

## Acts 15:36 – 16:10 Paul's Second Missionary Journey

### Background/Introduction:

- Paul and Barnabas had just **returned from Jerusalem** to meet with Peter, James and the other apostles to settle the dispute from “Judaizers” or “those that belonged to the party of the Pharisees,” that Gentiles must be circumcised according to the Law of Moses, “become Jews,” before they could receive salvation.
  - **This was a BIG deal. Satan** sought to introduce **Jesus + circumcision**. If this had been successful, the spread of the gospel to the Gentiles would have all but been stopped. Therefore, this was a monumental decision for the church of Christ.
  - At the Council of Jerusalem, Peter first weighs in saying, I was the first to share the gospel with the Gentiles and God bore witness by giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did with us. So there is no distinction between the us Jews and the Gentiles.
  - James then weighs in and says that even the prophets declared that the Gentiles who are called by God will be saved and quotes the prophet Amos.
  - Therefore we should not “put God to the test” by requiring the Gentiles to follow the Law that neither we nor our fathers are able to bear. And he says, it is my judgement that they should only abstain from idols, sexual immorality, animals that have been strangled and blood. For these guidelines would honor God and maintain unity between the Jews and the Gentile Christians.
  - So they sent Judas and Silas to accompany Paul and Barnabas back to Antioch to bring the message that **Gentiles** who receive salvation **do not have to be circumcised** according the Law and become **identified as Jews** to enter the church.
  - Paul and Barnabas are in Antioch of Syria and we pick up with Paul and Silas as they begin the 2<sup>nd</sup> missionary journey.
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**Acts 15:7-9** <sup>7</sup> And after there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, “Brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. <sup>8</sup> And God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them, by giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us, <sup>9</sup> and he made no distinction between us and them, having cleansed their hearts by faith.

**Acts 15:13 - 20** “Brothers, listen to me. <sup>14</sup> Simeon - Peter has related how God first visited the Gentiles, to take from them a people for his name. <sup>15</sup> And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written,

<sup>16</sup> “After this I will return,  
and I will rebuild the tent of David that has fallen;  
I will rebuild its ruins,  
and I will restore it,  
<sup>17</sup> that the remnant<sup>[b]</sup> of mankind may seek the Lord,  
and all the Gentiles who are called by my name,  
says the Lord, who makes these things <sup>18</sup> known from of old.’

<sup>19</sup> Therefore my judgment is that we should not trouble those of the Gentiles who turn to God, <sup>20</sup> but should write to them to abstain from the things polluted by idols, and from sexual immorality, and from what has been strangled, and from blood.

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**Acts 15:36** <sup>36</sup> And after some days Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us return and visit the brothers in every city where we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they are.”

- Paul could not sit still in any single place for too long and there was always another place to go and soul to win. Paul had an itch that had to be scratched. He had a **passion for taking the gospel** to the Gentiles. Anytime he saw a ship sailing out to sea or a mountain to cross Paul

would think about the people he could reach on the other side. **Do I have this passion for reaching people?** - All the people we encounter, Discount Tire – What is their story? Who will share with them?

- **Paul** and Barnabas planned to **retrace their trip** from Cyprus, to Perga, to Antioch of Pisidia to the cities of Iconium, Lystra and Derbe.
- Paul wanted to return to see **how those whom he taught** and received the gospel were faring. Those whom he crossed the seas, climbed the mountains, was rejected, stoned and left for dead to save.
- Without a doubt Paul was the greatest **evangelist** and completely changed the western world, but his success is attributed to his **discipleship**. He goes back to the cities to check in on his brothers in Christ. To encourage them, teach them about the results of the Jerusalem Council, correct false doctrine and train the leadership to build the churches. These are the seeds that replicated and literally did the work to spread the gospel and **turn the western world upside down**.

