook if you're really struck by the visions and the angels and this and that. But notice how they preach. Peter gets up on Pentecost, and what does he do? He says, "Well, all this stuff that's happening—this is what the prophet Joel talked about" (Acts 2:16–21). And, "By the way, in the Psalms of David, here's what David had to say about the future Messiah" (Acts 2:25–28). So he's preaching from the Scriptures.

When Stephen preaches, Stephen gives an overview of Old Testament history and then applies it to them right then and there and says, "Now, this Christ was the one that it was all leading up to, and you've crucified him" (Acts 7).

So he's preaching from Old Testament history.



When you look at what Philip does, Philip is talking in that chariot. You know, we saw earlier an angel told him to go to the road. Cool! An angel talked to me. Then the Holy Spirit said, “Now go to that chariot.” Yeah, man, that would be cool if I just had somebody talking to me and telling me, “Go over to that chariot.”

What’s he do when he gets to the chariot? Oh, this guy’s reading the Bible, and he doesn’t quite know what it’s talking about. He’s reading Isaiah 53. “Well, I’ll tell you what Isaiah 53 is about,” says Philip. And he explains, “He was despised and rejected by men... he bore our griefs... carried our sorrows...” (Isaiah 53:3–4). That’s Jesus.

So he’s basically just giving a Bible explanation. After all that extraordinary guidance that got him to the Ethiopian, he basically tells him the Bible was talking about Jesus (Acts 8:26–35).

And when you read Paul’s journeys, it says that he would reason with them from the Scriptures (Acts 17:2–3). Apollos would preach from the Scriptures and demonstrate from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Messiah (Acts 18:28). And so the leading of the Holy Spirit is, above all, a leading into the Scriptures.

We sometimes put ourselves—you know, when we read Acts—we say, “Boy, the apostles were led in this way. I’m going to be led in that way.” Maybe so, but put yourself in the position of the audience of the apostles—because that’s really what you are. And the audience of the apostles is constantly being told what the Scriptures say about Jesus.

So if you want to have the Holy Spirit’s leading, be ready to listen to the Scriptures. The Bereans were considered nobler people than people in some of the other towns, because when they heard Paul preach, they said, “Well, he might be right. We’re going to check and see whether it matches up with the Scriptures that we already have.” And they would consult those Scriptures and say, “Yep. Yep, he’s right.” And they came to believe in Jesus because of consulting the Scriptures (Acts 17:10–12).

Another way that the Spirit speaks is in a context of prayer and worship.

We’ve already seen that the men in Antioch—Paul and Barnabas and the others who were prophets and teachers—were fasting and worshipping when the Holy Spirit came to them and spoke to them (Acts 13:1–2). And that happens in other situations too.

Before Pentecost, what’s going on? Those early believers are meeting in the home, and they’re praying, and they’re praying, and they’re praying. And it is in the context of their prayer meetings that the Holy Spirit comes on them in such power and communicates with them and launches the gospel (Acts 1:14; Acts 2:1–4).

Cornelius had an angel appear to him—but don’t forget that he was praying at the time the angel came to him (Acts 10:1–4). Peter had a vision from heaven—but don’t forget that he was praying when he fell into the trance that brought about that vision (Acts 10:9–11).

So the Spirit is the Spirit who helps us in prayer. And if you want to hear from the Spirit, be much in prayer.

You know, it may seem almost too obvious to say, but we always have to pay attention to the obvious. Because you can say, “I want to get into the cool stuff where I’m getting all that amazing guidance from the angels and the visions.” Read your Bible and pray a lot, and there will be an awful lot of guidance coming to you.

Maybe you’ve seen the cartoon where some guy is sitting there saying, “I wish God would speak to me.” He’s got an open Bible right in front of him. Well dude—God is speaking! Perk up and listen.

So you have these prayer meetings. Again, in Acts 13, those leaders are all praying together when the Holy Spirit speaks and sends them out (Acts 13:2–3).

Then he also directs through leaders. Sometimes when we think about Spirit guidance, we want to think about individual Spirit guidance. But as individuals, we receive a lot of guidance from the leaders that God raises up—and that’s a part of the Book of Acts as well. You read about apostles. You read about them appointing deacons: “Choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom” (Acts 6:3). Those are the guys who are going to administer the program for the widows and for the people in need. And still today, God has people whose main calling is to look after the financial affairs and the material well-being of people in the church—and we call them deacons.

