

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JULY 4TH-5TH, 2026 // THE BOOK OF ACTS

TIMOTHY (ACTS 16:1-5)

PAUL AND SILAS MEET TIMOTHY

Paul and Silas return to Lystra and Derbe and meet Timothy, a young Believer who likely came to faith during Paul's first missionary journey. Known for his faith and character, Paul invites Timothy to join the mission.

- **Faithfulness in the small things opens the door for greater opportunities.**

TIMOTHY'S CIRCUMCISION

Timothy joins Paul on his missionary journey. Because of Timothy's Jewish background, Paul has him circumcised—not for salvation, but to remove an unnecessary barrier so more people, specifically Jews, would hear the gospel.

- **Hold tightly to biblical truth. Hold loosely to personal preferences.**

A HEALTHY, GROWING CHURCH

Paul and his team encourage the churches and share the decisions from the Jerusalem Council. The Believers are strengthened in their faith, remain united in the gospel, and grow daily in numbers.

- **Focus on faithfulness, and trust God with the growth.**

DIRECTION (ACTS 16:6-10)

CLOSED DOORS

Paul wanted to preach in Asia, but the Holy Spirit said, "Not yet." He then tried to go to Bithynia, but God closed that door as well.

- God wasn't rejecting Paul—He was redirecting him. **Sometimes God's greatest guidance comes through closed doors.**

THE MACEDONIAN VISION

In Troas, God makes His direction clear. Through a vision, Paul is called to Macedonia, leading the gospel into Europe for the very first time. Paul had plans for a few cities, but God had a greater mission in mind.

- Our plans may be "good," but **God's plans are always better.**

LUKE JOINS THE TEAM

The shift from "they" to "we" in verse 10 shows that Luke joined Paul's missionary team. God closed two doors to bring the right people together and lead them to Macedonia, to continue sharing the gospel.

- God not only directs our steps, **He also brings the right people into our lives.**

LYDIA (ACTS 16:11-15)

PAUL ARRIVES IN PHILIPPI

Paul and his team cross the sea into Europe and arrive in Philippi. Since there wasn't a Jewish synagogue in the city, they go outside the city gates to a "place of prayer" by the river, where people had gathered to seek God.

- We don't have to cross an ocean to be on mission, **we just need to be intentional.**

SUCCESSFUL BUSINESSWOMAN

Among those gathered was Lydia, a successful businesswoman who sold expensive purple cloth. Though she was wealthy and respected, she was still searching for God.

- Her success couldn't satisfy the **deepest need of her heart; only Jesus will satisfy!**

"THE LORD OPENED HER HEART... "

God was already at work in Lydia's heart before Paul ever spoke. As Paul shared the gospel, the Lord opened Lydia's heart. She saw her need for Jesus, and she surrendered.

- We are called to **love people, pray for them, and point them to Jesus—then trust God to do what only He can do.**

LYDIA'S HOSPITALITY

Lydia's faith changed the way she lived. She was baptized, shared the gospel with her household, and opened her home to Paul and his team. Later, Paul would write about the generosity of the church in Philippi.

- Lydia used **everything God had given her to help others experience God's love.**

IMPRISONED (ACTS 16:16-24)

SLAVE GIRL

As Paul and his team continue their ministry, they meet a young slave girl who is controlled by an evil spirit. She follows them for many days, announcing who they are. Although her words are true, her insight is not of God.

- **Don't believe every voice. Test everything by God's Word.**

PAUL WAS GREATLY ANNOYED

After many days, Paul commands the evil spirit to leave the girl in the name of Jesus. By Christ's authority, the demon immediately leaves. Paul refuses to let anything distract from the gospel or the power of Jesus.

- **Whatever has you in bondage, Christ is able to set you free.**

ANGRY OWNERS

The girl's owners do not rejoice over her freedom. They mourn the loss of their profits, revealing that they loved money more than they loved people.

- **Every person is made in the image of God.** Do we genuinely love people, or do we just love what we can get out of people?

BEATEN AND ARRESTED

The girl's owners falsely accuse Paul and Silas. A hostile crowd quickly turns against them, and they are beaten, arrested, and thrown into prison.

- **Following Jesus doesn't mean a life free from trials. But He promises to be with us through every trial.**

ARE WE FAITHFUL? TIMOTHY'S EXAMPLE

- Are we faithful with where God has us today? Timothy was faithful where he was, and God gave him more responsibilities.
- Are we willing to lay down our preferences? Don't let our preferences become barriers to the gospel. **Hold tightly to biblical truth. Hold loosely to personal preference.**

DO WE TRUST GOD? PAUL'S EXAMPLE

- Are we seeking to hear from God? Are we ready to obey what He tells us?
- Do we trust God's timing? Do we trust that God knows what is best for us?
- Sometimes God's greatest guidance comes through closed doors. **Even when doors close, keep in step with the Spirit.**

DO WE LOVE PEOPLE? LYDIA'S EXAMPLE

- Lydia experienced success in the world. But success in this world will never fully satisfy us. **Only Jesus can fully satisfy.**
- Lydia's conversion reminds us to pray for people, be intentional, and point them to Jesus. God is the One who saves, not us.
- We are blessed to be a blessing to others.

FOLLOWING JESUS CHANGES EVERYTHING

- The slave girl was double bound but experienced freedom in Christ. Jesus still sets people free. Do we want freedom?
- Following Jesus doesn't mean a perfect life. But it does mean **a life full of joy, contentment, love, hope, and peace regardless of our circumstances.**