



There is no question that the apostles were promised that the Holy Spirit would speak through them (Mark 13:11). There is also no question that the apostles were promised that the Holy Spirit would directly guide them (John 16:13). Yet, these promises were not to all believers—the means through which the Holy Spirit guides believers in general is through the word of God, the “sword of the Spirit” (Ephesians 6:17). The pattern of Scripture is that when the Holy Spirit did speak directly to believers it was in words, “which the Holy Spirit **speaks**” (1 Corinthians 2:13). Any strong inclination of the heart that does not follow this pattern cannot reliably be viewed as the guidance of the Holy Spirit.



things that will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me” (Acts 20:22-23). Here, once again, the Spirit used clear words declaring that “**chains**” and “tribulations” awaited Paul. This was clearly not strong feeling, it was communication that could be recorded, written down, and clearly understood.

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ISSUE

19.9

BULLETIN OF  
THE OLSEN  
PARK CHURCH  
OF CHRIST

# Faithful Sayings

February 26,  
2017



### Services

Sunday: 9:00 AM  
10:00 AM  
11:00 AM  
Wednesday: 7:00 PM

### Elders:

Pat Ledbetter  
Jeff Nunn

### Deacons:

Steve Dixon  
Ryan Ferguson  
Arend Gressley  
Ben Hight  
Blake McAlister  
Brady McAlister  
Walker McAnear  
Sam Nunn  
Lance Purcell  
Rusty Scott  
Justin Smiley  
Trevor Yontz

### Evangelist:

Kyle Pope

## When the Holy Spirit Speaks: Strong Feeling—or Words? By Kyle Pope

In our discussions with friends in the religious world, it is not uncommon to hear people claim that the Holy Spirit has led them to do or to say something. Many such people believe strongly that the Holy Spirit leads them in a direct manner, separate from the guidance found in the Bible. When questioned, in most cases, what they really mean by this is that they have felt a strong feeling within that led them to say or do something. It is always important to test all things by the standard of Scripture. On this issue, this is especially important, lest we find ourselves in the same position as the false prophets in the



days of Ezekiel, “who follow their own spirit and have seen nothing” (Ezekiel 13:3).

Are there times in Scripture when the Holy Spirit spoke to Christians through a strong feeling? As a test case we can survey the accounts in the New Testament in which we are told that the Holy Spirit spoke. As a record of the early church, and a history of the Holy Spirit’s work in the church, how does it describe the Spirit’s guidance to Christians?

There are six instances



in which such direct guidance is recorded. The first example relates to the preaching of Philip to the Ethiopian nobleman. When he saw this man in his chariot, Scripture tells us: “Then the Spirit said to Philip, ‘Go **near and overtake this chariot**’” (Acts 8:29). We notice that the Spirit’s communication to Philip was clear, concrete, and in the form of a complete sentence. A second example occurred when Peter saw the vision of the sheet lowered from heaven with animals in it. Scripture records: “While Peter thought about the vision, the Spirit said to him, ‘Behold, three men are seeking you. Arise therefore, go down and go with them, doubting **nothing; for I have sent them**’” (Acts 10:19-20). Here we see two complete sentences. One sentence expresses knowledge of things beyond Peter’s senses (i.e. there were three men). The second sentence commands certain behavior. These were not just vague feelings but clear revelations and instructions.

Two examples concern the prophet Agabus. The first reveals: “And in these days prophets came from Jerusalem to Antioch. Then one of them, named **Agabus, stood up and showed by the Spirit that there was going to be a great famine throughout all the world, which also happened in the days of Claudius Caesar**” (Acts 11:27-29). While this account does not reveal the specific words of the Spirit, the nature of the revelation indicates a great level of specificity. We note that the Spirit revealed to him there would be 1) “a famine”; 2) it would be “**great**”; and 3) it would span “throughout all the world.” The second came when Paul was returning to Jerusalem. The text records:



**And as we stayed many days, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. When he had come to us, he took Paul’s belt, bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus says the Holy Spirit, “So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles”** (Acts 21:10-12).

In this revelation there is not only a complete sentence but the command from the Spirit to the prophet to use a prop—Paul’s belt, to illustrate what would happen to him. We see this is much more than a strong motivation within the heart of Agabus. It is clear communication in words.

Two final examples both concern Paul. While in Antioch, we learn about prophets in the church in that city. Of these prophets, Scripture records: “As they

ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the **work to which I have called them**’” (Acts 13:2-3). Here the Spirit identifies men by name—“Barnabas and Saul.” Here the Holy Spirit commands their appointment for a specific work. These are words that were spoken, recorded, and understandable. A final example echoes what would be declared by Agabus. Paul relates: “And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the