

Acts 15:36-41

“And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do. 37 And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark. 38 But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work. 39 And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed to Cyprus; 40 And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God. 41 And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.”

Introduction

[Audio version: <http://resources.ccphilly.org/SPM612>]

“We have come through the Jerusalem conference, Acts chapter 15, where Paul and Barnabas and others came up to Jerusalem because there was a dispute in this new Church in regards to whether the Gentiles that were being saved needed to be circumcised or keep the law of Moses. And as this group gathered in Jerusalem, there were believing Pharisees who were insisting that these Gentiles that were coming in needed to be Jewish before they could really be saved. And we understand part of that, again, they thought *‘They can’t just live in some licentious lifestyle like they’ve lived all along, if they’re coming to the Jewish Messiah certainly there needs to be changes.’* And there did, and this new Church was working through those issues. Peter then spoke and said ***‘Why are you laying this unnecessary burden upon them that neither we nor our fathers were able to bear, we can’t put the Gentiles under the law, they’re saved by faith, even as we.’*** Then Barnabas and Paul spoke up and shared the miraculous signs that God performed amongst the Gentiles, confirming their message to the Gentiles, that God was working miraculously, he was approving of the Gospel that

they were preaching. And then James stood up and challenged them all, and said **'Look, it shouldn't be any surprise to us, the prophets have told us that the Gentiles would be gathered into the Kingdom, this is not news, it's something we should have been prepared for.'** And then as they prayed and sought the Lord, they sent a letter to the Gentile churches saying **'It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us,'** I love that, **'that we lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things,'** and asked them **'to abstain from things strangled, from blood, from fornication, from idolatry,'** he said, **'if you keep yourself from these things you do well.'** And then Paul says in Galatians **'they also exhorted them to remember the poor, which thing we were more than willing to do, it was on our hearts to do that anyway.'** And as they sent that letter from Jerusalem back to Antioch, they sent it with Silas and Barsabas, who were notable men in Jerusalem, just the wisdom of the apostles, that only if they just sent a letter with Paul and Barnabas, it could be interpreted by some as being disingenuous. So they sent Silas who was a prophet and respected amongst the leaders in Jerusalem, and Barsabas to go with them. And they came to Antioch and stayed a good while with them, and the church in Antioch, of course, rejoiced that they didn't have to come under the Jewish law to follow Christ. But it says that Silas was pleased to stay there, he remained in Antioch ministering there to the church. So we have a great church, Barnabas, Paul, Silas, they're continually teaching and preaching, it says, and the church is being built up.

Paul Decides To Go Visit & Edify The New Churches God Raised Up Through Him

A Great Contention Takes Place Between Paul & Barnabas

Verse 36 says, **chapter 15, verse 36,** **"And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do."** **'Let's go to the territories,'** would have been Cyprus, Pathos, the cities there into Phrygia, Perga, Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Derbe, Lystra where all these new churches have

started, **'let's go and see how these fledgling churches are doing.'** **"And Barnabas"** then in **verse 37** **"determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark."** his nephew. **"But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work."** (verse 38) So, Barnabas says **'Alright, great idea, let's go, and let's take John Mark with us,'** and Paul said **'No way, we were in a difficult situation, Pamphylia was an area where there were robbers,'** historians tell us that there was typhoid raging at this time, some feel Paul contracted in that area, and he said **'When we needed him, he bailed on us, and he went back, you know, it's not a good idea, I don't want to take him back to the work.'** **"And the contention"** **verse 39,** **"was so sharp between them, that they"** Paul and Barnabas **"departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus; and Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God."** (verses 39-40) now that's sad in some ways. Now look, the contention was so sharp, the Greek says **"it was heated, it was hot"** they were yelling at each other, it was a heated contention. That does me some good, by the way, to think that apostles can fight and argue like the rest of us, you know. Here are two guys, no doubt, who both thought they knew the leading of the Spirit, and they're banging heads. Who was right? I'm convinced they were both right. Barnabas is *"the son of consolation,"* he was the perfect person to take John Mark and restore him. Paul was not. Paul was cut from a different cloth, Paul wanted to press onward, he didn't have time, he was all business, a pragmatist, and Silas the prophet would go with him, and the missionary endeavors would be doubled, it would end up to be a blessing. But it's interesting, and it's sad in some ways, because Barnabas was the one who initially brought Saul of Tarsus to Jerusalem and introduced him to the apostles, and convinced them that he was to be received, that he was a brother. Barnabas is the one who went to Tarsus and found Paul and brought him back to Antioch, and had been used by the Lord in Paul's ministry in a huge way, and they'd been together these years, and now the contention between them is so sharp they're going to go in different directions. Now, John Mark ends up to be a significant person. Barnabas passes off the scene here in the Book of Acts, we don't hear of him anymore. He doesn't pass off the scene in Church history, but the history we're given in the Scripture, he fades away in this verse. In 1st Peter, chapter 5, we hear Peter speaking of John Mark, who Peter