**Acts 15:37-41** <sup>37</sup> Now Barnabas wanted to take with them John called Mark. <sup>38</sup> But Paul thought best not to take with them one who had **withdrawn from them** in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work. <sup>39</sup> And there arose a **sharp disagreement**, so that they separated from each other. Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus, <sup>40</sup> but Paul chose Silas and departed, having been **commended by the brothers** to the grace of the Lord. <sup>41</sup> And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

- We do not know exactly **why John Mark left them in Pamphylia**. Possibly the realities of missionary life involving conflicts with those they encountered, sickness or the coming Taurus mountains that they were about to traverse to Antioch of Pisidia was too treacherous. What we do know is that Paul was not happy and considered his departure as **desertion**.

- Barnabas who was John Mark's cousin saw it differently and wanted to give him another chance.
- **Sharp disagreement** – Greek paraxusmos means **violent action or emotion**. This was an intense conflict with heated emotions.
- While God did not cause the disagreement, he used it to accomplish His purposes.
  - There were now **two missionary teams** instead of one.
  - Silas brought to Paul's ministry some ingredients that Barnabas did not have. He was a **Roman citizen** (16:37). He was a **prophet** (15:32). He probably **spoke Greek** (compare 15:22, 32). He was from the church in Jerusalem- Great if you are proclaiming the message of salvation by grace given by the church. Though **Barnabas was a great loss, Silas was a great gain.**
  - God perfectly ordained the **right man for the job**.
- Notice the change of plans. Barnabas and John Mark seem to be hustled off to Cyprus while the scripture tells us in verse 39 that Paul chooses Silas were "**commended by the brothers**". They received a commendation from the church in Antioch.
- Paul and Silas head north over land in the opposite direction. Interesting to note Cyprus was the hometown of Barnabas and Paul goes through Syria and Cilicia where his hometown Tarsus was located.
- Verse 41 says, they were "strengthening the churches." **Discipleship**. They were building up the faith of those who previously believed so they would **replicate**, share the gospel with others and spread Christianity across their region.
- Paul and Barnabas had planned to go back to Galatia by the same route, but because of the disagreement they went in opposite directions. Paul headed north by land in the opposite direction of Barnabas.

**Acts 16:1** Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek.

- They passed through the mountains called the **Cilician gates** and arrive in Lystra.
- The Holy Spirit had it all planned out. Upon their arrival they meet Timothy. **God wanted to add another member to their team.** God was putting the right people in place at the right time for the effective growth of His church.
- Luke tells us that Timothy was a son of a Jewish woman and we are first introduced to Eunice.

**Mothers Day:** What do we know about Timothy's mother?

- She was married to a Greek.
- She had become a believer in Christ likely during Paul's first missionary journey.
- Paul commends **Timothy's mother Eunice** along with Timothy's **grandmother Lois** for their sincere faith in Christ Jesus.

**2 Timothy 1:5** I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well.

**2 Timothy 3:15** and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

- Julie and I both had mothers and grandmothers that had sincere faith. I was confirmed in the Episcopal church and later baptized in the Baptist church. My mother made it a priority to be involved in our church, Young Life, Fellowship of Christian Athletes and made got a second job so that my sister and I could attend Kanakuk Kamps.
- When Julie's parents moved to Rochester her grandmother researched churches, they visited and the pastor visited their home and led her mother and father to Christ. **Julie's mother** read the entire series of Children's Bible stories and laid a very strong foundation of biblical understanding.

- As we look back on the important role that Eunice and Lois played in training up Timothy, those of us who had mothers and grandmothers that nurtured our faith we can be thankful.
- For mothers and grandmothers here today, we can look to Eunice and Lois as examples to **exemplify our sincere faith** that we live out in front of our children and be intentional **about training our children in the Scriptures**.
- We have been shaped by our Mothers and grandmothers and YOU as mothers and grandmothers are **so important in shaping the future of your kids to develop the next generation of Timothy's**.
- So today, we are thankful to our mothers and grandmothers.

**Acts 16:2-3** <sup>2</sup>He was **well spoken of** by the brothers at Lystra and Iconium. <sup>3</sup>Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him, and he took him and **circumcised him** because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that **his father was a Greek**.

What do we know about Timothy?

