



## Feeling Out of Sorts

August 22, 2018

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Sometimes things feel off. They just don't feel right. We say they're off-kilter. I had that sensation on a recent morning as I left my bedroom. Walking down the hall, I felt unbalanced, as if I were moving with one foot on a raised edge. The sensation continued into the kitchen. Things just felt off.

It wasn't until I grabbed my car keys and purse that I diagnosed my disequilibrium: I was wearing two different shoes. Both were slip-ons, but I had one black and one tan, with different sole heights. Coincidentally, they did match my outfit, and I considered momentarily whether to attempt a new fashion statement. I swiftly decided, however, that my wobbliness outweighed my desire to be a trend-setter. Replacing one of the shoes instantly made me feel right again with the world.

When that sensation settles on us, we should check obvious sources for our unease. We might be experiencing symptoms of a medical condition, or we've forgotten something on the calendar, or we might just have mismatching shoes. If we're lucky, we'll find a quick fix.

Sometimes, however, our discomfort defies quick fixes. Nothing is obvious, but we still feel out of sorts. I've come to wonder in those moments whether the Holy Spirit is at work.



The Holy Spirit is unnerving. It moves around us in ways that are unsettling. It causes us to move in ways we'd rather avoid. Recall that it was the Spirit that led Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted (Matt. 4:1) or, in Mark, "*drove him out* into the wilderness." (Mark 1:12). We read of the Holy Spirit descending "like a dove" on Jesus at his baptism. (e.g., Matt. 3:14). Have you ever seen a dove landing? It goes talons first, sometimes with frantic flapping, not at all what we depict in our artwork. We need to gird our loins, as it were, before

blithely asking for the Holy Spirit to act.

When we are unnerved or unsettled, we can try to ignore the feeling. Or, we can fixate on our personal unease. Instead, I've begun to ask myself: what am I to learn or see or struggle with in these moments when things feel off? Rather than focus on my sense of discomfort or attempt to ignore the feeling, I try to become more attuned to what is happening around me. It's not my natural reaction, so it must be intentional.

It would be arrogance to suggest this gives me the inside scoop on the workings of the Holy Spirit, but I hope it will open me to a glimpse of it. I pray we are being unsettled for a purpose greater than we can imagine.