

Kootenai Communicator

May 2021

The monthly newsletter of Kootenai Community Church, Kootenai, Idaho

Important Dates <<<

May

- 3 Men's Fellowship
- 15 Ladies' Retreat
- 16 Windles at KCC for an update
- 17 Men's Fellowship
- 21-22 Equipping Conference

*Expounding the Scriptures, Exhorting the Saints,
Exalting the Savior*

Hearing the Voice of God Part 10: Spurgeon on Hearing God's Voice

by Jim Osman

Normally, this month's edition of the newsletter would include an article written by our upcoming conference speaker. The article would be intended to generate interest in the subject matter of this month's conference. No such promotion has been necessary for the Equipping Conference this year. The conference is sold out and we already have a number of people on the waiting list.

The following article is material that was originally going to be expanded into a chapter in my book, God Doesn't Whisper. I had to leave this material out, along with a couple others like it, lest the book become a work of daunting size, making it unappealing to the reader. Thankfully, the foreword provided a long and punchy quote from Spurgeon on this subject so I could at least feel that Spurgeon's take was well represented.

If you walked up to a fellow believer fifty years ago and said, "God spoke to me and revealed. . ." they would assume that you had been reading your Bible that morning. Today if you walk up to someone and say the same thing, a whole different sentiment is conveyed. Today it would be assumed that you heard a "still small voice" whisper in your ear, you got an "impression," or you "felt led" to do something. Oh, how the times are a-changing!

Unfortunately, "hearing from God" in modern evangelicalism has nothing to do with reading the Bible and understanding it. Instead, it has to do with a very subjective, personal, feelings-based practice of trying to hear God speak **apart from Scripture**.

It is my contention that this second, and very new and modern view is not only subjective, dangerous, and presumptuous, but also grossly unbiblical.

That is not to say that people in previous centuries never claimed to be led by impressions, nudgings, and feelings. There were many who did. However, this notion, which today is nearly a

sacrament among evangelicals, was historically frowned upon, warned against, and rejected as being quite contrary to the teaching of the Scriptures - which it is.

We are visiting this subject in order to analyze this teaching as addressed by Charles Spurgeon.

A Brief Overview of Spurgeon

Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-92) was England's best-known preacher for most of the second half of the nineteenth century. In 1854, just four years after his conversion, Spurgeon, then only twenty, became pastor of London's famed New Park Street Church (formerly pastored by the famous Baptist theologian John Gill).

Spurgeon is one of my favorite figures of church history. Known as the "Prince of Preachers," Spurgeon preached over 36,000 times during his pastoral ministry, often to crowds in excess of 10,000 people, in a day without electronic voice amplification!

According to Spurgeon expert Phil Johnson, Charles Spurgeon was a cessationist, meaning that he regarded the apostolic sign gifts as unique to the era of the formation of the New Testament. Spurgeon believed that the genuine gifts of tongues, healing, and miracles all ceased before the end of the Apostolic era.

Ironically, Spurgeon is often quoted by charismatics as someone sympathetic with their view on hearing the voice of God. This is because Spurgeon did from time to time act

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upon strong subjective impressions as if they were special revelatory messages from the Holy Spirit.

Although examples could be offered where Spurgeon acted on such impressions, whenever He discussed such things, he warned of the dangers of such a mystical approach to being led by God.

Some Quotes from Spurgeon

Likely you have crossed paths with folks who think that every spiritual idea that presents itself to their minds must be God speaking to them. They measure their spirituality by the number of such impressions that they receive and follow. If they don't race after some course of action, they think they are disobeying the voice of God. So, they follow after every still small voice and feeling *carte blanche*, as if it were a directive from God, because they believe it is.