Paul and Barnabas, on their missionary journeys, appointed elders in every church. That was just standard procedure. You’re going to have some people who are going to be called to answer to God and also to lead on God’s behalf (Acts 14:23).

And then there’s a great council in Jerusalem in Acts chapter 15, and the apostles and elders are gathered together. Again and again and again, it refers to the apostles and the elders. And at that gathering, there is a very great need for the Spirit’s leading because the apostles have had a lot of success in their mission journeys. But there are some people who are wondering what that means for non-Jewish people. And there are some who say, “They’ve got to become Jews. Get them circumcised. Get them observing the diet laws. Make sure they’re doing everything that Moses told us to do—and then maybe they’ll be good to go” (Acts 15:1,5).

And the challenge is, that is not what the Holy Spirit was leading. And so they got together in Jerusalem and they met together with the apostles and the elders.

First of all, some Christians who had been Pharisees—or still were Pharisees—stood up and said, “You’ve got to be circumcised. You’ve got to do everything Moses said or you cannot be saved” (Acts 15:5). And Peter says, “What are you guys talking about? Didn’t the Lord reveal to me that he accepts everybody? While I was still speaking to them, the Holy Spirit came on them” (Acts 15:7–9; referencing Acts 10:44–47). If God gives his Holy Spirit to them without doing all that, he’s already accepted them. “It’s by the grace of God in Jesus Christ that we’re saved,” says Peter (Acts 15:11).

Peter sits down. Paul and Barnabas stand up and say, “Well, we've been traveling. We've been in a lot of different towns. We've been preaching the gospel. You want to know what he's doing? He's leading all kinds of people to faith in Christ. They're receiving the Holy Spirit, and they're not getting circumcised or observing all those other laws. Looks to us like God's accepting them without requiring all that” (Acts 15:12).

And then James stands up—and James is the half-brother of Jesus—and he says, “Well, I've got a Bible passage here. It says in the Book of Amos that God is going to restore his fallen tent, and when he does, the Gentiles are going to come to the Lord” (Acts 15:16–17, quoting Amos 9:11–12). “And I don't think we ought to make it hard for them.”

And so they all kind of discuss it, and they come to one mind. And they write a letter to the church in Antioch and to other Gentiles, and they say, “It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us...” (Acts 15:28). So the Holy Spirit has worked through their gathering—through their meeting and their discussion as apostles and elders. “Now, it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us that we're not going to lay a bunch of burdens on you, and here's how we're going to proceed.” And that letter was received with great joy (Acts 15:30–31).

But you see, that is very important to realize—that is just as much (in some ways more—you won't ever say “more”) the leading of the Holy Spirit than the visions and so on. But this was one that was for the public life of the church and for how they were going to move forward into the future. It wasn't enough just to have a vision here or there. They had the Bible, they had the teaching of the apostles and the elders, and they had guidance on what they needed to do.

By the way, “elders” is plural. “Apostles” is plural. The grand potentate of the church who alone receives wisdom, visions from the Lord, and tells you all what to do—find somebody else. Because “elders” and “apostles” is always plural. There is not one vicar of Christ on earth. There is not one vicar of Christ in your congregation who knows it all and nobody else needs to be consulted with. So be aware that he directs through a leadership body.

And then, very important, he arranges events for his purposes—and not always in the ways that we would have liked him to or would have expected in advance.

What is one of the great missionary moments in the Book of Acts? Well, here's one of the great missionary moments in the Book of Acts: Stephen's death. He gets killed, and everybody who's a Christian in Jerusalem is out of there—except the apostles. It's just a mess.

"On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria" (Acts 8:1). What a tragedy.

"Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went" (Acts 8:4). Oh. So you have this persecution, which is a calamity—except now, all of a sudden, it just scattered the gospel all over the place. They'd been told by Christ to go to all nations—they hadn't quite been doing that yet. They were really enjoying the fabulous growth of the church and the blessings on it in Jerusalem. But it was when things got into a mess that they actually were spread out to preach the gospel elsewhere.

"Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah there" (Acts 8:5). And the Samaritans got to know Jesus Christ in part because of the persecution that arose after Stephen. And so Philip is there preaching to them; many of them come to know the Lord. A whole new people group has come to salvation because of the persecution.

"Now those who had been scattered by the persecution that broke out when Stephen was killed traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, spreading the word only among Jews. Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus" (Acts 11:19–20).

