

Part 40 And Paul Chose Silas

A sermon series by Pastor Byron Chesney Wednesday, June 22, 2016

† Acts 15:32-41

We left off last week with Paul, Barnabas, Judas, and Silas delivering the message from the Jerusalem council concerning circumcision and the law. The last thing we read was [Acts 15:30-31](#) So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch: and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle: 31 Which when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation.

And that is where we pick the story back up at starting in verse 32:

[32 And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them.](#)

The word, “prophet,” as used in this verse is not meaning a prophet like Isaiah, Jeremiah, or Ezekiel who foretold future events. **Thayer’s Greek Dictionary** describes them as “*those in the religious assemblies of the Christians, that were moved by the Holy Spirit to speak, having power to instruct, comfort, encourage, rebuke, convict, and stimulate, their hearers*” That describes Judas and Silas very well. It says that they exhorted and confirmed them. That means that they gave them encouragement and helped them strengthen their walk with the Lord.

Judas was a very common Hebrew name which is a derivative of the name “Judah,” as in the 4th son of Jacob. There are 8 different Judas’s mentioned in the New Testament alone. Then we have Silas, who is going to turn out to be a perfect companion for Paul in his next missionary journey.

[33 And after they had tarried there a space, they were let go in peace from the brethren unto the apostles. 34 Notwithstanding it pleased Silas to abide there still.](#)

So Judas and Silas hung around at Antioch for a while which I’m sure was a great help to the Church there, and then Judas heads back to Jerusalem but Silas hangs out longer.

[35 Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.](#)

Not only did Silas stick around longer but so did Paul and Barnabas. Notice it says that there were teaching and preaching the word of the Lord. My, what a time that must have been for the Church, to have 3 great preachers there helping out in the services. I’ll tell you friends, it helps a man to have others helping out in the ministry. Sometimes I start feeling like the Lone Ranger. I’m thankful when other men step up and help out in the service of the Lord.

[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.](#)

Paul couldn’t stay settled very long, he started getting the itch to return to the field and visit all of the Churches they had started in the first mission trip. He longed to see if they were still sticking with the doctrine of the Gospel and to see if they were growing in God’s grace. He had a real heart for the Churches. Paul wasn’t like your modern day evangelists who blow in from town to town preaching the same 5 sermons everywhere he goes and then leaving just as quickly as he came in. No, Paul preached the Gospel, saw them saved, then followed up with them with discipleship. His goal wasn’t necessarily seeing how many converts he could get, it was seeing how many lives could be changed and that they grow in God’s grace and in their understanding and knowledge of the things of the Lord Jesus.

[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.](#)

Now we see the first disagreement between Paul and Barnabas. We don’t know why Barnabas was so eager to get John-Mark involved again, of course he was related to him so he may have felt some obligation towards him. But Paul is not happy with that decision. He still has fresh memories of how he had deserted them after they had left Cyprus and headed to Pamphylia. It seems that he had abandoned them at the time they needed his help the most. So, Paul is not going to agree with taking him along again.

[39 And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus;](#)

I’m glad the Bible does not leave out certain things. The Lord could have easily just not mentioned this dispute between Paul and Barnabas but he included it in His Word for our benefit. I think it is God’s way of showing us a few things. 1. What happens when you neglect your duties. 2. That even men like Paul and Barnabas are subject to disagreements. In other words, they ain’t perfect. 3. God’s not looking for “perfect” men, he’s looking for obedient men.

So, Barnabas and John-Mark go back to Cyprus, which is where they both were from. I’ve often wondered about Barnabas’ and Mark’s ministry after this. We aren’t told anything else about what they did when they went to Cyprus. I’m sure they did a good work there but there just isn’t anything else said about it.

We do know that despite Paul's mistrust of Mark as a traveling partner, he still cared for him and spoke highly of him later on in his writings from Prison to Timothy. **2 Timothy 4:9-11: Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me: 10 For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia. 11 Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry.**

And, that was the Christian thing to do, to forgive him. Too many times we hold grudges against people for something they did and we never give them another chance. We mark them off of our list forever. But that's not the Christian way. That's not the Lord's way. What if the Lord wrote you off every time you messed up? I'd be on his permanent blacklist if that were the case. But our God is a forgiving God. I think the Psalmist says it best when he says this: **Psalms 86:15: But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.**

So, while Mark may have not done so well traveling with Paul, we know that he stayed true to the ministry. In fact, he later went on to be the vessel that God chose to pen down His words in the Gospel of Mark. So the Lord was able to use him even if Paul wasn't.

40 And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God.

I like that phrase, "and Paul chose Silas." Doesn't feel good to be chosen? I remember those awkward times in school gym class when we would line up and have to be chosen for one team or another. How terrible it was to be one of those last ones to be chosen. I'm thankful that the Lord chose me one day. But the Bible says, "and Paul chose Silas." Silas is going to turn out to be the greatest helper to Paul and the ministry of anyone Paul ever worked with.

First of all, Silas is a Roman citizen. Since Paul was chosen to be a preacher unto the Gentiles having another Roman citizen on his team would greatly help in reaching them. The reason we know that Silas was a citizen of Rome is because of what happened when they were in Philippi.

We all know the story. Paul and Silas are in Philippi preaching the Gospel when a "certain damsel possessed by a spirit," began following them around crying out before them as they went; "these men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation." The Bible says that she did this for many days. Finally Paul had enough of it and through the power of the Holy Ghost he commanded that the spirits come out of that girl.

Well, when that happened, the men that was using her to make money off of her demon possession got mad and got everyone stirred up against Paul and Silas and had them beaten and arrested.

Paul and Silas are cast into prison and at midnight when they were singing and praying to the Lord, the Lord caused an earthquake in that place and it shook the bars and chains off of them. The old Philippian jailer came running and saw what he believed to be an escape of the prisoners started to take his own life. But Paul stopped him and shared the Gospel with him and he got saved.

Well, after that they went home with the jailer and preached to his family and they all got saved and baptized. Then the next morning we pick up the story.

Acts 16:35-40:

35 And when it was day, the magistrates sent the serjeants, saying, Let those men go.

36 And the keeper of the prison told this saying to Paul, The magistrates have sent to let you go: now therefore depart, and go in peace.

37 But Paul said unto them, **They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans,** and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out.

38 And the serjeants told these words unto the magistrates: and they feared, when they heard that they were Romans.

39 And they came and besought them, and brought them out, and desired them to depart out of the city.

40 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 37 Paul declares that he and Silas are Roman citizens.

Secondly, Silas is a Jew so that is will help when they are around the Jewish people.

And thirdly, don't forget when Silas is first mentioned, the Bible says that he was a prophet sent from the Jerusalem church.

41 And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.

And so, Paul and Silas go immediately to work visiting the Churches that were formed during Paul's last journey.

† All Scripture from the Authorized King James Version