



- But Paul Didn't!
- 15:38 - He - "Thought Not Good To Take Him!"
- Because - As Paul Saw It:
  - John Mark Had Deserted The Ministry:
    - Just As They Were About To Begin The Harshest Phase Of That:
      - First Missionary Journey!
  - He Is Referring All The Way Back To:
    - 13:13 - When After Their Visit To Cyprus - "They came to Perga in Pamphylia: and John departing from them returned to Jerusalem!"
- Now - We Are Not Told:
  - Why John Mark Left:
    - But It Is Clear From This Passage:
      - That It Was Not On Good Terms!
- But For This Second Trip:
  - Barnabas Wanted To Give His Nephew:
    - Another Chance - But Paul Did Not Think:
      - That This Was A Wise Course Of Action!
- And - In The Words Of 15:39:
  - "The contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other!"
    - Now - Luke - In His Recording Of This Dispute - Does Not Take A Side In This Dispute!
      - He Does Not Tell Us Who Was Right Or Who Was Wrong!
        - And So - It Is Probably Best For Us Not To Take Sides Either - Even Though Many People Do!
- Suffice It To Say:
  - As One Writer Did:
    - Barnabas Was Probably Right:
      - When It Came To:
        - Christian Feeling! And:
    - Paul Was Probably Right:
      - When It Came To:
        - Christian Reason!
  - But - It Is Clear That:
    - At This Stage Of Their Relationship:
      - And Ministry - Two Good & Godly Men Had To "Agree To Disagree" - And They Both Had Their Reasons For Doing So!
- Now - This Is A Hard Thing For Us:
  - To Read! After All That Paul & Barnabas:
    - Went Through Together!
      - To Let Something Like This Get Between Them!
        - But - God Was About To Show That Even Through Contention - He Can Still Direct His Church!
          - And He Did!
  - Because - Even After This Contention:
    - The Work & The Plans:
      - Did Not Change! Instead - There Was:
  - A New Commission!
    - 15:39b-40 - "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!"
      - Now - We Are Only Told Here That:
        - Paul & Silas Were Commissioned By The Church In Antioch To Go On This Second Missionary Journey!
          - But - Barnabas & Mark Left Antioch As Well! And Where Did They Go? Back To The Old Stomping Grounds Of Barnabas - Cyprus!
    - So - Even Though Their Forces Were Divided:
      - Both Paul & Barnabas Carried Out Their Mutual Desire:
        - To Visit Their "Brethren In Every City" Where They Had "Preached The Word Of The Lord!" (15:36)

- I Don't Believe Barnabas Stopped:
  - Serving - Just To Go Home To Cyprus!
  - No - They Both Appear To Carry Out Their Plans & Ministries!
- Because - We Still Read About:
  - Both Barnabas & John Mark:
    - In The Letters Of Paul!
  - In His Letter To The Colossian Church:
    - Paul Encourages Them To Receive Barnabas If He Comes To Them!
  - And - In His Letter To Timothy:
    - Paul Says That John Mark Is Even "Profitable To [Him] For The Ministry!"
  - So - This Dispute In Antioch:
    - Was Short Lived!
      - And - As Brothers In Christ - They Were Willing To Forbear & To Forgive Each Other - So That The Ministry Would Not Be Blamed!
- But - In Acts - This Is The Last Time:
  - We Read About Barnabas Or Mark:
    - And Our Attention Now Turns To Paul & His New Partner - Silas - Who Was One Of The Representatives From The Jerusalem Church!
    - And So - The Two Of Them Embark On:
- A New Confirmation!
  - 15:41 - "And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches!"
    - Since Barnabas Went To Cyprus With Mark:
      - That Freed Paul & Silas To Take The Land **Routes** Back To Those Towns & Cities:
      - That Caused Great Pain & Suffering For Paul!
- But - Even Through This Dispute - Between Paul & Barnabas:
  - We Can See The Direction Of The Lord!
    - In His Providence - God Can Take:
      - Even Our Weaknesses & Failures:
        - To Accomplish His Will In This World!
  - But Then - As We Begin Acts 16:
    - We Can Also See:

## 2. ***The Lord's Direction Through Dilemmas!***

- Like The Dilemma We Read About In:
  - 16:1-5 - "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!"
    - Now - We Can Be Sure That Paul Was:
      - Overjoyed When He Returned To:
        - **Derbe & Lystra & Iconium!**
    - Especially When He Heard About The Testimony Of Timothy!
      - And How God Saved This Young Man:
        - And How He Grew!
  - But - There Was A Dilemma:
    - About Timothy - Because Of His Family Ties!
      - Even Though His Father:
        - Was A Gentile - His Mother:
          - Was A Jew - And That Made Timothy A Jew As Well!
  - But Timothy Had Not Been Circumcised:
    - And That Would Be An Obstacle
      - In Sharing The Gospel To The Jews In His Hometown!
    - Well - It Didn't Seem Like Much Of A Dilemma For Paul!
      - Because - In 16:3 - He "Took And Circumcised Him Because Of The Jews Which Were In Those Quarters!"