So now you have this persecution scattering people all over the place, and they're not just talking to Jewish people about Jesus—they're talking to Gentiles. This is one of the big moments in the history of the church, and it's not the fun, exciting leading of the Holy Spirit. It is the "get out of here or we're going to kill you" kind of leading.

And when you read about Paul's journeys, how is Paul led by the Holy Spirit? Well, sometimes he has the vision of the man from Macedonia: "Here's where you need to go next" (Acts 16:9–10). Sometimes he has the leading: "There's a posse behind me. I am getting out of here fast—to the next town." And you find that again and again and again in the Book of Acts: "Oh, it's time to hightail it out of town now."

Not always does he leave town because of opposition. Sometimes the Holy Spirit told him to stay in town longer (Acts 18:9–11). Sometimes he knew opposition was coming even before he went—and he went anyway (Acts 20:22–23). But very often, circumstances dictated it.

Sometimes Paul even needed a little help to know what to do. You read about a riot of a bunch of idol worshipers: "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" They have a whole stadium packed with people screaming their lungs out: "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" (Acts 19:28–29, 34).

And Paul says, "I should go in there and preach to them." The brothers dissuaded him. They said, "Okay, Paul, you know—preaching, great idea—but not today. Go into a stadium full of bloodthirsty rioters? Maybe a different day is a better time for the sermon."

But there are these circumstances that very often dictate where the apostles and witnesses need to go next.

Do you ever have that? I mean, when we're looking for the Holy Spirit's leading in our lives, we need prayer and Scripture. We also need to think about: "Hey, why am I in this situation?"—and not as a way to beat yourself up. Because sometimes when something bad happens, you say, "Oh, what did I do wrong?" Maybe nothing. Maybe God just wanted to shift your life.

I've had it a few times in my life where I made a change—a big change—and I thought that people didn't quite handle it right in relation to me. Well then, my task is not to be mad at them. It's to say, "Well, maybe they're right, maybe they're wrong—but now it's time for a new phase."

When we were looking at moving to Michigan, we were going to move there and work with the prison ministry. What could be wrong with that? But we couldn't sell our house. So here we are. There are simply circumstances that sometimes shape where you end up.

With Paul, those circumstances—sometimes he'd get hounded from one town to the next to the next. And boy, he covered a lot of towns by the time that was all over. His missionary journeys carried him to many different places.

And sometimes the circumstances involved wicked people: bad rulers who were hoping to get a bribe. He doesn't pay it, so he sits in jail a while longer. Another ruler knows he's innocent—"Oh, too bad, I think I'll keep some people happy, politically expedient"—keep you in jail. In jail you stay, Paul (Acts 24:26–27).

Well, you know—that ruins your life. "I guess I'll just have to write a few of those letters that people are still reading two thousand years later." Sometimes getting in jail is not what you choose, but God has some things. You know, when you're too busy, you don't do much writing. When you've got nothing to do but write, you write.

And of course there are those four shipwrecks and a variety of other things. All of that—the Holy Spirit is at work. And Paul ends up in Rome. It wasn't the trip he planned. It didn't get there the timing he planned. A lot of things went differently. But he got there. And you'll find that in your life too.

Sometimes only looking back can you say, "Well, now I can kind of maybe see what the Lord was up to." But in the middle of it, it's just one thing after another. But if at every step of the journey you're saying, "Well, what is the Holy Spirit putting me in this situation for? What is he directing me towards?"—then you can really live a life led by the Spirit, rather than saying, "Well, my life is just one event after another and it makes no sense and it's kind of a jumble."

He speaks to our spirit and through our spirit. Here we need to understand that the Holy Spirit lives inside people who belong to the Lord Jesus Christ. He's the one who led us to faith in the first place. And as he dwells in us, he teaches us. He communicates to us through our spirit, through our mind, through our heart and emotions, through the desires, the instincts that we develop.

The Bible says that "the spirit of a man is the lamp of the Lord" (Proverbs 20:27). The Lord works in your spirit, and that's even more true when his Holy Spirit is living inside you and testifying to your spirit.

"Those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God" (Romans 8:14). "You received the Spirit of sonship, and by him we cry, 'Abba, Father.' The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children" (Romans 8:15–16).

So one way that he's speaking to our spirit is just giving us assurance—telling us that we're loved. "God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us" (Romans 5:5).

