

LED AND EMPOWERED BY THE SPIRIT (Application)

In Sunday's message, we highlighted four keys to being led by the Spirit and experiencing his power. (1) We need to realize what an extraordinary gift we have received in the Spirit; (2) we need to be aware that we can effectively silence the Spirit's voice by failing to honor him and follow his lead; (3) we need to long for the ordinary works of the Spirit far more than we do the extraordinary works of the Spirit; and (4) we need to be open to the extraordinary ways the Spirit may move and work among us.

1. Why are each of these important for a balanced approach to the Holy Spirit?
2. Which one of these is most meaningful to you? Why?
3. What are some practical steps you can take to be more sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading in your life?

**THE STORY CONTINUES****LED BY THE SPIRIT | ACTS 16:6-15**

The Holy Spirit is the most misunderstood, frequently abused and often neglected person of the Trinity.

Many of us are so caught up in the spectacular works of the Spirit that we forget the more common but no less spectacular work of the Spirit. There are others of us that are so terrified by the thought that the Holy Spirit might lead us to do something crazy, like lift our hands, speak in tongues or be a bit expressive in our worship, that we are uncomfortable at the very mention of the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is a big deal in God's redemptive story. He was active with God in creation, and he is active in New Creation. It is through the Spirit that God is renewing and restoring his people. He is by far one of the most precious gifts that God has given us. Through his Spirit, Christ is more vitally present with us than he was with his disciples as they dined with him in the upper room or enjoyed casual conversation around a charcoal fire on the shores of Galilee.

The Holy Spirit is a big deal in Luke and Acts, as well. In his gospel, Luke is very careful to show us how vital the Holy Spirit was to the life and ministry of Jesus. In Acts, he shows us how vital the Holy Spirit is to the life and the ministry of the early church. It goes without saying, if the Spirit was vital in the life and ministry of Jesus and the early church, he is every bit as vital to us.

In Acts 16, we see the Holy Spirit leading Paul and his companions in some extraordinary, even perplexing ways, and we see him working in the heart of Lydia, in an ordinary but no less spectacular way.

EXTRAORDINARY GUIDANCE FROM THE SPIRIT (vv. 6-10)

⁶Paul 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.

⁷When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. ⁸So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas.

⁹During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." ¹⁰After 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.

1. We ordinarily receive guidance by cultivating our relationship with God through the word and prayer and applying biblical wisdom in the ordinary events of everyday life. How do we see Paul applying these principles in this passage?
2. When you read the words "having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia," what comes to mind?
3. How do you think the Holy Spirit kept Paul and his companions from preaching the word in the province of Asia?
4. Why do you think that the Holy Spirit kept Paul and his companions from preaching the word in the province of Asia?
5. What do you make of the fact that Luke does not take the time to give us the how or the why?
6. Why do you think Luke refers to the Holy Spirit in verse 6, and the Spirit of Jesus in verse 7?
7. What does this tell us about the nature of the Holy Spirit and the Trinity?
8. Why do you think God revealed his will to Paul and his companions in three separate stages—by twice preventing them from following through on their own plans and finally redirecting them through a vision?
9. Why do you think Paul consults his traveling companions before leaving for Macedonia?
10. What are some general principles we learn about God's guidance from this passage?

AN ORDINARY MOMENT WITH THE SPIRIT (vv. 11-15)

¹¹From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, and the next day we went on to Neapolis. ¹²From there we traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days.

¹³On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there.

¹⁴One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message.

¹⁵When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us.

1. Paul and his companions must have been initially surprised that God had guided them to Philippi. The setting is a huge break from the norm. There is not a significant Jewish population. There is no synagogue. Their initial audience is a handful of women. What do you think God is trying to teach them?
2. How had God worked in Lydia's life to prepare her for this moment?
3. How was God working in the moment?
4. How does the Holy Spirit enable us to initially respond to the gospel?
5. How does the Holy Spirit enable us to continue in the gospel?
6. What does this passage tell us about the ordinary work of the Spirit?
7. What are some other ways you might describe the ordinary work of the Holy Spirit?