I have known people to lay aside all sound doctrine, rational thinking, and Scripture itself to follow after what they believe God was telling them through "impressions." Spurgeon warned against this in sermon 2185: *"I hope that none of us will ever fall into the snare of following the guidance of impressions made upon us by texts which happen to come prominently before our minds. You have judgments, and you must not lay them aside to be guided by accidental impressions."*

Spurgeon was addressing the practice (which is pandemic among modern evangelicals) of seeing in Scripture some message customized for them which they think is mysteriously contained in the text. This personal message is somehow "given to them by the Holy Spirit" when it springs off the page. I had a friend tell me that he named his son a certain name because he was reading in the Old Testament and when he read that particular name, "The Holy Spirit told me that is what the child's name should be."

By what should we order our life? Strong impressions or Scripture? Spurgeon answered this in his eloquent and even humorous way in sermon 878. I have to confess that these next words from Spurgeon are among my favorites! If you are easily offended, please do us both a favor and stop reading right here. If you have thin skin, and you persist in reading, you have been warned.

"Some, I know, fall into a very vicious habit, which habit they excuse themselves - namely, that of ordering their footsteps according to impressions.

"Every now and then I meet with people whom I think to be rather weak in the head, who will journey from place to place and will perform follies by the gross under the belief that they are doing the will of God because some silly whim of their diseased brains is imagined to be an inspiration from above. [Note: I told you to stop reading if you were easily offended!] There are occasionally impressions of the Holy Spirit which guide men where no other guidance could have answered the end. I do not doubt the old story of the Quaker who was disturbed at night and could not sleep and was led to go to a person's house miles away and knock at the door just at the time when the inhabitant

was about to commit suicide—just in time to prevent the act."

In the same sermon Spurgeon confessed, *"I have been the subject of such impressions, myself, and have seen very singular results."* By "singular" Spurgeon meant, "extraordinary, remarkable, or exceptional." There are times when we act upon what is in our heart or mind because we feel strongly inclined to it (when not in violation of Scripture) and we find that God grants remarkable results.

I don't doubt that those who think God leads through impressions have themselves felt such strong leadings. As I have argued before, we all have feelings and thoughts come to our mind. The question is, "Am I instructed in Scripture to treat these impressions and feelings as God's revelation to me? Should I live by such impressions?"

Spurgeon answers, *"But to live by impressions is oftentimes to live the life of a fool and even to fall into downright rebellion against the revealed Word of God. Not your impressions, but that which is in this Bible must always guide you. 'To the Law and to the Testimony.' If it is not according to this Word, the impression comes not from God - it may proceed from Satan, or from your own distempered brain! Our prayer must be, 'Order my steps in Your Word.'"*

Common Sense over Impressions

I believe that God *can* and sometimes *does* providentially direct our steps by the ordering of suggestive providences. Since Scripture teaches that God is sovereign, we must conclude that His unseen hand is directing all things. Sometimes this is felt and sometimes this is seen. We can believe this, which I do, without falling victim to the folly of believing that this means God is whispering directives in our ears.

All these strong providences and suggestive circumstances must be tested by common sense at least and certainly tested by the Word of Truth. Spurgeon explains this:

"It needs a deliberate and judicious reflection to distinguish between the actual and apparent in professedly preternatural intimations, and if opposed to Scripture and common sense, we must neither believe in them nor obey them. The precious gift of reason is not to be ignored; we are not to be drifted hither and thither by every wayward impulse of a fickle mind, nor are we to be led into evil by superstitious impressions; these are misuses of a great truth, a murderous use of most useful edged tools. But notwithstanding all the folly of hair-brained rant, we believe that the unseen hand may be at times assuredly felt by gracious souls, and the mysterious power which guided the minds of the seers of old may, even to this day, sensibly overshadow reverent spirits. We would speak discreetly, but we dare say no less."