ended up taking with him, and again Peter must have been good medicine for John Mark, because Peter had denied the Lord, and no doubt was able to encourage John Mark in his failing. But Peter ends his first Epistle by saying ***“the church that is at Babylon, elect together with you, saluteth you and so doth Markus,”*** Peter says, ***“my son.”*** So he had endeared himself to the apostle Peter, he will write the Gospel of Mark, which I love, great, fast-moving account of Christ, and no doubt most of that under Peter’s tutelage, and then led of the Spirit he writes the Gospel of Mark. Paul, at the end of his life, in 2nd Timothy will say this in regards to Mark, he says ***“Only Luke is with me,” 2nd Timothy 4:11, “take Mark and bring him with thee, for he is profitable unto me for the ministry.”*** So there was reconciliation and restoration. We’re not sure how long it took. Paul seems to me, a personality that could be cantankerous and stubborn. That was a weakness and a strength, in his life no doubt he was a man who was determined to live out his life for the cause of Christ. But it’s interesting to see them here, come to odds over whether to take John Mark with them. ***‘The contention, it says, was so great they departed asunder one from another,’ “and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed to Cyprus; and Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.” (verses 39b-41)***

Acts 16:1-15

“Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father *was* a Greek: 2 which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. 3 Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek. 4 And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem. 5 And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily. 6 Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, 7 after they were

come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not. 8 And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas. 9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; there stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. 10 And after he had seen the vision, immediately endeavored to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them. 11 Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next *day* to Neapolis; 12 and from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, *and* a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days. 13 And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted *thither*. 14 And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard *us*: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. 15 And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought *us*, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide *there*. And she constrained us.”

Introduction: Start Of Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey

Now we come to the 2nd missionary journey. Barnabas will take John Mark and go to Cyprus, Cyprus was his home, it was the island that he came from, familiar territory to Barnabas, it was a wise decision for Barnabas, he takes shipping and takes a boat with John Mark to the island of Cyprus. Paul determines on the 2nd missionary journey to take a different route, and to go overland. Matt, I think we're just going to throw that up and leave that there [see https://www.bible-history.com/Pauls_Second_Mission_Map/] through the rest of the study, if you want to get an idea here of what's going on. Where is Antioch? There is Cyprus, you see that Barnabas and Mark take a ship to Cyprus. Paul goes overland, no doubt stopping at Tarsus, his hometown, here it is. And then he will go from there to Derbe, to Lystra, then to Iconium, then all the

way back up here to Pisidian Antioch, which is not the Antioch he started from, and Paul then wanted to go into Asia, from this direction, to Ephesus, to Miletus, but he was forbidden of the Spirit to do that, and then he wanted to go to Bithynia, and if he'd had come up here, there is Byzantium, which is Istanbul today, which was a huge city, but he was forbidden of the Spirit to go to Bithynia and go into this area, so he will be led to Troas, we'll follow that along here, just so you don't feel cheated. Here's Antioch [of Syria] where they begin, instead of taking a ship and going to Cyprus which he did on the first missionary journey, that's where Barnabas and John Mark go, Paul goes overland this time, stops in Tarsus, his own hometown, no doubt from there to Derbe, to Lystra, to Iconium, and then to Pisidian Antioch. The main Roman road that was paid to maintain then went due west into what they considered Asia, where Paul later would get to Ephesus and so forth, but the Spirit forbid him, heading north he wanted to go then to Bithynia, and it said the Spirit forbid him from doing that. Again, up here was Byzantium, Istanbul today, so instead he ends up at Troas. So, we follow that and we'll look at it together. So, let's come back here.

Paul Meets Young Timothy And Takes Him On Into The Ministry

We have then **verse 40**, **“And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God.”** and with Paul, because it says here they're recommended by the brethren, I'm sure that Barnabas and John Mark were also, but it's very clear that Paul and Silas end up with the Jerusalem letter, and they take that with them on their journey. So Paul chose Silas and departed, **“being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.” (verses 40b-41)** **“Then came he to Derbe and Lystra:”** we can see where that is on the map, he comes up to Derbe there, and as he comes then to Lystra, 20 miles past Derbe, no doubt visiting the church there in Derbe confirming the elders they had ordained, then to Lystra, **“and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek:” (Acts 16:1)** We're introduced now to Timothy. He must have said *‘Don't call me Timotheus, call me Timothy,*' if I was Timotheus that's what I'd say