So one of the great ways of receiving the leading of the Holy Spirit is just knowing that, in some way mysterious beyond our explanation, our spirit and his Spirit intermingle in ways that you're going to be having thoughts that aren't just yours—and learning to recognize the quality of a thought that comes from beyond you. A thought that the Holy Spirit puts into your mind—an idea, something that I need to do. And it wasn't on my to-do list maybe. But having thought of that, all of a sudden I know. I know I need to do that.

And the more you live in the Christian life, the more you're going to be recognizing that. That you're not just thinking your own thoughts—that there are thoughts coming from him. And not always in the form of some audible voice or vision, but he is communicating through your own thinking that almost becomes his inner voice.

The feelings that you have, the mind of Christ—sometimes it's just having a mind of humility and feeling in a situation there.

And when you're walking by the Spirit, you still need to evaluate. Because you're going to know right away: some feelings—they're not coming from him. They're just not.

But other ones, you're going to say, “Boy, I don't think I would feel that way if it weren't the Holy Spirit causing me to feel grief for somebody who's perishing, or to feel a great concern for the homeless, or to feel outraged by a certain injustice.” That's coming to me from the Holy Spirit.

And above all, when he testifies with our spirit that we're children of God, don't ever just say, “Well, that's just kind of wishful thinking on my part.” The Bible says that's the Holy Spirit who's giving you that trust and that faith and imprinting on your mind and your heart and your desires.

This is the great mystery of the Holy Spirit's work within us. And I don't think that we've grasped fully what the Book of Acts and the rest of the New Testament is saying to us if all we're looking for is the outer—just the outer: visions, signs, and angels. Because according to the Bible itself, the most intimate work and leading and blessing of the Holy Spirit isn't the fact that he's out there sending signals, but that he's in here. And that you're thinking his thoughts, that you're feeling his feelings, that your spirit has been filled with his Spirit, your heart is now a heart for God.

And this—I can't explain everything about that, of course, because I'm only a baby in that sense, in walking in the Spirit. But I present it to you because I think it's what the Bible calls us to, what many Christians of the past can testify to.

I know for myself there are times when I have thoughts that do guide my decisions. I take this series on Acts—I already knew what I was going to preach about a few weeks ago, and then it all got changed. It would have been easier by a lot for me to preach what I was planning on, but I thought, “Oh, I think I'm supposed to shift gears.”

And a bigger life decision for me: I've told you before I was a math and computer science major. I was ace in everything. Speech was my worst grade. And I have this sense, this thought that keeps growing and growing and growing: I've got to be a preacher of the gospel. What do I do with that? It goes beyond your rational analysis—because I'm not good at speech, I'm good at math. And sometimes the Lord wants people to be in math or accounting or other occupations—not me.

So there are times when the Holy Spirit will give you thoughts that are so strong you can't get rid of them. Or thoughts that keep—maybe one other way of evaluating thoughts, unless you're just totally obsessive and you always have the same thoughts—but sometimes there are things that keep coming to you again and again and again. That doesn't mean it's automatically for sure a divine communication, but if there is something that comes to your mind over and over that you think is of God—or might be—take it very seriously if God keeps impressing similar things on your heart over and over again.

And then beyond what I might call the Lord implanting thought or feeling, just the way the Lord shapes your entire mind. It's very closely related, but it's different. He grows you into a mature, wise person where it can be said, not just you're having thoughts from the Spirit or feelings or leadings from the Spirit, but where you have the mind of the Spirit, where you have the mind of Christ.

“We have received the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. We have the mind of Christ” (1 Corinthians 2:12, 16). The apostle prays, he says, “I keep on praying that God will give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation so that you'll know him better. And I pray that the eyes of your heart will be enlightened” (Ephesians 1:17–18).

He prays that people will be able to be filled with the Spirit so they can understand what God's will is. “The mind of the Spirit is life and peace” (Romans 8:6). “He who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit” (Romans 8:27). You know, that's just worth thinking about. Just think about those phrases: mind of Christ, mind of Spirit. You can read large volumes on it, but let it be impressed on you that you can have a mind shaped by who Jesus is—a mind that's in tune with him, the mind of the Holy Spirit. These are tender and very precious mysteries.

I know a lot of people have a hard time even talking about it to fellow believers because they say, “Well, I had kind of a... people will think I'm weird.” But these are some of the most precious things that can happen to you by the work of the Holy Spirit.

And then there is the miraculous. There are signs, voices, visions, angels, prophecies, interventions. Don't be too quick to write those off. Don't be too quick to think that is the normal way the Holy Spirit always communicates with everybody. But don't dismiss it either.

