



Lifeline
INTERNATIONAL
Proclaiming Truth, Providing Help.

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Following the Spirit in China

"They passed through the Phrygian and Galatian region, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia; and after they came to Mysia, they were trying to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them; and passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. A vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing and appealing to him, and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." Acts 16:6-9

On his second missionary journey, the apostle Paul and his team experienced the guidance of the Spirit as they spread the gospel.

We have also experienced this same guidance many times as we work in China to spread the gospel. By no means do we compare our mission with the importance of the work that the Apostle Paul accomplished but we do possess the same Spirit.

Much of the time the Spirit's guidance is providential, meaning we are not consciously aware of it but God is actively directing our steps. This is a constant reality for our teams when traveling and ministering in China. *(see the story on page 2)*

Other times hearing his voice and being sensitive to his movements are important for the success and protection of the work. We also experience this on a regular basis.

One night we were scheduled to visit a meeting of underground church workers. It was in progress at an apartment complex where city firemen were housed. **As we were walking to the area, the Holy Spirit said to me, "Turn around, no meeting tonight!"**



I immediately stopped in my tracks there in the middle of the sidewalk. My team and the group of local church leaders escorting me to the meeting turned around with puzzled looks on their faces wondering why I hesitated.

When I told them there would be no meeting tonight, they disagreed with me and made every attempt to persuade me that everything was safe and that there would be no trouble.

**The Spirit said to me,
"Turn around,
no meeting tonight!"**

The believers and workers were in high anticipation of our visit and the leaders were anxious to get us to the meeting. As the disagreement continued, my persistent refusal to continue walking became a frustration to them.

They continued to plead with me until a young worker came running toward us from the meeting just a few blocks away. **Breathlessly he informed us that the police had just arrived and were asking questions and taking names!**

On that note, the entire group turned on their heels and the leaders began tugging at my elbows in haste as we took up a very quick pace out of the area.

The believers at the meeting were perhaps verbally threatened by the authorities, but **if we had been present, they would have faced a heap of trouble. Meeting with foreigners is very illegal and strictly enforced.**

The lesson here is to remember the work we do is the Lord's ministry and it is to be done at the direction of His Spirit. Our role as His servants is to be sensitive, and obedient to His leading.

More leadings of the Spirit

Our team traveled deep into the southwest mountains of China to preach the Gospel. We climbed a mountain trail for an hour and a half to reach a minority village. The first person we met was a young man who I have since named Matthew. We spent many hours with him and three of his friends. (Mark, Luke and John). After a lengthy and lively discussion, it seemed we were not making any progress. We felt our time with them would be fruitless when suddenly they broke and reversed their opinions. Matthew agreed that he needed Jesus and the other three followed suit! **The Spirit's work was so sudden that we were taken by surprise.**

Years later we visited that village seeking to find and strengthen the believers. Upon entering the village an old man directed us to a Christian home that might give us some information. As we conversed with the young man who invited us in, we asked him how he got saved. He told us the story of a couple of foreigners who came years before and spent the afternoon with him!

It was then we realized that God had directed our paths straight to Matthew once again! He is now the Pastor of the church there! We spent many hours together rejoicing and recounting the day we first met and how he had received the Lord. We also received a first hand account of all that had taken place since that day.

After their conversion, two of the brothers borrowed money from friends to begin traveling to another city to receive bible training. **They evangelized their village and they won 50 to Jesus.** The house church grew and even sent out a missionary to another village for a year.

But trouble came and 16 police officers showed up to shut the illegal meetings down. **The authorities confiscated all bibles and literature and took the leaders to jail for a day.** They were threatened and ordered to disband. They were also forbidden to have any contact with foreigners.

This pressure caused some of the new believers to wither. It also brought persecution from the people of the village, which hindered evangelism efforts. **The Church was existing without contact from the outside and without supplies.**

Our reunion was an answer to their prayers. We immediately supplied a VCD player for the Church so they could receive teaching by CD. **We also established a secure supply line we call "the underground railroad". Bibles, supplies and correspondence began flowing to this village Church.** The Spirit had guided us and used us to be a source of encouragement to this pastor and church.

Personally



A happy reunion with Matthew!

Dear friends,

There is a little more to the story of the four young men we met in the mountains . . .

After we prayed with them to receive Christ, we continued to teach them about Jesus' life, death and resurrection.

*One of the fellows interrupted and asked, "Tell us, how long ago did this happen?" We confidently answered, "About 2000 years ago." Then with a puzzled look on his face he asked, "Why are we just now hearing about it? Why has someone not come before now?" Not a one of our team could answer. His sincere question tore our hearts wide open. It opened a wound we suffer each time we go to China. His question still affects me today. The answer is a simple and heart breaking one: **Because the laborers are few.***

This unforgettable story makes us so thankful for your faith and obedience to send us as missionaries and to help supply for those who don't have. We bless you for all that you do.

For those who have never heard,

Brother Bill