too. But Timothy will be his main companion for the next 15 to 18 years. Paul will say at the end of his life, that it's only Timothy who we trust in regards to taking over the churches in a certain area. He will call him his own son in the faith. And evidently on the first missionary journey, as they came to Lystra, where Paul was stoned there, remember, and he was thrown out of the city in the trash dump as dead, "supposing him to have been dead." I believe in fact he was I believe again, in 2nd Corinthians it tells us **'I knew a man so many years ago, whether he was in the body, out of the body I don't know, caught up to the 3rd heaven, caught up to Paradise, saw things unspeakable,'** I believe it happened there. And then it says **'Paul rose up,'** and no doubt young Timothy with his mouth hanging open, was an eye-witness to that, not only Timothy himself, but his family. When Paul writes 2nd Timothy, he says **'When I called to remember, the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois,'** evidently Paul knew, **'and thy mother Eunice, and I am persuaded that in thee also.'** He says to Timothy in the 3rd chapter, he says **'Continue thou in the things thou hast learned and has been assured, and knowing of whom thou hast learned them, and that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures,'** so his mother Eunice, his grandmother Lois had taught him the Old Testament. Paul says **'That from a child you have known the holy Scriptures,'** Paul says, **'which are able,'** if you have Jewish friends take note of this, Old Testament, **'which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus.'** Paul clearly says the Old Testament Scriptures themselves are able to make someone wise unto salvation. So he says he's writing to Timothy, they're his last letters, his own son in the faith, he said **'I call to remembrance your grandmother, your mom, how they instilled a pure faith in you,'** and he says **'that you from a child were taught the holy Scriptures,'** and he encourages him to stay onward. So this young man, Timotheus, his name means "one who honours God." Paul in six of his Epistles, that he'll write to the churches, will mention, will introduce himself "Paul and Timothy, bond slaves of the Lord," he's mentioned in at least six of Paul's Epistles, and Paul will write the two letters to him. This young man had been trained in ignorance, like Joshua, like David, like so many others, like you and I. There had been things going on in his life for years, little did he ever dream that that foundation of the Old Testament would come into play. Little did he ever dream he would accompany the great apostle. Little did he ever dream what God had

for him, but God had faithfully laid a foundation in his life for the things ahead of him. Look, if you grew up in a Christian family, you're here, who knows what God might have for you. Who knows what God might have for you. On the other side, some of my favorite men in the ministry, grew up in alcoholic homes, abusive homes, and they get saved and came to Christ, and they live with a broken heart for the lost. They live with a broken heart for the downtrodden, and they are the most effective evangelists in some ways. Who knows how God might redeem that and use that, God may have been training you, and you're completely ignorant of those years that God was investing something in you that he's going to redeem and use in a powerful way. That was Timothy's story here. **"Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, name Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek:"** (verse 1) he's the son of a certain woman, we know from the 2nd letter to Timothy, Eunice, "which was a Jewess," now that in the mind of the Jewish community made Timothy Jewish, in their tradition, if there was a mixt marriage, which they forbid, but throughout the Mediterranean world outside of Israel, it was not uncommon to find that. But if a Jew and Gentile were married, they considered the bloodline running through the mother. So, if they had been a Gentile mother and a Jewish father, the Jewish community would not have considered Timothy then a Jew. But because he had a Gentile father, a Greek father, and a Jewish mother, the Jewish community considered Timothy then to be Jewish. And that was important and will come into play here. So he says **"the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek:"** (verse 1b) and some feel, the way the grammar is constructed here, it indicates the father had passed off the scene, we don't know, **"which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium."** (verse 2) they knew of this young man, it was evident there was a calling on his life. **"Him would Paul have to go forth with him;"** to the mission work, a young intern, the next generation being raised up, Paul ready to invest his life into Timothy. But listen to this, it says, **"and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek."** (verse 3) now he takes Timothy and circumcises him, so he can go with Paul and tell the Gentile churches they don't have to be circumcised. Think about it. [No, actually, think about this. Paul's main method of evangelism was to go into every synagogue in a major city he would come into, and

witness to every Jew and *God-fearing Gentile* within that synagogue that Jesus, Yeshua of Nazareth was the Jewish Messiah, the promised Saviour of the world. And Paul, being circumcised, could walk into any synagogue. But heaven forbid if Paul were to bring in Timothy, an uncircumcised “Jew” into the synagogue. It would have created mayhem, to say the very least, and Paul may not have been permitted to speak freely because of this. So Timothy had to be circumcised to be a part of Paul’s evangelistic mission which brought him into almost every Jewish synagogue he could find (see <https://unityinchrist.com/history2/index3.htm>] **“he took and circumcised him because of the Jews”** that is the unbelieving Jews **“which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek.”** And the idea is that his mother was Jewish, so they would have considered him Jewish, if he had not been circumcised he would never have had an inroad with the Jewish unbelievers [as they entered into their synagogues, as I was pointing out], which Paul in chapter 15 just settled that the Church is not demanding any Gentile believers had to be circumcised. But Paul takes this young man whose considered a Jew, but the Jewish communities who know about his family, he had him circumcised, so then he will have an effective ministry, because Paul initially in each city would try to go to the synagogue and then to the Gentiles. Paul wrote this in *1st Corinthians*, he says ***‘For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. Unto the Jews I became as a Jew that I might gain the Jews, to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law. To them that are without the law, as without the law, being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ, that I might gain them that were without the law. To the weak I became as weak, that I might gain the weak. I am made all things to all men, that by any means I might save some.’*** And he says it’s for the Gospel’s sake. So he’s telling us, he didn’t have Timothy circumcised because it was mandated by the Christian faith, it added no righteousness to him, it was to make him a more successful evangelist amongst the Jewish nonbelievers that were in that part of the world. [Considering Paul’s main method of evangelism by entering into every synagogue he could to preach the Gospel, this made perfect sense.] So he took him, he had him circumcised because of the Jews that were in those quarters he says, for they all knew his father was a Gentile, **“And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep,**