I'll take one example from later in church history. The vision of the man from Macedonia—we could say, “Well, that happens in the Book of Acts,” and it did (Acts 16:9–10).

There was a guy named Patricius who got kidnapped by pirates and was made a slave in Ireland. And then escaped slavery. But while he was in slavery, he began to pray to the God that he'd

heard about growing up that he didn't take very seriously. And he came to have a living faith in Christ while he was being held and enslaved. But finally, he gets out of there and he escapes, and he's back in England.

And then one night Patrick has a vision: "I had a dream of a man who seemed to come from Ireland, and he carried countless letters, one of which he handed over to me. I read aloud where that letter began: 'The voice of the Irish.'" And he says in his dream, as he read that "voice of the Irish," he heard voices like men from the Irish forest where he had been, and the voices were saying in unison, "We appeal to you, boy—come and walk among us once more."

And so Saint Patrick goes back to Ireland to evangelize the slaveholders and the pagans whom he had just been so relieved to escape from. He would not have done that without a great intervention and a very forceful vision from the Lord.

Just as there are other situations where the Holy Spirit will intervene in our lives and move us in a direction that we might not have considered without it.

But I will say this about the more miraculous kinds of leadings: it's likely that you don't need to go looking for them. When an angel shows up, you'll know it. When the Holy Spirit gives you a vision—or if Christ does come in an extraordinary way, and he still does today, sometimes in converting people—one of the most common forms of conversion among Muslims is having a vision of Jesus Christ. They have a vision, and that impresses them that Christ is really who he is said to be.

So again, I do not want to turn the miraculous into everything, but we certainly ought not to reduce it to nothing and say, "Well, that was nice that that happened back in the Book of Acts. We're in a totally different era." We're in the era of the Holy Spirit still. It's not the era of the apostles. It's not the foundation-laying era. I'm not going to claim to be an apostle, where I have some of the mighty gifts of healing and so on that they had to attest the gospel message that God gave them.

But the Holy Spirit does intervene. And when he does, you're not going to have to go seeking and wondering whether this little hunch now was the same as the vision from Macedonia. You may have to think about your hunches, but it's not the same thing as the vision of the man from Macedonia or the angel who spoke to you very, very clearly and unmistakably.

Therefore, as we think about being led by the Spirit, we want a fully rounded view of how the Spirit leads from the Book of Acts and the rest of the Scriptures. And as I said before, just forget all the other ones if you're not reading the Bible. To be Bible-saturated is the first step in getting the mind of Christ. He applies the Scriptures to our life, so be in the Scriptures. If you haven't been reading the Bible—you know, I hate to say it because I put a lot of work into this sermon—but just forget this whole sermon and read your Bible, okay?

And then, be a person of prayer and worship. Find leaders, a body of leaders, that set an example that's worth following and that follow the Bible's teaching accurately. Look at the events of your life, and don't just resent the people who made life miserable for you. Say, "Well, what is God



doing? Is he moving me onto a different phase or into something different here? And what are the opportunities that he's giving me?"

Remember the persecution. Did they say, "Oh, Stephen's dead. All is lost. We're ruined. Now we're in a different town. We're far from home"? They said, "Oh, we're here. Why are we here? Oh yeah, we have a gospel. Let's start talking." And so they preached the gospel wherever they went (Acts 8:1, 4). When God puts you somewhere, he's got purposes. And so seize the purposes with the power of the Holy Spirit.

Be aware of what he's doing in your own spirit and mind. Some of us are so rushed—you're not going to hear the Spirit speaking in your mind quite so readily if it's wall-to-wall noise all day, where you're either watching the tube, consulting your phone, or all those other sources of infallible wisdom. You might want to listen to your own spirit long enough to hear God's Spirit as well.

And then keep on praying, keep on seeking to grow a whole mind—not just a leading here or a nudge there, but a mind that thinks like Jesus and chooses like Jesus. Because you know what? When you read in the Book of Acts, you'll read that God directed in those amazing ways. But when he gives you that mind, then you start saying things like Paul did. In Philippians: "I think it's necessary." In Thessalonians: "We thought it best." He writes the Corinthians: "It seems advisable" (Philippians 2:25; 1 Thessalonians 3:1; 1 Corinthians 16:4). He's not always saying, "I had a vision of this." We're thinking Christian people. He's given us the mind of Christ, and so we're thinking and we're making decisions.

