

## Part 41 Timothy, Troas, and Macedonia

A sermon series by Pastor Byron Chesney Wednesday, June 29, 2016

### † Acts 16:1-10

We left off last week finishing up chapter 15 which dealt with Paul and Barnabas having a dispute over taking John Mark with them on a 2<sup>nd</sup> missionary journey the Bible says this: **Acts 15:39-41: 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; 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.**

We spent a large amount of time discussing why Silas would end up being the best missionary partner Paul ever had due to the fact he was; a Jew, a Roman citizen, and a Prophet.

So, we pick up tonight in verse 1 of Acts 16 with Paul and Silas going to Derbe and Lystra:

**1 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:**

Of course Silas is also with Paul even though Luke says “**then came he.**” Remember he is telling the narrative of the life of Paul and how the Lord worked through him.

“**a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus**” Now we are introduced to a young man named **Timotheus**, also called “**Timothy.**” As you know very well, Timothy would be who Paul takes under his wing to help in the ministry. In his first letter to Timothy Paul refers to him as “**my own son in the faith.**” **1 Timothy 1:1-2: Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope; 2 Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.**

Also in Paul's second letter to Timothy he starts out saying this: **2 Timothy 1:1-2 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus, 2 To Timothy, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.**

Paul thought very highly of Timothy and it shows throughout Paul's epistles. Paul cared not only for his spiritual well-being, but his physical well-being as well. Timothy obviously had some kind of stomach problems that bothered him a lot and Paul wrote this in **1 Timothy 5:23 Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities.** We have talked about this before but for this study I will mention it again; in Paul's day it was hard to find clean drinking water. Many people would stay sick from drinking water tainted with bacteria and disease and they would have dysentery and malaria which would keep their stomachs tore up constantly. This was not an excuse to get drunk, it was for medicinal purposes. With Timothy being a pastor he of course could not be a drunkard or drink strong drink but Paul encouraged him to mix a little wine with his water to help with his stomach problems. This was common to do in those days.

“the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed.” Timothy had a good mother and her name was **Eunice**. We know that from reading in **2 Timothy 1:3-5 I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day; 4 Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy; 5 When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.** Growing up my best friend was Kevin Roberts, Bro. Frank's son, and his mother, Frank's wife's name was Eunice. She was a good Godly mother as well.

“**and believed**” Not only was Timothy's mother a Jew but it says that she believed. So, she was a Christian. We do not know how she came to Christ or where she had heard the Gospel but she had and was saved. Most likely it was the result of Paul's first missionary trip when he went through Lystra and Derbe.

Timothy's mother also taught him the Scriptures. Paul writes about it in **2 Timothy 3:14-15 But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; 15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.**

I couldn't think of a better testimony to have than for a mother to teach their children the Scriptures. Sure beats a lot of things mothers are teaching their children these days doesn't it? We need more Eunice's in this world. If we did, we would have more Timothy's. Instead we've got ungodly mothers and fathers who could care less about their children's spiritual walk or keeping them out of hell. It's going to be bad enough to see how many parents will be in hell, but can you imagine knowing your children were in hell because you didn't love them enough to tell them about Jesus?

“**but his father was a Greek:** The way this is worded, it is implied that Timothy's father was not a believer. He also was not a Jew. So Timothy grew up in a mixed marriage household. It is possible that his father died while he was young.

**2 Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium.**

This verse is talking about Timothy having a good report with the brethren at Lystra and Iconium, not his father.

**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.**

Now we get to this section where we must deal with the reason Paul had Timothy circumcised. Some people want to argue that Paul was teaching a double standard here because the Jerusalem council had already made the decision that circumcision wasn't necessary for Salvation. Timothy was already saved so Paul wasn't doing this for salvation purposes. He also was not compromising his beliefs just to please the hardline Jews. With Timothy's dad being a Greek, the Jews would not have considered him a Jew even though his mother was one. He did this in order for Timothy to be able to relate and identify with the Jews making it easier for him to share the Gospel with them. They would be more apt to listen to him and not be offended by him if he identified with them.

Turn with me real quick to **1 Corinthians 9:19-23**: For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. 20 And 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; 21 To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. 22 To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. 23 And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you.

So, I guess you could say Timothy was becoming all things to all people so he could share the gospel with them. In other words, he took one for the team.

**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.**

The decrees Paul and Silas was delivering to the Churches was the decree that was sent forth by the Jerusalem council concerning the circumcision and abstaining from eating blood and meat offered up to idols.

**5 And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.**

The Churches are thriving and growing and that was Paul's main concern for them. That is why he embarked on a return journey to visit them all.

**6 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, 7 After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.**

Paul, along with Timothy, Silas, and Luke was waiting on the leadership of the Holy Spirit. It appears from Scripture that they had it in their minds after leaving Galatia, to travel North into Asia, but the Bible says they were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia. -- Then it appears from Scripture that they had made up their minds to travel South to Bithynia, but the Spirit suffered them not.

The Holy Ghost is forbidding the Apostle Paul from preaching in a place that from all indications needed to hear the Gospel. That seems odd to us. I mean, shouldn't the Gospel be preached to everyone? Well, yes it should, however the LORD knows when and where it is needed the most. Obviously He has much bigger plans for Paul and his team at this time.