that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were in Jerusalem.” (verse 4) And he has Silas with him, as a prophet from the church in Jerusalem, confirming that what they’re saying is true, and he’s got Timothy with him, telling the Gentile churches they don’t have to be circumcised to be saved. Interesting. [In reality, all of these churches were composed of a mixture of real Jews and *God-fearing Gentiles*, so they were what would be termed Judeo-Christian in composition and worship practices.] **“And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.” (verse 5)** they’re hearing that it is just simple faith in Jesus Christ that is required of God, and the churches are growing daily.

The Specific Guidance Of The Holy Spirit Aims Paul & Silas Into Europe

“Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia,” (verse 6) now you see, what they did was they came up here in this area of Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, which is Pisidia there, they wanted to take, there’s a famous road, a Roman road that went directly west to go into Ephesus, Miletus no doubt, Colossi, and it said they were forbidden of the Spirit to do that, to go in this direction and go westward [see [https://www.bible-history.com/Pauls Second Mission Map](https://www.bible-history.com/Pauls%20Second%20Mission%20Map)]. It doesn’t say they were forbidden of the Spirit to preach the Gospel, so you can’t use that as an excuse *‘I was going to share the Lord with that guy, but the Holy Ghost told me not to share the Lord with that guy.’* I’m not saying that can’t happen, that would be the exception not the rule. My advice to you, is when in doubt, speak out. When in doubt, preach the Gospel. Now that’s a terrible mistake to make, when we get to heaven [into the Kingdom of heaven, which is going to end up on earth] we’re never going to think and look back thinking *‘Ah raspberries, I shouldn’t have shared the Gospel with that guy,’* when you get to heaven you may think *‘I should have shared, I had an opportunity and I didn’t.’* You’re never going to regret sharing Christ with anyone. So here, this is a different set of circumstances, the Holy Spirit is moving them to Europe, and he forbids them to take a detour at this point in time. The 3rd missionary journey Paul’s going to get there [actually at the end of this 2nd missionary journey Paul’s

going to get to Ephesus, as his last stop before heading back to Antioch in Syria]. He's going to eventually go to those areas where the Holy Spirit is directing him away from at this point. So, he says they **"were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, after they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not."** (verses 6b-7) So they come up into the area of Mysia, should be right around here, they wanted to go to Bithynia, and it says the Spirit forbid them, literally it says **"the Spirit of Christ"** or **"the Spirit of Jesus"** as some of the Greek texts says, remarkable, **"suffered them not, would not allow them."**

The Importance Of Being Led Of The Holy Spirit In Missionary Endeavors

Look, how important is it in missionary endeavors to be led of the Spirit? One author I read said *"There's the sent ones and the went ones,"* and you certainly want to be a sent one when you're in the mission field. Back in chapter 13, verse 2 it says they were praying and fasting, ministering to the Lord, and the Holy Spirit said **'Separate unto me Barnabas and Saul to the ministry I've called them to,'** and it says **'being sent forth of the Holy Spirit.'** If you're going to be in mission work, how important is it when the Holy Spirit says *'No, don't turn westward, don't go northeast, I want you to go this way.'* They're being directed by the Holy Spirit in this work, and it says **"And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas."** (verse 8) now let's look, [see https://www.bible-history.com/Pauls_Second_Mission_Map] they come up here to Pisidia Antioch, and they end up here, they come to Troas right there on the coast. So you guys, ready? They come to Troas right there on the coast, and from Troas they're going to take a boat to Samothracia, this is called the Hellespont, famous for major armies crossing here. Samothrace, it's the height of Thrace, Samothracia is an island, 69 square miles, and it has a peak in the middle of it that is 5,200 foot, as they come to that island, Samothrace, it was like a beacon in the middle of the Aegean Sea here, so they come to there and they will come over to this area, and land here and then go to Philippi. So we'll come to Troas, from Troas they will take a boat and come to Samothrace, the island there, then over to Philippi. So it tells us here that **"they passing by Mysia came down to**

Troas.” (verse 8) you see it there, “And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; there stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.” (verse 9) It doesn't say a dream, it was a vision, it's not specific, so he sees. So over to Macedonia, here southern what was Yugoslavia, Macedonia today, around this area of Greece, there's Corinth on the this missionary journey. A man from Macedonia, this is Europe, once you cross the Aegean Sea here you're into Europe, again, that's southern Yugoslavia, Macedonia today, and down here into Greece.