- He was a young man. 16-25 years old.
- He had a good reputation among the Christian communities in Lystra and Iconium – active in the church and known for his character and commitment to Christ.
- Timothy was from a Roman province, having a Jewish mother and a Greek father, he had a unique background **perfect for the ministry to Jews and Greeks**. Paul saw something in Timothy and knew he would be good for apostolic ministry. He was the perfect teammate for Paul and Silas and came at the perfect time. Had Paul and Barnabas not split, Timothy would not have been with Paul to help with his ministry in Galatia.

**Timothy was a disciple of Paul.**

- He was a traveling companion with Paul to Phillipi, Thessalonica, Berea, Corinth, Ephesus and possibly Rome.

- Timothy was trusted by Paul to deliver his letters to the churches in Corinth, Phillipi, Colossae, and Thessalonica. He often stayed at the churches to strengthen and encourage the churches in their faith.
- Paul writes 2 letters to Timothy addressing him as his **“true child in the faith and beloved son”**
- He trained Timothy in the doctrines of the faith, how to deal with false doctrines and to train the elders overseeing the churches. To the Philippians he says, Timothy is of kindred spirit having a genuine concern for the welfare of the church. Paul describes Timothy to be like a child serving his father.
- Timothy served as the bishop in Ephesus and was martyred around 97 AD

### **So I ask myself, who is your Timothy?**

- Do you have someone that you have “adopted” to help them grow in their faith?
- Do you have someone that you are building up in order that they can replicate the gospel and grow others in their faith?
- Was there someone in your life that took you on as their disciple and invested in your life? – I found a letter. If you have someone that has encouraged you, write them a letter and encourage them.
- I can think of a lot more people that I have disciplined to be **good business people** than I have disciplined to be **Christ followers** capable of replicating the gospel and building other people up.
- As I enter the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, this will be a goal of mine.

### **Timothy’s father:**

- Because his father was a Greek he was not circumcised, but **Paul circumcised him.**
  - Paul **just returned from the Council** of Jerusalem with the specific message that you did **not need to be circumcised** or

**become a Jew** to receive salvation and they were carrying this message to the churches.

- **Why would Paul insist that Timothy be circumcised?** It was not about salvation or a theological statement, but about a **practical matter** of being effective in their ministry among the Jews. Paul says in his letter to the Corinthians:

**1 Corinthians 9:20** <sup>20</sup>To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law.

- Paul did what was necessary and practical to win Jews to Christ. They would be teaching Jewish people in Lysra, Derbe and Iconium and it was important that Timothy be circumcised as a practical matter as being a Jew in order to win Jews. But it was not a change of doctrine established at the Jerusalem Council.
- In Paul's letter to the Galatians, we see Paul vehemently forbid Titus who was a Greek from being circumcised, sticking to the doctrine established by the Jerusalem Council

### **Timothy joins the ministry with Paul and Silas.**

- Think about the last time Eunice and Lois saw Paul. Remember the Jews chased Paul to Lystra.

**Acts 14:19** <sup>19</sup>But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having persuaded the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead.

- “Hey mom, how about letting your son come and join me?” In 1 Timothy 1 Paul reminds young Timothy:

**1 Timothy 1:14** <sup>14</sup>Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you.



- It tells us that Timothy was commissioned to the ministry by prophecy and the laying on of hands by the elders.
- Paul led Timothy to Christ and strengthened him up to where he could join him to lead others to Christ.
- Timothy received a word of prophecy, a word of encouragement and was commended by the elders.

**The evangelical church** has done a great job in sharing the gospel, but they ~~have done a terrible job~~ **need improvement mentoring, discipling and training up new believers to lead others**. Paul was the greatest evangelist, but he changed the world for Christ because he was also the greatest disciple maker next to Jesus.

**Acts 16:4-5** <sup>4</sup>As they went on their way through the cities, they delivered to them for observance the decisions that had been reached by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem. <sup>5</sup>So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and they increased in numbers daily.

- Paul, Silas and Timothy delivered the decisions made at the Council of Jerusalem.
  - Gentiles do not have to be circumcised or become a Jew first to receive salvation.
  - To **fit in culturally** Gentiles should abstain from things polluted by **idols**, the **blood** from strangled animals and **sexual immorality**. **This was not a requirement for their salvation, but a way to bring unity among the brothers.**
  - And it was successful. They increased in numbers daily.