Spurgeon's Balanced Perspective

Spurgeon did not "despise" those who received impressions and did say, *"Such strong impressions are not to be despised, and I have no doubt that highly spiritual minds do become like a photographer's sensitive plate, and do receive impressions. What another man may be a fool for talking of, such*

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Sunday School <<<

3rd- and 4th-Grade Class: Melody Lynch and Sara Joy Rasor, teachers; Jenny Stevens and Emily Barba, assistants

The 3rd- and 4th-grade class is a fun and energetic group! We usually have around 12 kids each week. The kids are continuing to earn Lego blocks and/or Pop Beads for attending class, bringing their Bibles, and reciting memory verses. We recently started the book of Acts and learned about the coming of the Holy Spirit and the beginning of the Church. We will continue to see the spread of the gospel through Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the end of the earth.



Sunday School begins at 9:30 a.m.

>>> *Missionary Moment— Marty and Jeanette Windle*

Hello -

Having received our first vaccinations, we are celebrating spring by heading west this coming week for seven weeks of visiting churches and family, above all, Marty's parents and siblings in western MT. Please pray with us for our 1998 camper van, that it will keep chugging along safely and steadily over some eight thousand total land miles. After a bout of flu (thankfully not Covid), Marty is still struggling with his voice, so please pray that God touch his vocal cords while he is speaking.

On the home front, our oldest, Michael, is doing better, if not yet ready to return to his position at Johns Hopkins, so will be housesitting. Our younger son, Steve, who was a combat medic with the Marines, is graduating in the field of experimental physics and just took a post-grad position at the University of Maryland. Our middle son, Josh, and wife, Marie, had their second child, Rose, just before Christmas. At three months old, she battled a rare deadly strand of infant botulism. We and her parents are so grateful for God's intervention and the incredible medical team at UC Davis children's hospital in Sacramento. Please continue to pray for Michael's complete healing, Steve's move and long-term direction, and continued health for baby Rose.

Meanwhile, we'd asked for prayer for our ministry team in Myanmar. If you've followed the news, you know things haven't gotten easier. One family member was arrested but ultimately released while our field director went through a scare of his own (forgive vagueness as can't give details). They have witnessed horrific scenes of arrest, tortured bodies dumped in the street, and protesters shot.

Because of turmoil, both our orphanage and Bible Institute have been on lock-down in BCM Myanmar's main church compound in the capital city since the coup started. This means that our field leadership are feeding 54 children and 34 students onsite as well as trying to provide for 9 children's ministry workers around the city and 18 BCM church-planting pastors. Thanks to some gifts toward this emergency, it was possible to purchase two thousand kilos of rice, 160 kilos of oil, and other supplies, but this is an ongoing crisis (if you are interested in donating to this need specifically, go to www.bcmintl.org).

Please pray for safety and provision for this courageous team and the nation of Myanmar as they continue to face this crisis. Ten years of democracy saw so much advance for God's kingdom in Myanmar. Pray that freedom to preach the gospel will not be reversed.

Finally, we've mentioned how Covid rages on in places vaccines haven't reached. This week our BCM Ukraine ministry leader, Timothy Dymchenko, lost his battle with Covid (see his ministry as church planter and with refugees). Daily we hear cries from Bolivia, Peru, and other ministry fields of church and family members dying. Our BCM India headquarters personnel Lawrence also died this week unexpectedly from a heart attack. Each is a painful loss to family and friends but also the ministries they spearheaded. Please pray for God's comfort and provision to the families of brothers Timothy and Lawrence and others continuing to deal with this pandemic.

As always, for ongoing daily news of what God is doing right now across BCM ministry fields, check out BCM International's Facebook page. And may God's rich blessing be on your life, family, and home as we move into this New Year 2021.

Serving together with you in God's Kingdom,
Marty & Jeanette



Marty and Jeanette Windle from BCM International will be here Sunday, May 16, for a missionary update.

>>>Garden of Readin'

The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment



PURITAN PAPERBACKS | JEREMIAH BURROUGHS

The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment by Jeremiah Burroughs

For over four hundred years, this book by an English Puritan preacher has brought peace and contentment to believers during what he describes as “sad and sinking times,” based on his deep dive into Paul’s words in Philippians 4:13. This reprint retains all the complex, beautiful language of the original.