The Gospel Recently Going Back Into This Area

When I first years ago travelled to Austria to do the pastors conference there in Spital, where Calvary Chapel has a schloss, a castle there, very interesting, when you go to Europe, this is just free information...a burg is a fortress, usually with a mote around it and a big gate, a schloss is a mansion, like the Beverly Hillbillies mansion, and there is there in Spital a schloss, called Schloss Herldeck, and it is the exact replica of a mansion that was on the French Riviera that a Jewish businessman had built for his wife, who fell in love with a mansion on the French Riviera, he had it reconstructed there (in Austria). The beginning of World War II, Hitler came in there with Goering and Goebbels and drove the family out and took over that mansion. In fact they had painted on the outside a blond husband and wife with blue eyes with little blonds kids around them with blue eyes, very eerie to go in there and realize that down in the showers that Hitler and Himmler, they held Goering there until the Nuremburg trials, and it fell into disarray, and Chuck Smith, Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa bought it and turned it around, got a team over there, helped them to refurbish it, and today it's used for conferences, Christian conferences. I was there once and this guy walks in, this is a free story, do you mind, this guy walks in, about six-foot-three, sits in the back, and it was a German, this was a West German pastors conference, he's got a patch over one eye, he looks about 75 years old, just a huge guy, sits there, and tears are running down his face, running out from under his patch. And afterwards he came up, and he said *“I'm a pastor in town here in Spital,”* and he said *“I've been terrified to come into this building for years, because he said the last time I was in this building I was with Hitler and Himmler,”* he said *“I was an SS agent,”* and he said

“I fled Austria towards the end of the war and got into Sweden and I got saved, and I got born-again. And I came back to the area and I’ve been pastoring in this town for years, and could never bring myself to come back here, but for some reason today I came in and sat down, and it was a German pastors conference here today,” and he just sat there, and he wept. And how wonderful God is to redeem, and to take those things that are cast away and broken down and to restore them and use them. Wonderful to see those kinds of things go on. But the first time I was there, the Berlin Wall was still up, it was almost impossible to get pastors out of then Yugoslavia, Romania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and invitations would be sent out, but you never knew who could come, you had to get visas, who could sneak across borders, very remarkable. And a Greek Orthodox priest from Macedonia had gotten the invitation somehow, and had ridden a bus for 48 hours, got up into Austria, and got out and was standing there with his suitcase, in his civvies, and looking around, completely lost, and the wife of the man who was running the conference came over and said *“Can I help you,”* and he said *“I’m looking for this castle,”* Oye Vye, and she took him and she drove him up to the castle. And I had opportunity, it was in the 70s then to serve him communion, serving a Greek Orthodox priest communion, and at that conference, when he came up there, he accepted Christ and he got saved, and he said *“I can’t believe, 70 years, 70 years it took me to know the truth.”* And he went back and started a verse by verse, chapter by chapter Bible study with Greek Orthodox priests in Macedonia. How incredible, the Gospel coming back, the Word of God coming all the way back to Macedonia. God is still working in Macedonia, after all of these years, how wonderful. I had an opportunity to see him once again several years later, and he was just lit up, and he was sparkling. He had one crooked eye too, but he looked beautiful, he was a remarkable guy.

God Speeds Them All The Way To Philippi, A Roman Colony

So anyhow, this man from Macedonia appears to Paul in a vision, and prayed him, begged him saying **‘Come over into Macedonia and help us,’** asking the Gospel to come into Europe. **“And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavored to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for**

to preach the gospel unto them.” (verse 10) Look, “**immediately**” now please take note of this, “**endeavored to go to Macedonia,**” “**we**” there places Luke in the picture for the first time in the Book of Acts. We’re not told why Luke happened to be at Troas. But Luke now hooks up with Paul and Silas and Timothy there at Troas, where they cross the Hellespont there. And very interesting, from now on in the Book of Acts, whenever we hear “we did this, we did that,” we know that Luke whom the Lord used to write, the Holy Spirit wrote through, wrote the Book of Acts, wherever we hear “we” we know Luke is with Paul in his journey, and whenever we hear “they” we know Luke is somewhere else, at Paul’s bidding no doubt. But it says here, **‘After he had seen the vision, immediately we,’** now Luke is with him. And wonderfully **“we endeavored to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.” (verse 10b)** Now I don’t know if some of the other guys, earlier in this, Paul wanted to go one way, the Holy Spirit said “no,” wanted to go another way, the Holy Spirit said “no,” now Paul says **‘Hey, I had a vision last night,’** I don’t know if the guy’s were saying *“Are you sure you’re hearing the Holy Spirit here?”* Paul said **‘Ya,’** and Luke tells us **‘we were all assured,’** they must have prayed and they all said **‘Ya, we believe this is right, let’s do this.’** **“Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis;” (verse 11)** they’re all concurring on this. He’s telling us something interesting here, “we came with a straight course,” it’s a nautical term, and what it means is the wind was blowing at the back of the boat [they headed before the wind], they come in a day to Samothracia, and in less than a day then to Philippi, it’s a day and a half, it’s less than two days for them to travel from Troas to Philippi. In chapter 20, verse 6, when they’re coming back in the other direction it takes five days to cross the same body of water [all that is saying is the wind hadn’t changed direction, and they had to tack back, whereas they were sailing before the wind on the way there. I’m a sailor.] And sometimes if the wind was contrary the boat had to tack back and forth with the sail to capture the wind. Paul says **‘When we got here and we set out [trying to head west to Ephesus on the Roman road], and the Holy Spirit said ‘Don’t go this way, don’t go that way [into Bithynia],’ and there was a man calling us to come over into Europe, Macedonia,’** he said **‘When we hit the boat, the Lord blew us straight across the Hellespont right into, in two days we crossed that area and came into Philippi, into Macedonia,’** just wonderful to take note