We're not going to wait around and say, "I'm never going to make a decision unless I have that extraordinary vision or angel." Say, "Well, I'm going to keep on growing and making decisions in a godly way. If God wants a different one, he can intervene." I've said that many times too. I said, "Well, I like the ministry that I'm doing at Christian Leaders. I like the ministry that I'm doing here. If God doesn't want me to do it and wants me somewhere else, he'd better make it clear. Otherwise, I'm going to keep going." So sometimes I'm not going to say, "Well, every day I have to have a new sign." I'm going to keep doing what I'm doing until he gives me a reason to do something different. And I think you can take that approach too, where you say, "Well, I'm a Spirit-filled person. God guides me. But I am open to change if he wants me to take a different direction."

But I can't end without simply saying what a blessing it is to have the Holy Spirit given—to have him living in you, to be led, to know that you're not your own. You've got somebody with you, and he's in front of you, he's behind you, he's all around you. He's going to take you where he wants you to be, and he's going to achieve amazing purposes through you. Even the little things you do can turn into really big things, because somebody really big is at work in those little things.

## **Prayer**

We thank you, Lord, for the gift of the Holy Spirit. We do pray for your wisdom and for your guidance, and not to be misled by false spirits or other ways that Satan would try to confuse us,

but instead to be deeply grounded in your Word, in a life of prayer, in godly leadership, in trust in your providence and in how you arrange all events to accomplish your purposes in us.

And then, Lord, give us a sensitivity in our spirit to be quiet and listen to what's going on inside us and what you're saying and moving inside us. And we pray, Lord, that the mind of Christ our Savior will live in us every day.

And then, Lord, where you choose to still send us other kinds of leading that you've decided we need, help us to be open to that, but to be open to every form of leading that you're already giving us. We pray, Lord, that this church may be led by you. We pray that your entire church worldwide may be empowered and guided and revived to accomplish your purposes in our world. For Jesus' sake, amen.

## **Spirit Led**

### **By David Feddes**

### **Slide Contents**

<sup>13:1</sup> Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. <sup>2</sup> While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” <sup>3</sup> So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off. <sup>4</sup> The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus.

### **Spirit led**

- Signs
- Voices
- Visions
- Angels
- Prophecies

#### **Signs**

Wind, fire, speaking in tongues (Acts 2:1-4)

Tongues sometimes validate outpourings.

Healings and miracles confirm apostles.

#### **Voices**

An angel told Philip, “Go south to the desert road.” (Acts 8:26)

The Spirit told Philip, “Go to that chariot and stay near it.” (Acts 8:29)

The Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” (Acts 13:2)

The Lord stood near Paul and said, “Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome.” (Acts 23:11)

#### **Visions**

Jesus appeared to Saul in blazing light and spoke in an audible voice. (Acts 9:3-6)

Jesus spoke to Ananias in a vision and told him to go pray for Saul so that his sight could be restored and he could receive the Holy Spirit. (Acts 9:10-16)

Cornelius had a vision of an angel. (Acts 10:3-6)

Peter had a vision of a sheet filled with unclean animals. God used this vision to lead Peter to bring the gospel to non-Jews. (Acts 10:9-20)

Paul had a vision calling him to Macedonia. (Acts 16:6-10)

Saul had a vision in the temple in which the Lord told him to leave Jerusalem and preach to Gentiles. (Acts 23:17-18)

#### **Angels**

Freed apostles from jail and told them to preach (Acts 5:18-20)

Led Peter out of jail (Acts 12:7-10)

Guided Philip to Ethiopian (Acts 8:26, 29)

Guided Cornelius to call for Peter (Acts 10:3-6)

Spoke to Paul aboard ship in a terrible storm (Acts 27:23-24)

### **Prophecies**

Prophets in Antioch (Acts 13:1)

Agabus predicted famine, prompting offering in advance (Acts 11:28-30)

Christians in Tyre predicted trouble for Paul in Jerusalem. (Acts 21:4)

Daughters of Philip prophesied. (Acts 21:8-9)

Agabus predicted Paul's arrest. (Acts 21:10-11)

### **Spirit led**

- Signs
- Voices
- Visions
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### **Spirit led: FAQ**

- Should I always find out God's detailed, individual will before I make a decision?
- If someone claims miraculous leading today, are they mentally unstable?
- Should I expect the Spirit to lead me by all the same methods he used in Acts?

