

# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JULY 5TH, 2026 // BOOK OF ACTS

## TIMOTHY (ACTS 16:1–5)

### TIMOTHY'S LINEAGE

As Paul and Silas make their way west from Antioch and Cilicia, they end up in Lystra (where Paul and Barnabas were called gods). There they met a disciple named Timothy, the son of a Jewish mom who was now a Christian, and a non-believing Greek father (probably deceased). Rabbinic law said in this case the child would be considered Jewish.

### TIMOTHY'S CHARACTER

Timothy, his mom, and his grandmother were probably converted during Paul's first missionary journey (2 Timothy 1:5). Timothy had so grown in the faith that others saw God at work in him and spoke highly of him.

- **Does our passion for Jesus shine in such a way that others see our good deeds and glorify our Lord** (Matthew 5:16)?

### TIMOTHY'S CALLING

Paul also saw the work of God in Timothy and wanted him as a ministry partner. Because Timothy was considered Jewish but had not been circumcised, his condition would be a hindrance to their ministry to Jews. So, Paul circumcised him.

- The Jews would have expected an uncircumcised Gentile. An uncircumcised Jew would have been offensive.

### NOT A GOSPEL ISSUE

Some think Paul's decision to circumcise Tim goes against the Jerusalem Council and added a work to the gospel. Tim's circumcision had to do with a cultural issue that would be a hindrance to the Jews **hearing the gospel** from him, not to how one **responds** to the gospel and is saved.

- **The gospel's demands should be the only stumbling block, not cultural barriers.**

### RIGHT DOCTRINE, RIGHT PRACTICE, CHURCH GROWTH

The Church has gotten the gospel right. They have also removed cultural barriers that would keep fellowship from happening within multiethnic congregations. As Paul and Silas report these things to the churches, the churches grow both **doctrinally** and **numerically**.

- **Healthy churches proclaim the gospel and disciple converts until Jesus returns.**

## GUIDING (ACTS 16:6–10)

### THE HOLY SPIRIT LEADS

Leaving Lystra with Silas and Timothy, Paul wanted to go west into Asia, but the Holy Spirit forbade them. So, they went north aiming to go to Bithynia (modern-day northern Turkey) but the Spirit of Jesus (Holy Spirit) didn't allow them. Why? How? Luke doesn't say.

- **While the Holy Spirit primarily leads us through the Word, He leads in other ways.**

### HE USES VISIONS, TOO

Traveling through northern Mysia, they went to the port city of Troas where Paul had a vision that a Macedonian man was pleading with him to come and help them. In this instance, the Holy Spirit made it clear where they were to go next.

- **We must be careful interpreting dreams and visions. The filter of God's Word keeps us from going against God's known will.**

### LUKE JOINS THE TEAM

In v. 10, we see the first of the famous "we" verses in Acts. Scholars believe these are passages in which Luke is with Paul. While Paul saw the vision, the team is in agreement that God wants them to go to Macedonia.

- **Not only is the Word a great filter for discerning God's will, godly friends and advisors should be sought out, too.**

## LYDIA (ACTS 16:11–15)

### PHILIPPI

The team sailed across the Aegean Sea to bring the gospel to Europe. They traveled from the seaport of Neapolis to Philippi, which had a rich history stretching all the way back to Philip, the father of Alexander the Great. It was now a Roman colony with many retired Roman soldiers living there. Paul started many churches in Roman colonies.

### TO THE JEWS FIRST

Ten Jewish men were required to establish a synagogue. However, there may have been Gentile God-fearers who could establish a place of prayer. Paul found one such place near a river with women in attendance. The men sat down and taught from the OT that Jesus is the Messiah.

- **God is always at work if we have the desire to see and the will to obey.**

## WEALTHY BUT NEEDY

One of the women was Lydia. Thyatira was the center of the purple dye trade and Lydia was a wealthy dealer in Philippi. She was also a God-fearer like Cornelius (Acts 10). While she believed in God, she wasn't a convert to Jesus.

- People in our society acknowledge God all the time, but don't worship Jesus. **God is great but we only come to Him through Jesus.**

### GOD AT WORK

Some plant, some water, but God brings the growth (1 Corinthians 3:6). Paul had a role to play: proclaiming the gospel. But only God can change a heart. Lydia had a role to play as well: she had to respond in repentance and faith.

- God uses imperfect vessels like us to share the greatest news of all. **He takes the pressure off us by doing the saving.**

### BAPTIZED

Once again, the response to trusting in Jesus as Lord and Savior is baptism. When Lydia and her household were baptized, these must have been family members and servants who were able to also profess faith in Jesus.

- **Believer's baptism is the norm in the New Testament. Baptism comes after one professes faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.**

### OPEN HEART, OPEN HOME

Hospitality is one of the beautiful expressions of the body of Christ. Lydia had a home that could host these men who had led her to Jesus. Table fellowship in homes with other Believers is an incredibly kind and beneficial way to enjoy our common bond in Jesus.

- **Hospitality isn't about the size of our homes but the size of our hearts.**

## PRISON (ACTS 16:16–24)

### THE DEVIL KNOWS GOD

A demonized girl recognized who this missionary team was, "servants of the Most High God." This girl was a profit-making tool in the hands of her owners. Using an evil spirit, she would offer advice and tell the future for a price. It seems this spirit wanted to wed the work of God through the missionary team to the work of the girl.

- **Knowing God isn't submitting to Him.**

### THE TRUE GOD'S POWER ON DISPLAY

Paul eventually tired of the evil spirit's outbursts. He also felt compassion for the girl and cast the demon out. Instead of celebrating a soul set free, her owners could only lament their loss of income and wanted Paul and Silas to pay.

- **Not everyone will celebrate freedom in Jesus. Some outsiders will only lament what they've lost in a former partner in sin.**

### SUFFERING FOR JESUS' NAME

The slave girl's owners rally the city into a frenzy over Paul and Silas. They go after their ethnicity and their beliefs. None of the accusations are true, but mobs never care. The men are stripped, flogged severely, and thrown into the inner prison with their feet in stocks.

- **Temporary pain is nothing in exchange for eternal life, healing, and peace.**

## DON'T BUILD BARRIERS TO THE GOSPEL

- Paul's circumcision of Timothy wasn't to add a work to the gospel. Timothy was already a Christian. For the Jews, a non-circumcised Jewish man wouldn't be worthy of giving a hearing to.
- If obeying non-sinful cultural practices opens up a door to tell people about Jesus, **then obey the culture.**

## THE HOLY SPIRIT IS WORKING AND LEADING

- Jesus left us the Holy Spirit to lead, guide, and direct us. **Because He is at work, we need to ask for His help and expect He will answer.**
- **The Holy Spirit primarily works through the Bible** but can work in many other ways, both miraculous and mundane (open doors, closed doors for instance).

## JESUS MAKES ALL THINGS NEW

- While Lydia and the slave girl were from opposite sides of the street, they both shared the same problem: they needed a Savior.
- Some will welcome the changes that Jesus brings and some will despise them.
- Although Jesus is making all things new, all things aren't new yet. **We must prepare to be celebrated and condemned for Him.**