

ACTS: New Friends & A New Mission Field

Acts 16:1-10

Old Friends & New (v. 1-5)

- Paul has taken Silas with him as he travels to Tarsus, Paul's hometown (15:40)
 - Silas is a prophet (15:32)
 - He embodies the church's commitment to a Gentile mission, as he was one of the envoys bearing the Jerusalem council's letter (15:22, 27)
 - As a Roman citizen, he can move about easily within the Empire (16:37)
- Then go back to the towns of Derbe & Lystra that they had been to before
 - Their purpose is to deliver the news from the Jerusalem Council & to encourage the new-founded Churches
 - And continued to see daily growth in the congregations
- In Lystra, they meet a young man named Timothy
 - He is a brother in Christ with a good reputation
 - He is also of both Jewish & Gentile background
 - Making his ability to fit in with both groups an asset
 - However, Timothy was uncircumcised, which would be a hindrance to ministering to Jews
 - So, he agrees to be circumcised to remove the barrier
 - This illustrates the biblical principle of putting personal preference and even personal conviction aside to better minister to others (1 Cor. 9:19-23)

A New Mission Field (v. 6-10)

- Together they travel through the regions of Phrygia & Galatia
 - The Holy Spirit had communicated that they were to avoid the Roman province of Asia at this time
 - They will come here later when Paul travels to Ephesus
- They travel through the region of Mysia along the southern shore of the Sea of Marmara
 - And are intent of traveling into the region of Bithynia to the northeast
 - But the Spirit prevents them
- So, they travel west to Troas, a port town on the Aegean Sea
- While in Troas, Paul has a vision of a Macedonian man pleading with him to come help
 - So, the troupe sets sail to bring the Gospel to Europe

God's Timing & Plans

- Three times Paul receives directions from God on where to bring the Gospel
 - Steeped in Trinitarian language
- It was not that God did not care for the people in the regions that He directed Paul away from
 - But rather that the timing and people may have not been right
- God's timing and plans need to supersede our own

So What?

- Are we, like Timothy & Paul, willing to lay aside our preferences & personal convictions to ministry to others?
- Are we listening to the Spirit's leading?

Meditation Verse: *1 Corinthians 9:22b*