#### **Acts 16:6-10**

**Acts 16:6-8** <sup>6</sup>And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. <sup>7</sup>And when they had come up to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them. <sup>8</sup>So, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas.

- **Show Map.** – Paul, Silas and Timothy were making their way back through Lystra, Derbe and Iconium strengthening the churches.
- They tried to head south and west into Asia but were **“forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia.”** This is modern day Turkey.
- So they traverse across to **Mysia** and tried to go north to Bithynia to minister to the prosperous cities around the Black Sea, **“But the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them.”**
- So they go to the only open place that they had not been forbidden to the coast and end up at **Troas**.
- The Scripture does not tell us how the Spirit closed the doors to the places that Paul wanted to journey. But Paul knew he was called to take the gospel to the Gentiles and he continued forward.

**Proverbs 16:9** The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps.

- Isaiah tells how the Lord will be faithful to lead the Israelites to Jerusalem.

**Isaiah 30:21** <sup>21</sup> And your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, “This is the way, walk in it,” when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left.

- We don’t know how the Spirit of Jesus blocked their journey, but it was very clear that he directed their steps to edge of the sea at Troas. They had nowhere else to go.
- **When the Lord closes doors – Keep moving.** “I don’t know the will of God so I am going to do nothing.” **No, keep pressing forward** looking for open doors.
- **S, what happened to Paul?**

**Acts 16:9-10** <sup>9</sup> And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing there, urging him and saying, **“Come over to Macedonia** and help us.” <sup>10</sup> And when Paul<sup>[c]</sup> had seen the vision, **immediately we** sought to go on into Macedonia, concluding that God had called **us** to preach the gospel to them.

- Do you know what great cities were in Macedonia? **Philippi, Thessalonica, Corinth, and Athens.** God did not tell him where He wanted Paul and his team to go until **they could go no more and reached the waters edge.** And **then He opened the door to Europe.** No longer was Christianity confined to the east, it was going to reach Europe.
- You want to know **how to live by faith?** That's how. Just keep moving forward in faith. Closed doors can be as clear as open doors. When you finally hit a dead end God will often open a door and direct your steps.
- And you think Paul hesitated? **Verse 10:** "After he had seen the vision, **immediately** we sought to go on into Macedonia, **concluding** that God had called us to preach the gospel to them."
- When someone is placed on my heart and I feel the call to reach out, do I CONCLUDE that God has called us to preach the gospel to them?
- **Europe was calling** to Paul to come and help them.
- This was one of the **great turning points in all of history.** Paul brought the gospel from Asia to Europe. And from Europe the gospel continued to spread west to us.
- Notice what also happens in verse 10. The pronouns shift from "they" to "we" and "us." It was here that Luke joined Paul and his companions.

## So What were the things that the Lord spoke to me?

- **Disagreements to deliverance.** The Lord can use disappointments, frustrations and sharp disagreements as was the case between Paul and Barnabas to accomplish His purposes. He doubled his missionary teams, brought the right people together for the greatest impact for the kingdom. He can use any and all circumstances for His purposes?  
Romans 8:28
- **A Mother's Faith.** On Mother's Day we can be thankful for our moms and grandmothers who exemplified a life following the Lord and who trained us up and gave us a foundation of truth in the Scriptures. We can follow their example as moms and grandmothers to shape the next generation of Timothys in our children and grandchildren.
- **Who is your Timothy?** Who are you sharing your faith with and pouring your life into so that they can grow in their faith and lead others to Christ?
- **What is your Macedonian calling?** Keep following your calling. When doors close, keep pressing forward, keep seeking the Lord. It may take you to your Troas, your the end of the road, before He calls you to your Macedonia, to your Europe and change the world.
- **Write a letter of encouragement.** Make the time to write a letter of thanks to those who have poured into you.

## Communion:

- Paul, Silas, Timothy, Barnabas and Mark – These were men chosen by God to preach the gospel and make disciples.
- These men invested their lives to proclaim Jesus as the messiah.
- The fruit of their ministry and the power of the Holy Spirit has led to our own salvation.
- We take this bread and wine in remembrance of Christ's body and blood that was given to us that our sins may be covered.