- And We See From This:
- An Example Of Grace!
  - Paul Did Not Want There To Be Any:
    - Man-Made Obstacle To Get In The Way:
      - Of The Gospel!
        - Paul Knew That Circumcision Meant Nothing For The Christian!
  - But It Did Mean Something For The Jews!
    - And So - “Unto The Jews He Became A Jew” So That He “Might By All Means Save Some!”
      - The Circumcision Of Timothy:
        - Had Nothing To Do With His Salvation!
          - It Only Had To Do With Keeping The Doors Open For The Gospel To The Jews!
    - And So - A New Member Joins The Team:
      - Of Paul & Silas – Young Timothy!
        - And As They Travel - They Share:
- An Exhortation Of Grace!
  - In 16:4 - “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!”
    - This Is Where Things Could Have Become:
      - A Dilemma For Paul & Timothy & The Churches!
  - According To The Jerusalem Council:
    - Circumcision Was Not Required:
      - For Salvation!
  - But - Paul Had Timothy:
    - Circumcised - After His Salvation:
      - For The Sake Of The Jews!
  - Christians Still Struggle:
    - With This Question!
      - And Sometimes Still Wrestle With What This Means For Us & Our Ministries Today!
        - But - It Is Clear - That Neither Paul Nor Timothy Nor The Churches Saw Any Contradiction In These Actions!
  - They Sought To Live & To Serve:
    - In A Way That Manifested The Grace Of Christ:
      - To This World! And That Is Why In 16:5, There Is Further:
- An Establishment In Grace!
  - 16:5 - “And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily!”
- And So - Even Through This Dilemma:
  - We Can See The Direction Of The Lord!
    - In His Providence - God Can Take:
      - Even Our Dilemmas & Unanswered Questions:
        - To Further His Work In This World!
  - But Then - We Can Also See:

### 3. ***The Lord’s Direction Through Doubts!***

- Which We Read About In:
  - 16:6-8 - “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. / 8 And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas!”
    - Paul & Silas Clearly Had A Plan:
      - In Mind - As They Traveled Through The Interior Of What Is Today:
        - Modern Turkey!
  - After They Visited:
    - The Churches In:
      - Phrygia & Galatia - Likely Where:
        - The Four Cities Of The First Missionary Journey Were Located:
  - They Sought To:
    - **“Preach The Word In Asia!”**
      - More Than Likely - This Meant That Paul Set His Sights On The Capital City Of That

- Province - Ephesus - Which Was Further West!
  - But - The Lord Had Other Plans!
    - It Wasn't Yet Time For Paul To Visit That Part Of Asia! So - They:
- "Were Forbidden Of The Holy Ghost!"
  - Somehow - God Changed Their Direction!
    - Now - We're Not Sure How:
      - Whether Through A Voice From Heaven Or A Dream Or Even Providential Circumstances:
        - But - I'm Sure That, At Some Point, Paul & Silas & Timothy Wondered:
          - Why? Why Lord?
    - Why Not Asia?
      - Well - Without An Answer - According To:
        - 16:7 - They Then "Assayed To Go Into Bithynia" - Which Was Further North!
          - But - Once Again - The Lord Had Other Plans For Them!
            - So:
  - "The Spirit Suffered Them Not!"
    - Once Again - Somehow - God Changed Their Direction!
      - And I'm Sure Even More They Must Have Wondered:
        - Why? Why Lord?
      - Why Not Bithynia?
        - But - Without An Answer - According To:
          - 16:8 - They "Came Down To Troas!"
    - And In Troas:
      - They Waited For Further Instruction & Direction:
        - From The Lord!
          - And As They Waited - They Probably Thought About All The Ways:
            - The Lord Had Directed Their Paths!

### **Conclusion:**

1. Through Disputes & Through Dilemmas & Through Doubts!
  - Probably Even More:
    - Than Are Recorded For Us Here In Acts!
      - But - There Was **No Doubt:**
        - That The Holy Spirit Was Guiding Them Through It All!
2. And The Same Is True:
  - For You & For Us Today!
    - The Lord Makes This Promise:
      - That - As You - "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. / In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths!"
  - So Even Through:
    - The Disputes & Dilemmas & Doubts:
      - Of Your Own Life - Remember:
        - That Even Through These:
          - The Lord Is Directing Your Path!
    - So - Like Paul:
      - Keep Your Trust In Him!
        - After All - As Job Once Said:
          - "But He knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold!" (Job 23:10)

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