*Please contact Jenny Leo (208-610-2520)
about donations or any library-related matter*



Women's Ministry <<<

2021 Ladies' Retreat

May 15

8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.



Just for this year
we will be meeting at

Kootenai Community Church
Featuring author and speaker

Martha Peace

Martha Peace will be bringing us four sessions to encourage and strengthen our knowledge of who God is and His character.

Session 1:

Martha's Personal Testimony

Session 2:

The Goodness of God

Session 3:

The Mercy of God

Session 4:

The Wisdom of God



More information and registration
available at the Welcome Table.

>>>Cocolalla Lake Bible Camp

Please visit the camp website at clbcamp.org for more details.

SPRING SCRAPBOOK RETREAT

May 7-8

Contact the camp for more details.

Call (208) 263-3912 or check out their website at

www.clbcamp.org



Student Ministries <<<



MAY

5 Bible Studies @ KCC, 7:30-9 p.m.

12 Youth Group @ KCC, 7-9 p.m.

19 Bible Studies @ KCC, 7:30-9 p.m.

26 Youth Group @ KCC, 7-9 p.m.

Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things which you have not known.

Jeremiah 33:3



>>>Kootenai Thunder

kootenai thunder.com

For the most current information, please check our website and Facebook page.

Consider joining Thunder as a ministry opportunity if you have any coaching experience or just enjoy sports. We can always use the help!

THUNDER NEWS: Our end-of-the-year sports banquet is May 1 for our players and their families. Be in prayer that the gospel will be shared clearly with all the families represented. One of our goals as the Thunder program is to make sure the families have heard the gospel during their time with the Thunder.

BASKETBALL: Our junior high season went great! The boys team took third in the tournament and the girls team ended their season playing in the third-place match, losing, but only after an exciting game. That's a wrap for the year. We will be back at it after the summer, with volleyball and soccer as our fall sports. For more information, go to our website or Facebook.

Kootenai Classifieds >>>

HOMEGROWN VEGGIES

Now: red and yellow onions

For prices call Andrea Kinne 208-265-0102



ALL NATURAL GROUND BEEF 90% LEAN

\$4.00/lb.

Contact Tim Shields 208-946-1256 or cow.chaser1@yahoo.com

To have your items listed in this section, please get the information to Lisa Slippy by the 15th of the month prior to publication. Email her at lisaslippy@gmail.com

HOUSING NEEDED: If anyone has a house to sell or rent, there is a Christian family moving to Sandpoint from Georgia in June that are looking for housing for their family and having a difficult time finding anything. Jordan and Jessica Rocke will be moving here for Jordan to work at Litehouse. They have three children (one girl and two boys), so looking for at least a three-bedroom home. Please contact Dave Rich if you have something.

>>>Adventure Club



Adventure Club! The End of our First Year!

In spite of COVID-19, not advertising our club outside of our own church, and shutting down for the month of December, Adventure Club has been AMAZING this year! We've had 58 children attend, and we have 38 leaders signed up and trained. We have a very good sense of what works well and what needs tweaked for Year 2. Clubbers and Leaders alike have enjoyed every single Friday night, and many verses have been memorized. We're excited to end Year 1 with a bang on May 28, with a Review Night and Round-Up Night!

May Club Nights

- 7 Club Night
- 14 Club Night
- 21 No Club (Conference)
- 28 Review Night & Round-Up Night!

SUMMER BREAK . . . AND LEADER TRAINING!

AC takes a break during June and July, giving leaders and clubbers a chance to relax and refresh. Leader Training will take place in July; we'll let you know the date soon. If you are interested in joining the Adventure Club Team, please talk to Dave & Diane Rich.

Questions about Adventure Club? Please talk to Dave & Diane Rich. You can reach them on a Sunday morning in person, or call (208) 265-2997, or email dianeerich@gmail.com.

Week of Adventure . . . Coming soon in August!

