

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

TIMOTHY (ACTS 16:1-5) ON THE ROAD AGAIN

Paul and Silas start to visit the new churches in reverse order of the first trip. Returning to the hostile area of Lystra, Paul meets a convert named Timothy.

- Tim's dad was Greek, but his mom was Jewish. Jewish law stated you take your mother's religion, but Tim's dad dominated their home.

PEOPLE LIKED THIS YOUNG MAN

Tim was evidently a result of the 1st trip and Luke records that the "brothers and sisters at Lystra and Iconium spoke highly of him."

- Most scholars believe Tim's mom was a single parent because his dad had died. So, we have a **fatherless, "mixed" child from a non-Christian background that is to become a key minister in the faith.**

YOU WANT TO DO WHAT?

Paul saw the leadership potential in Timothy and invited this 16-18 year old to join him, but first something uncomfortable had to happen.

- The small Jewish community in Lystra would have thought Tim was rejecting his Jewish heritage and wouldn't have respected an uncircumcised Jew.

BUT WAIT, DIDN'T WE JUST SETTLE THIS?

Chap. 15 is all about a decision to not impose OT customs on people, yet Paul is having this Jewish young man circumcised. Why?

- The circumcision had nothing to do with Tim's salvation, but **in order to minister to the Jews, he had to make a sacrifice** to be respected by them. Tim would've been shut down in every city by the Jews.

GREAT PROGRESS REQUIRES GREAT SACRIFICE

Could Tim have been saved and remained a faithful Christian in Lystra? Sure, but God had bigger plans for this obedient servant: a **major role in Paul's missionary trips, mentioned in 6 epistles and the focus of two, and a pastor in Ephesus.**

- **If one plans to do anything great, it will cost them a great amount!**

THE RESULT WENT BEYOND TIMOTHY

Tim's sacrifice didn't just make him great; it extended to countless lives! Luke records, "the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers."

- **Our sacrifice is ultimately for the Kingdom! Though God honors the individual, our eternal impact on others is much more satisfying!**

ROUND 2 (ACTS 16:6-10) ROADBLOCKS

As the team moved northwest through Turkey, they came to the province of Asia (not to be confused with modern Asia), but v6 says, "they had been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia."

- This was because God intended for Paul to head to a city called Troas and didn't want him held up before he got there.

HOW DID THE SPIRIT COMMUNICATE THIS?

Luke doesn't tell us how, but it could have been a vision, an inner understanding of God's will (that still small voice), or even a prophetic Christian along the way.

- **God tries to communicate with us, but unfortunately our relationship with Him is often weak and we're too distracted or "busy" to hear what He has to say.**

"THE SPIRIT OF JESUS DIDN'T ALLOW THEM"

God shuts more doors until Paul has a vision in the city of Troas "in which a Macedonian man was standing and pleading with him, 'Cross over and help us!'"

- This event is called the **Macedonian Call**. In **obedience**, the team abandons plans to head north and heads east towards Macedonia.

THIS WAS A MONUMENTAL OPEN DOOR

Troas lies on the coast of Asia Minor (Turkey) with the Aegean Sea separating the Middle East and Europe. God now wanted the team to take the gospel into Greece and a whole other continent. The team would go first to Macedonia (north Greece).

AN AREA WITH IMMENSE HISTORY

Macedonia was named after Greek King Philip of Macedon (359 B.C.) and became a Roman province in 148 B.C. This is where Aristotle came to tutor Alexander the Great after the death of Plato. Fun fact: Philippi is also the hometown of Luke, the author of Acts, who is about to join the team.

LET'S DO THIS

After receiving the vision from God, Paul and his team waste no time in sailing across the Aegean Sea to Macedonia. The purpose of the mission is simple and clear—to preach the gospel to the Greeks in their own country.

- **Notice that when the direction was clear, no time is wasted in doing God's will.** Also notice Luke says "we."

LYDIA (ACTS 16:11-15) THE TRIP TO PHILIPPI WAS INTERESTING

The journey from Troas (Turkey) to Philippi (Macedonia) was about 130 miles. The team stopped twice, once on the island of Samothrace and once in Neapolis.

- In Samothrace they worshipped the god Cabiri. They also called the island "Poseidon's Island" after the vengeful Olympian god.

"...AND FROM THERE TO PHILIPPI"

Philippi would have been an exciting city for Paul, also from a large city. This was a sophisticated city known for its school of medicine. Luke shows pride in his hometown by mentioning that it is "a leading city of the district of Macedonia."

THE TEAM CHILLED A COUPLE DAYS

Greece was a whole new ball game, and the missionary team "stayed in the city for several days" before they began to minister.

- This may be a subtle reminder for us to **be considerate and aware of our surroundings. Of course we present the gospel, but it must be delivered well with love and consideration.**

CHURCH WITHOUT WALLS (V13)

In cities where there were no Jewish synagogues, faithful Jews would worship near water out in the open so other Jews would know how to find them. Apparently this gathering by the water was all women who'd come to pray.

- Synagogues could only start if 10 men were willing to form them.

A GOD-FEARING WOMAN LISTENED IN

The team joined the women and talked about spiritual matters. A woman named Lydia was listening to the conversation that was obviously about the gospel of Christ, and God "opened her heart to respond to what Paul was saying."

- **When we are open-minded and receptive, God's light cuts through our darkness and opens our hearts.**

LYDIA WAS AN INTERESTING WOMAN

The first convert in Europe was a Gentile woman that worshipped with the Jewish women in her community. She was also a successful businesswoman that had garnered fame for dying clothes royal purple.

- We see a similar story to Cornelius as she brought the men back to witness to her household and baptize.

SHE "URGED" THEM TO STAY AT HER HOUSE

After Lydia's conversion, she makes her hospitality a conditional demonstration of gratitude. Her home is believed to be the location of the first church in Philippi.

- The Philippian church was known for its generosity and support of Paul (Phil.4), and Lydia was known as a huge contributor to the missionaries.

ALL KINDS OF PEOPLE

- We have **Timothy**: a multicultural young man from a nonreligious family whose father had died. We also have **Lydia**: a well-known, wealthy, and successful Greek businesswoman.
- We see more examples of the diversity of the Kingdom of God! **God calls all people who will be receptive and open-minded!**

THE RESPONSE TO SALVATION

- Genuine faith has a response. With Tim we see **sacrifice** and the call to go **the extra mile in order to reach others** with the gospel.
- With Lydia we see how **hospitality** and **gratitude** are shown to others because of what God has done for us.
- **We are not saved by our works, but works are a natural response to salvation!**

IT SHOULD GO BEYOND THE INDIVIDUAL

- We also see that **we are called to serve, share**, and contribute with the resources God has entrusted to us to **steward**.
- In a narcissistic, selfish, and failing society, **the Christian must learn to think beyond themselves** if we are to **positively impact the world** and **honor our Savior!**