May I say to you this tonight, that even things that are good and noble and needed, may not be God's will for your life at the time. One of the worst things we can do as a Christian is to spend our time on something that is out of God's will. No matter how good that something is. A lot of Christians spend their entire lives doing things that are not God's will when all along if they had obeyed the Holy Spirit they would have done much more.

Paul and his missionary team were wanting to do a good thing but if they had, they would have been doing it under their own will, following their own spirit and not God's will or God's Holy Spirit.

**8 And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas.**

You know, one of the hardest things to do when trying to follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit, is to wait. Nobody likes to wait. We go to the grocery store and we try to find the shortest line because we don't want to wait. Go to a restaurant and hope there is not a long line because we do not like to wait. There is nothing I hate worse than sitting on the interstate in the evenings trying to get home and the traffic is just stopped. I hate waiting. Often times it seems that when it comes to the things of the Lord, we find ourselves waiting.

That's where the Apostle Paul has found himself... waiting, hanging out in Troas for direction from the Lord. I'm sure he would rather have been anywhere else in the world than Troas right now. I mean Paul is a mover and shaker. He is a traveling man looking for bigger and better places to share the Gospel.

Do you ever find yourself tarrying in Troas? Often times I make plans to do something and the harder I try to make it happen, the further away I get from getting there. Sometimes the Lord has to put me in Troas. That's where Paul is right now but even though he was not where he thought he would be it doesn't mean that he wasted time waiting. Look at what he says he did with his time over in **2 Corinthians 2:12-14**: 12 Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord, 13 I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia. 14 Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.

So even though Paul wasn't quite where he wanted to be, he made good use of his time. He preached the Gospel. I like what he said in **verse 14**: **"...thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us IN EVERY PLACE."**

Did you see that IN EVERY PLACE!!! No, it may not be where you thought you would be. It may not be where you intend to stay. It may even be a place that you can't stand. But it might be just exactly where God plans to use you. Paul allowed God to use him in even Troas. Does it mean Paul wasn't ready to leave there? No way, in fact when he did get to finally leave he left so fast he forgot his coat! **2Ti 4:13** The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments.

And then finally, after tarrying in Troas, God was ready to send Paul on one of the greatest mission trips in history. Look at verse 9 of our text in Acts 16.

**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.**

I can see Paul now as he sat in his room, tarrying in Troas, praying and asking God for direction and anxious to get moving so he could preach the Gospel. We don't know if Paul was asleep when he had this vision. It was at night so perhaps he was sleeping or maybe he was up late praying, we don't know. Regardless, Paul received a vision.

In Paul's vision he sees a man of Macedonia. Obviously the person he saw was dressed as a Macedon would dress because Paul recognized him as such.

Some people want to debate on who this man from Macedonia was. You can think and believe whatever you want, I personally believe it was the Lord Jesus Christ that appeared to Paul in this vision.

The plea was a plea for help. The help needed was the preaching of the Gospel. Make no mistake about that friends. It was Gospel preaching that was needed. Not help with raising money, not help with feeding the hungry, not help digging wells, not help with healthcare, while all of those things are needs, that is not what they were asking help for in Macedonia. It was the preaching of the Gospel.

As far as we can tell, the Gospel had never been preached in Macedonia. This was a heathen culture. This was a dangerous land with dangerous people. For Paul and his missionary team to travel West to Macedonia would have been a great risk. Many trials would await them in that land.

10 And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.

I like verse 10 where it says "immediately we endeavoured to go." The word endeavor means "a strenuous effort, an attempt to achieve." In other words they immediately, no questions asked, no ifs ands or buts, they did their dead-level best to go to Macedonia.

How many of us tonight can say that when God urges us to do something, we immediately drop everything and do it? Perhaps God has laid it on your heart to do something like give a prayer request or give a testimony about something the Lord has done for you or sing a song the Lord has laid on your heart and you put it off and put it off and then the opportunity is gone. You missed out on a blessing and also didn't follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit. You probably kicked yourself afterwards.

What if Paul said, "well, I don't really feel like going West." Or "Macedonia is not where I want to go." Or "Those people over there don't want to hear anything I've got to say." What if that had happened? Well, let me tell you what would have happened or better yet, what would NOT have happened...

1. Macedonia is in Northern Greece.
2. Because the Greeks had great cultural and political influence in Roman society, Christianity from Greece would spread into Rome.
3. After some time, Rome adopted Christianity as its official religion.
4. Since Rome became Christian, all of Europe became Christian as well.
5. The Reformation occurred in Europe and because of this, England began the Church of England.
6. The English government became oppressive toward anyone who would not worship in the Church of England
7. Which led the Puritans to set sail for America.
8. This led to the Revolutionary War and the birth of the United States of America.
9. Which leads us here as we sit tonight at Highland Baptist Church in Knoxville, TN.

Friend, I want you to realize that until the Apostle Paul stepped onto the shores of Macedonia, they had never heard Christ preached. This was the first known Gospel preaching in Europe. – Think about the implications of this. If Paul had not obeyed the Holy Spirit, perhaps none of us would be sitting here tonight!

And this is where I would like to end this Bible study for tonight. We will pick back up, Lord willing, in verse 11 next Wednesday night and cover Paul's first European convert, Lydia!

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† All Scripture from the Authorized King James Version