



Acts Chapter 16

Theme of Acts: The Holy Spirit and the Birth of the Church

Personal Reflection

Complete this section in one sitting or little by little during the week. Begin with prayer, inviting the Holy Spirit into your time. Spending time in the Bible, studying the original intent, meaning and cultural context helps you to understand how it applies to you now.

Further Study

Complete on your own or with your small group.

Personal Reflection

Song for the week: Reasons to Praise - Cory Asbury

Song links: <https://youtu.be/ofQyrWcDJxA?si=wkCCBKIVokD94VEE>

Read Acts 16 Click on any Bible verse in the study to read it or use your own Bible.

Luke continued writing about Paul's journey, this second missionary journey was Silas and lasted from 49-52 AD.

Barnabas went another way after the two had a strong disagreement about John Mark who had left during the first journey. Later the relationship between Paul and John Mark was healed. "A divine call does not exclude human friction and difficulty with other believers, or the responsibility to address both (Life w God Bible)." *Optional, read Acts 15:36-41, Acts 13:13, Colossians 4:10*

Consider a time when you had friction with another believer. How did you take responsibility to heal any rift caused by the friction? If you did not, consider what you could have done so that you are prepared for the next time friction or difficulty with another believer occurs.

"The beginning of Paul's second missionary journey lasted three years and covered about two thousand miles. Paul visited the Greek cities to which he addressed letters: Philippi, Thessalonica, Corinth, Ephesus. (Life with God Bible)" Paul also went back to some of the places from his first trip. He went to Derbe, where Paul met no recorded opposition, and then to Lystra, the place where the people thought he and Barnabas were Zeus and Hermes, where they turned on him, stoned him, and left him for dead.

Has God ever called you back to a hard situation? Or to have another conversation with someone who you were in a disagreement with? If so, how did you know it was the Holy Spirit directing you? What confirmed for you that it was God, not your own desire to appease or smooth something over?

Paul was seldom without a partner, or several people, when he was telling others of Jesus. His partners included Barnabas, Silas and Luke. He also trained younger men including John Mark, Timothy and Apollo.

Silas was a Hellenistic Jew and a Roman citizen. Paul considered him a faithful brother. When Paul wrote to the church in Thessalonians, he co authored the letter with Silas. Paul also mentioned Silas

in his letter to the church in Corinth. (Hellenistic: a Jew who lived outside of Jerusalem, who had adopted some Greek cultures and ideas). *Optional, read Acts 16:37, 1 Peter 5:12, 1 Thessalonians 1:1, 2 Thessalonians 1:1, 2 Corinthians 1:19*

In Lystra, Paul met Timothy, the same disciple to whom Paul wrote 1 and 2 Timothy. The believers in both Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him. As Timothy is mentioned as a disciple, it is possible that he came to belief in Jesus during Paul's first missionary journey to Lystra.

Paul referred to him as his "true son in the faith." He encouraged Timothy 12 years later, "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity." As he was young 12 years later, he must have been very young when in Lystra! *Optional, read Romans 16:21, 1 Timothy 1:2-4, 1 Timothy 4:12*

Who are you partnering with to tell others about Jesus?

Who are you building into who is younger than you in either their faith or their age?

How are you intentionally building these relationships?

We do not know how old Timothy was, but we know he was young. When was a time when someone who was under the age of 25 - or under the age of 15 or the age of 10 - was an example to you? What did you learn from them?

Timothy's father was Greek and most likely not circumcised or Timothy would have been as well. His mom, Eunice, and grandmother, Lois, were Jewish and had sincere faith and had taught Timothy the Old Testament and Law since he was an infant. His father most likely would not have been circumcised otherwise Timothy would have been. His "culturally mixed family prepared him for work in Greek cities. Like Paul, Timothy exemplifies God's economy, in which no experience is wasted (Life with God Bible)." *Optional, read 2 Timothy 1:5, 2 Timothy 3:14-15*

While people often remember what Paul wrote, some miss that Timothy co authored 2 Corinthians, Philippians, Colossians and 1 Thessalonians. *Optional, read 2 Corinthians 1:1, Phillipians 1:1, Colossians 1:1-2, 1 Thessalonians 1:1, 2 Thessalonians 1:1, Phillipians 1:1*

Pastor Frank taught us that while we see things as subtractions, God often is doing multiplication. What in your life did you see as a wasted experience or a hurtful experience that God redeemed and used for His purpose?