of the details that Luke is giving to us here. And he says **“And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days.” (verse 12)** Notice, Philippi is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, it’s literally the first amongst cities, it was listed first, the chief city in that part of Macedonia, and he says, probably telling us why, it was a colony, **“and we were in that city abiding certain days.”** This will be important to our journey through Philippi. Philippi is a colony, Augustus Caesar had granted Philippi what was called Juice Italicum, they were a Roman city, which meant none of the magistrates in the city were from Greece or from Macedonia, none of the officials of the city were from that area, all of the officials, the magistrates, the prefects were all from Rome itself. And what had happened in this city, Phillip of Macedon, Alexander the Great’s dad, had subdued it and the city had been named after him originally. And 42 years before Christ, 42BC if I remember, Octavius and Anthony defeated Cassius and Brutus, this is just free information, in a major battle there, and then Philippi becomes a Roman province, many retired Roman officers and soldiers were there. So all of the things that hold true in Rome would hold true then in Philippi. **Chapter 18, verse two**, you don’t have to turn, I’ll read it to you, it comes to play in our story here, it says **“After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth; and found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla;”** here’s why **“(because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them.” (verses 1-2)** Claudius [Caesar] had made a decree that all Jews had to depart from Rome.

*Paul, Keeping The Sabbath Outside The City By A River,
Meets Lydia*

So we come to this city Philippi, it says here **“which is a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days.”** Look at **verse 13, “And on the sabbath”** Saturday **“we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made;”** the Gangites river, it’s still there today, you gotta love the King James, where else, **“and we”** there’s Luke again, **“sat down”** I love this, **“and spake unto the women which resorted thither.”** The first sermon in Europe is a discussion, [on the Sabbath, which apparently Paul and

his company were observing, and take note of this, since Jews were driven out of Rome, and Philippi was a special Roman city, there may not have been any synagogues there at this time, or at least not occupied ones, maybe due to the decree of Claudius.] Now, it's telling us there aren't ten Jewish males in the city of Philippi to have a synagogue. That was probably because Claudius had expelled the Jews from Rome, and Philippi was a colony would have done the same thing. But there was a place, and that place would have been official and sanctioned by the leaders in Philippi, by the river, where prayer was allowed to be made by other faiths, and it was a place then where those who had turned from the Roman pantheon of many gods and idols to the Jewish God, to a monotheistic faith would come to pray [i.e. this would be the *God-fearing Gentiles* as well as the Jews who probably had proselytized them], on the sabbath, so we know this is the God of the Jews these woman have turned to. [So Paul, finding out where the few Jews in the area were meeting on the Sabbath, was still following his method of evangelism, but going to where they were meeting and evangelizing to any attending Jews and their *God-fearing Gentile* converts. His methods haven't changed a bit.] And this is a strange day, as they come down to the place where they normally pray on the Sabbath, Saturday morning, Saturday afternoon, here are these men seated there. And they must introduce themselves, Paul says *'My name is Paul, I'm of Tarsus, I'm from the School of Gamaliel in Jerusalem, I'm a member of the Sanhedrin,'* how excited they must have been, Silas must have said *'I'm from Jerusalem, I'm a prophet,'* Luke said *'I'm a doctor,'* that's always nice to find, and Timothy must have said *'Don't look at me, I'm brand new, I'm just joining the team.'* They're there, and these women start to sit and talk with them, and it says they have a discussion, they're sharing the truth of Christ with them in a conversation, the first sermon in Europe, and it says **“And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.” (verse 14)** That verse is loaded, this woman is from Thyatira, which is here [see [https://www.bible-history.com/Pauls Second Mission Map](https://www.bible-history.com/Pauls%20Second%20Mission%20Map)], she is now over in Philippi, Thyatira there, which was famous for purple dyes and so forth, she is in Philippi. She is a seller of purple, this was a dye that was taken from a conchilium, a shellfish called the murex, and it was an important trade in the Roman world, because Roman robes were dyed scarlet, Roman clothing, and the process was, they would