### **What is Acts?**

- History of church's foundational period, a unique time that ended after apostles died and New Testament was finished.
- Portrait of lively church and mission in the new covenant age of the Spirit, which continues until Jesus returns.

### **Where Spirit leads**

- Led to know, trust, and love Jesus
- Led to relate to God as your Father
- Led to understand and relish God's truth
- Led to reject sin and pursue holiness
- Led to long for God and heaven on earth
- Led to heartfelt prayer connection
- Led to God's unique purposes for you

## **How Spirit leads**

- Applies Scriptures to our lives
- Speaks amid prayer and worship
- Directs through leadership body
- Arranges events for his purposes
- Speaks to and through our spirit
- Grows wise, mature mind of Christ
- Guides “miraculously” as needed

### **Applies Scriptures**

Peter's Pentecost sermon quoted Joel and Psalms. (Acts 2:16-21; 25-35)

New Christians devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching. (Acts 2:42) The fullness of the apostles' teaching is what we now have in our New Testament.

Stephen's sermon expounded on OT history. (Acts 7:1-50)

Philip explained Isaiah passage to the Ethiopian official. (Acts 8:32-25)

James quoted a passage from Amos at the Jerusalem Council to prove inclusion of Gentiles. (Acts 15:15-18).

Bereans examined Scriptures to verify Paul's preaching. (Acts 17:11)

Paul reasoned from the Scriptures. (Acts 17:2)

Apollos proved from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Messiah. (Acts 18:28)

### **Speaks amid prayer and worship**

Before Pentecost, disciples were praying for the Spirit's outpouring. (Acts 1:14, 2:1)

Disciples in Antioch were worshiping and fasting when the Spirit spoke. (Acts 13:2)

Cornelius prayed to God regularly before hearing an angel. (Acts 10:2-3)

Peter was praying before receiving a vision. (Acts 10:9)

The Spirit helps us in prayer. (Romans 8:26).

Christians pray in the Spirit. (Ephesians 6:18; Jude 1:20)

### **Directs through leadership body**

The Holy Spirit used various leaders in Acts to guide Christians: apostles, elders, deacons, prophets, and teachers.

Deacons: "Choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom." (Acts 6:3)

Paul and Barnabas appointed elders to lead in each church. (Acts 14:23)

Christians counted on “the apostles and elders” for guidance from the Spirit. (Acts 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23; 16:4)

The Jerusalem Council of apostles and elders issued a decision to include Gentiles without burdening them: “It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us.” (Acts 15:28)

### **Arranges events for his purposes**

Persecution scattered Christians to witness in new places: On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea

and Samaria... Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went. Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah there. (Acts 8:1-5) Now those who had been scattered by the persecution that broke out when Stephen was killed traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, spreading the word only among Jews. Some, however, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. (11:19-20)

Painful division between Paul and Barnabas resulted in more mission endeavors. (Acts 15:39-41) Holy Spirit led into witnessing opportunities through jail (Acts 16:25-34), bad rulers (Acts 22=26 ), and even shipwrecks (Acts 27-28).

### **Speaks to and through our spirit**

The Holy Spirit prompts thoughts, feelings, and instincts in our spirit.

Those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God... you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." **The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit** that we are God's children. (Romans 8:14-16)

The Spirit enlightens the eyes of our heart. (Ephesians 1:18)

The spirit of man is the lamp of the Lord. (Proverbs 20:27)

### **Grows wise, mature mind of Christ**

We have received the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us... we have the mind of Christ. (1 Corinthians 2)

The mind of the Spirit is life and peace... He who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit. (Romans 8)

Often the Spirit wants us to use our minds and follow a sensible plan. Paul usually traveled to cities based on plans he made. Once in a while, God sent a vision to redirect Paul somewhere Paul hadn't planned to go.

Paul made many decisions based on good sense: "I think it is necessary." (Philippinas 2:25) "We thought it best." (1 Thessalonians 3:1) "If it seems advisable." (1 Corinthians 16:4)

### **Guides "miraculously" as needed**

Miraculous guidance is sometimes given, but it is not promised or ordinary.

Although the Spirit usually guides in "ordinary" ways, but the Spirit will intervene in more striking, "miraculous" ways when the Spirit decides that such guidance is needed.

### **Miraculous**

- Signs
- Voices
- Visions
- Angels
- Prophecies

### **How Spirit leads**

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- Directs through leadership body
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