Paul was delivering the message from the Jerusalem council which said the decision was clear; people did not have to become Jewish and live by the law of Moses to become a Christian; they did not need to be circumcised. They did have to come under the law of love. Yet Paul circumcised Timothy. What reasons may Paul have had for doing this?

Women would go to the water to gather water and bring it home. Preaching to the women at the river, “Paul transcended his own cultural barriers and founded the first European church among women. Its leader was clearly Lydia, to whose house church the Philippian letter may have been sent (Life with God Bible).” Paul’s part was to preach but God opened Lydia’s heart. “A God-fearer like Cornelius, she was an independent businesswoman, a dealer in the purple cloth worn by the Roman nobility (Life with God Bible).” Lydia was the first recorded convert in Europe.

Read John 4:6-29 and Acts 16:13-15. What similarities are in both stories?

What do these stories tell you about God’s view of women and women in the church?

Next Luke recorded of their meeting a female who was a slave and had a demon in her who knew the truth of Jesus and was shouting it. After days of her shouting, Paul became annoyed and in the name of Jesus, commanded the demon to come out of her just as Jesus had commanded 7 demons to come out of Mary Magdalene. *Optional, read Luke 8:1-3*

The woman in Acts 16:16-21 was being exploited for money. Her masters only cared about her financial worth. Her owners said that Paul and his companions were practicing “customs that are not lawful for us as Romans. Religions were either legal or illegal under Roman law. Judaism was legal; Christianity was not (Life with God Bible).” Paul and Silas were beaten and jailed.

Doing the right thing is not always easy. Paul freed the woman from demons but it cost him - he and Silas were beaten and jailed. Has there ever been a time when doing the right thing for God or helping someone cost you something? If so, write about it.

The female who was a slave was treated two ways. Those who owned her used her. Paul was annoyed but consider that with the demons leaving her, she was set free. It could be argued to have been the opposite of using - it was loving. Has there ever been a time you felt used? If so, how would it have felt to have been set free from it?

In jail, Paul and Silas prayed and sang hymns to God. Their response turned their attention to God and was a testimony to the jailers and other prisoners. An earthquake freed them but they remained. In their remaining, the jailer and his family were saved.

When we are going through rough times it can be hard to praise God. What reminds you to praise God even in the hard?

If we see a way out, we may be quick to take it. What helps you know when to leave the hard? If God is calling you to stay awhile longer, how do you know when your part is complete?

Putting it into practice:

Take some time this week to listen to hymns and sing them to God. Notice what praise does in your spirit and how it draws you to Him.

Further Study

“After leaving the prison they went to Lydia's home. As did Peter, when Paul is released from prison, he seeks the fellowship of believers (Life with God Bible).” Paul sought out community. A community God provided.

What has God given you this week? How has God shown up for you?

How has community at One Hope been a provision for you?

The relationship between Paul and Timothy teaches us

1. the value in friendships between people of different ages
2. ministry is stronger with the diversity of age
3. mentorship is a blessing
4. the value of spiritual families
5. God provides for us through relationships

Considering what Paul and Timothy's relationship can teach us, what is one area of friendship that you would like to invest in? What steps can you put in place to accomplish a growing relationship?

Luke changed the pronoun from “they” to “we” in Troas. Therefore it is possible that this is where Luke joined Paul in his missionary journey. *Optional, read Acts 16:8-10*

The Holy Spirit somehow prevented Paul and those with him from going to Asia. “Paul's vision indicated God directed the missionary advance into Europe (Life with God Bible).” Traveling to Macedonia Greece, there were on a new continent, in a Roman colony.

Sometimes God closes doors and sometimes He opens them. It can be confusing and hard when doors are closed or God says no. When was a time God closed a door to you? Looking back, what did God have in store for you instead?

Prayer

Spend time praying as a group for One Hope and your small group. If you feel comfortable, share prayer requests and pray for each other specifically.

Follow Up

Is there anything from this week's personal reflection time which you would like to discuss more with your small group?