take this shellfish, and the less expensive dye was made just by crushing the whole shellfish with the shells and everything and it would come out kind of a reddish, faded reddish dye, which was popular. But the purest dye, they would take that shellfish, and what they found is that there was a little sac in the throat of the shellfish, and there was one drop of dye that was in that sac and they would milk that out of there and get that single drop, so this dye was very expensive. Don't ask me who the first guy was to open one of those, he probably ate one and his wife said '*Your tongue is all purple!*' you know something, I don't know. Don't ask me how you decide where the throat is if you look at a clam, I couldn't figure out where the throat is, but they figured it out, and they would milk those single drops out, and what they would do is, that dye was extremely expensive and extremely potent, they would put it on wool, because the wool absorbed it. And after it was into the wool, it would then after awhile, it would turn blue. Once it turned blue, from scarlet to blue, purple to blue, they would then lay it in the sun. As time went by it would turn to green, and in the sun as time went by it would change back to purple again, and then they would put it in water with other cloth, and you could take that wool, dip it on a pot and boil it with other clothes to dye them. It was a very good trade, and evidently Lydia must have had a husband. In this world, gals, sorry, women did not have their own businesses.

What Was Lydia Like? Her Conversion Was Real

Tradition, Church tradition tells us that she was a widow, that she had children, she was in Philippi which was a Roman colony, and this purple dye was very good business there, that she was self-sustained, a sizeable home there in the city of Philippi, and she sold this dye. Well it tells us that this woman comes on the Sabbath day to the place of prayer. Which tells us something about her, it says she worshipped God. We can believe that, because in a Roman colony, Saturday was the big business day, but she would close down shop on Saturday, and have to tell all of her customers, hey, I'll see you tomorrow, whatever, and she would go out by the river to pray, to a God she didn't know fully. I mean, how many of us in the church today are willing to set aside business on a Sunday to gather with God's people? How many in the church today are willing to make God on a regular basis more important than mammon?

This woman indeed was a worshipper of God. [Sabbath-keepers, and I know from experience, have had to exhibit great faith, often loosing jobs over Sabbath-observance, and having to trust God in faith to find a new one. They set aside a full day for God every Saturday, along with their regular devotionals. Desmond Doss observed the Sabbath the best he could throughout his service as a medic in the Army during WWII, and also refused to carry a rifle or gun or to kill on the battlefield. He lived his faith, and saved over 75 soldiers on Hacksaw Ridge, Okinawa, the only Conscientious Objector to ever win the Congressional Medal of Honor on the battlefield.] Because on the day she could have made the most money, she had to close shop, and come out by the river, and be there for prayer to worship a God who she was drawing to, that she longed for things in regards to this God that were not clear in her heart. [And she could have been Jewish or a God-fearing Gentile, we're not sure.] And it tells us here, as the apostles spoke, she was a woman that worshipped God, and Luke says **'she' "heard us: whose heart the Lord opened,"** Paul said that faith of course comes by hearing the Word of God, but he says if you confess with your mouth, and believe in your heart. Faith is an act of the heart, not of the intellect, it is not based on IQ or I could never be pastor. I just about got through high school. This is an issue of the heart, the deeper part of the human being is the spirit, and it says that man believes in the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ. And it says here that the Lord opened her heart. Remember John 16, it said the Holy Spirit would come, and convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and judgment. The interesting thing is, this word is used by Luke in his Gospel, it means "to thoroughly open." Luke says that **'she heard us, and the Lord then thoroughly opened her heart.'** In the end of Luke's Gospel the two men on the Road to Emmaus, they said one to another, **"Did not our heart burn within us, when he talked with us in the way? And while he opened"** that's our word, **"to us the Scripture,"** the guys from Emmaus said **"he thoroughly opened,"** it wasn't a partial opening, **"he thoroughly opened the Scripture to us."** And then it says, **verse 45, in Luke 24, "Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures."** that's again the same word, "to thoroughly open." Here it says **'the Lord thoroughly opened her heart,'** in regards to the Word of God. And we know that, look what it says, **"that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul." (verse 14b)** her heart was so open that **"she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul."** You know

what it means “to attend” unto something? You have a toddler at home? And you don’t attend unto that toddler, that toddler will be dead, you know the way they are. If you have something you have to take care of, you have to attend to it. This is a word that means “she obeyed, she yielded, her life came into line.” That’s how you know someone’s heart is open. People can say ‘*Oh ya, I believe, I believe in Jesus,*’ but are you attending to the things that the Word of God sets in front of you? Do you attend unto them, do you care for them, yield to them and obey them? That’s the way we know that your heart is thoroughly opened to the Word of God. To just pay lip-service and still live in sin and compromise means that you need to get something straight with Jesus. And he’s patient, he’s forgiving, he’s willing. But this woman, it tells us, she worshipped God, and as she heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ from Paul the apostle, that the Lord “thoroughly opened her heart,” it’s causative, **“that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul”** she began to serve those things, and yield to those things that were spoken of Paul.