Kids! You'll get to enjoy AC 5 nights in 1 week in August, when we host our Week of Adventure! We'll be playing games outside, and having a craft time each night! We'll also have a lot more kids attending, since we'll be mailing a flyer to everyone in Kootenai and Ponderay! It's going to be quite an Adventure!

Church News <<<

PHOTOS PLEASE! As our church body grows, it is nice to have a resource for new folks to get to know us. Please upload a recent picture of you and your family into our online church directory, or you can email secretary@kootenaichurch.org. Also, we have upgraded the directory to include an elders and deacons page so that you can get to know who the leaders are at KCC.



MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Monday, May 3
Monday, May 17
6:30 p.m., at KCC



KCC EQUIPPING CONFERENCE **The Life and Ministry of Charles Spurgeon**

Featuring author and speaker
Phil Johnson

May 21-22, 2021



Phil is the executive director of Grace to You. He has been closely associated with John MacArthur since 1981 and edits most of Pastor MacArthur's major books. Phil also founded several popular websites including The Spurgeon Archive, The Hall of Church History, and the Pyromaniacs blog. He is an ordained elder and pastor at Grace Community Church.

COST
Through March 31
Single \$50
Couple/Family \$90 (Ages 12+)
April 1-30
Single \$60
Couple/Family \$100
At the door:
Single \$85
Couple/Family \$135

men may truly speak of, for God does sometimes reveal his will in this way."

I would agree with that assessment with the caveat that the "spiritual mind" is the one controlled not by impressions **but by the Word of God**. He who is governed by the Scripture is thus governed by the Spirit. The one governed by the Spirit will order his steps according to the Word of God, not impressions. His heart and mind will be so influenced by Scripture that he will find himself proving and doing the perfect will of God (Romans 12:1-2). Therefore, it would be the Word which impresses the mind and not some additional revelation. Such a "Word-directed" Holy-Spirit-controlled man or woman will find themselves knowing and doing the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God. God's will in a given situation is brought to light as the person, submitted to the Scripture, walks in the Spirit.

Apparently trying to strike a balance, earlier in the same sermon Spurgeon said, *"Sometime, too, but rarely, God guides us by very vivid impressions. I have seen so much of people who have been impressed this way, and that way, and the other way, that I do not believe in impressions except in certain cases. I was once in conversation with two friends, one of whom was guided by his judgment, while the other was swayed by impressions, and I could not help noting that the man who was guided by impressions was, as such people always will be, 'unstable as water.' If I am impressed in one way one day, I may be impressed in another way the next day, so impressions are unreliable guides. There was a young man, who was impressed with the idea that he ought to preach for me one Lord's day; but as I was not impressed to let him do so, it stood over, and probably will continue to stand over for some little time. He had no gifts of speech, but he thought his impression was quite sufficient. When I receive a similar impression, the revelation will be a proper one, and you will have the pleasure of listening to his voice, but certainly not before that."*

For Spurgeon, the tendency of some to be guided by impressions was something that needed constant reproof and warning. Sometimes following such feelings and impressions ended up producing, in the words of Spurgeon "singular results." In other words, it worked out OK. But far from being a rank pragmatist, Spurgeon recognized that under the "guidance of the Spirit" in "impressions" people committed "*follies by the gross*."

One more comment concerning the above anecdote: Spurgeon said, *"I was not impressed to let him do so. . . He had no gifts of speech, but he thought his impression was sufficient."* I ask you, "What do you do in such a situation if your only guide is what one 'feels led' or impressed to do?" Who was right? This young man apparently felt that God wanted Spurgeon to hand over his pulpit. Spurgeon refused. Was Spurgeon disobeying God's revealed will? Perhaps the young man's impression was a strong one. If God speaks through such means, and such impressions can be trusted and taken as God's voice to us, what are we to do when two of God's children (in this case, Spurgeon and the young man) receive differing impressions?