*The First Church In Europe, A House-Church, Was In
Lydia’s House*

“And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide *there*. And she constrained us.” (verse 15) Notice **“and her household,”** so that wasn’t in the same scene, there must have been a time period gone by here, where she actually went back to the house, shared the Gospel with her servants, with her kids, she must have said ‘*I finally learned the truth,*’ whatever. Evidently, they listened to the things that Lydia said, she was that kind of woman. **“when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us,” ‘*she begged us,*’ “saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord,”** now she was faithful, because she “attended unto the things that were spoken,” and there was an evidence of obedience, she brought her life in line with those things. **“If you judge me to be faithful to the Lord”** she said, **“come into my house and abide there. And she constrained us.”** Luke says. This is a great businesswoman, she out argues an apostle, a prophet, a doctor and an intern, Timothy. She constrains them, her home is big enough to come to, I don’t know if there was any level of

uncomfortableness initially, but eventually Paul and Silas and doctor Luke and Timothy end up staying at her home, and if you look over to verse 40, it says when Paul's let out of prison, we're going to find out he's in prison, him and Silas, **"And they went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed." (verse 40)** The first church in Europe ends up to be in the home of Lydia. The man of Macedonia was not a man at all, it was a woman. Paul saw a vision of the man of Macedonia, after he wanted to go in one direction the Holy Spirit said **'No,'** if he saw a woman from Macedonia the guys would have said *'Are you sure you know what you're talking about?'* A man from Macedonia wanted them to get over there, the name of the man was Lydia. God called them to come to Macedonia, and this incredible woman hears the first sermon preached in Europe. Her home is opened up and becomes the first church in Europe. And what an impact the Gospel has had in Europe over the centuries. Of course, sad, I've been there several times to see how cold it has become. The official church, the state church in Germany and some of the countries, you know, is the Catholic church [see <https://unityinchrist.com/history2/earlychurch3.htm>]. If you are a registered member of the Catholic church in Europe, they take your taxes out of your paycheck and they take your tithe from your paycheck. It is given to the Catholic church before you even get your check. I don't know how happy the Lord is about that, whether you like it or not you're tithing, but this is the State sanctioned church there. But listen, in Germany, the evangelical church is thriving, and it's alive, in socialism. Everybody's screaming [over here], *'Socialism, Socialism!'* [we Americans think "socialism" is a dirty word, but over there the social democracies have thrived, chosen over capitalism by Europeans coming out of Nazi servitude, which all but wiped out the middle class, the group which capitalism thrives in. It's not a dirty word, it is merely another form of government. No governments in this world of man, without Christ and his coming Kingdom of God, are perfect]. Look, when I was over there last year, the Church is thriving, there were pastors that I met with in Kosovo, from Poland, from Austria, from Scotland, England, from Ireland, from Germany, from Cyprus, from Macedonia, from Israel, from Jordan, ministers from Jordan, North Africa, from 22 different countries, and the Church [Body of Christ] in those places is thriving and alive and teaching the Bible, chapter by chapter, verse by verse, there's amazing things going on, in Hungary,

Romania and so forth, remarkable to see what's going on. It started at Lydia's house, this woman. What a woman she must have been.

In closing

Now we're going to move from the house of Lydia to this demon possessed girl. I think we should wait a week to do that. There is a little bit of a contrast there, between this demon possessed girl, she's the next girl we meet in Philippi, she's not a great gal. Read ahead, settle yourself into this next portion where we see Paul and Silas deal with this demon possessed girl, they get beaten, they get thrown into prison because of it, and finally then they're set free, and they will move on in chapter 17 where they come to Thessalonica, to Athens, to a remarkable part of this journey. Let's have the musicians come, we have time I think for two songs tonight. Let's stand, let's lift our hearts, lift our voices. I encourage you, look, don't be discouraged if you argue with another Christian, even apostles argued. In time, please make up, Paul was reconciled, those things settled back down again. Don't be discouraged if you think the Lord's leading, and the Lord said '*No, no, I didn't tell you to do that.*' If you're patient, he will lead. The Shepherd is never dependent on the IQ of the sheep, that's a great consolation for me. If my heart is willing to follow, he will do the job, and he will lead. And when we are on his path, the wind will be at our back, so to speak, he will make us move with his own speed where we need to end up. And I encourage you, look at that first church, look at this woman, mammon was not her god in a world where money was everybody's god. She was willing to set all things aside to come and to pray to a God that she really didn't know. He was the right God. And there she discovered the Gospel of Jesus Christ, her life was changed, and our lives are changed because of Lydia's life being changed. First sermon in Europe, first church in Europe, Lydia...We have our own Lydia here, and I appreciate her after all these years...[transcript of connective expository sermons on Acts 15:36-41 and Acts 16:1-15, given by Pastor Joe Focht, Calvary Chapel of Philadelphia, 13500 Philmont Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19116]

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