What if I told you that I feel very "impressed" and that "God was leading me to tell you to cash in all your retirement accounts, in-

vestments and land holdings and give the money to the building fund"? How do you respond to such "leading" on my behalf?

You may say, "I don't feel led to do that."

But if feelings and impressions are to be our guide, then your only basis for not following "my leading" is that you don't have the same leading. But of course, I could just suggest that you aren't spiritual enough to be hearing the voice of God and there must be something wrong with you if you can't sense His leading.

However, if Scripture becomes our **only** guide for knowing and doing God's will, then you can confidently say to me, "Jim, the Bible doesn't tell me that that is what I am to do. I am not led by my impressions and I am certainly not led by your impressions. You are deceived at best and a fruitcake at worst!" And you would be right!

A Final Word from Spurgeon

There is an obvious deceptive danger in judging your duty by impressions. Spurgeon comments in Sermon 3263, *"Others, too, judge of their duty by impressions. 'If I feel it impressed upon my mind,' says one, 'I shall do, it.' Does God command you to do it? This is the proper question. If he does, you should make haste, whether it is impressed upon your mind or not; but if there be no command to that effect, or rather, if it diverges from the line of God's statutes, and needs apology or explanation, hold your hand, for though you have ten thousand impressions, yet must you never dare to go by them. It is a dangerous thing for us to make the whims of our brain instead of the clear precepts of God, the guide of our moral actions. 'To the law and to the testimony,' - this is the lamp that shows the Christian true light; be this your chart, be this your compass; but as to impressions, and whims, and fancies, and I know not what beside which some have taken, - these are more wreckers lights that will entice you on the rocks. Hold fast to the Word of God, and nothing else; whoever he shall be that shall guide you otherwise, close your ears to him. If at any time, through infirmity or weakness, I should teach you anything which is contrary to this Book, cast it from you, hurl it away as chaff is driven from the wheat; if it be mine and not my Master's, cast it away. Though you love me, though I may have been the means of your conversion to God, think no more of what I say than of the very strangers in the street, if it be not consistent with the teachings of the Most High. Our guide is his written Word, let us keep to this."*

Indeed! Let us keep to this.



Kootenai Community Church

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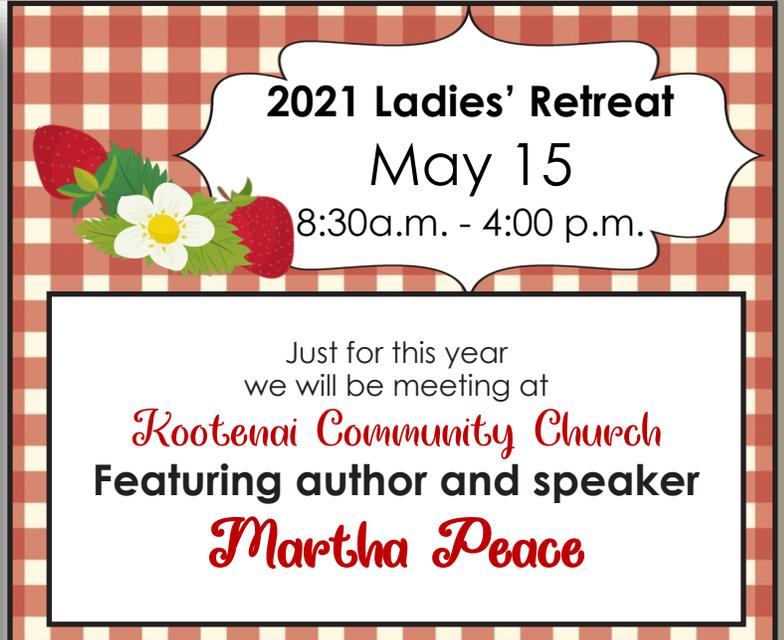


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Featuring author and speaker
Martha Peace

KCC CHURCH CAMPOUT
JULY 21-24
(details later)

