

Journey Through the New Testament

Acts 16 – 20

The Spirit of God's Gracious "NO"

6-2-19

Introduction

In this week's readings, Paul was prevented from speaking in the province of Asia. As a result of the Spirit's redirection, Paul and his team encountered Lydia in Philippi. She was a "Gentile God-worshipper" (Acts 16:14) who embraced Paul's message. She and her whole household were baptized. Paul's passion and mission influenced large numbers of Greeks and some Jews. Many of the Jews, however, became jealous (Acts 17:5) and opposed Paul's activity. They started riots and were abusive, causing him to move on to other regions. Through the guidance of the Spirit, Paul's faithfulness, and committed supporters the word spread and grew in power.

Group Sharing

Discuss insights or questions that came to mind in the experience of reading scripture this week. What obstacles remain as you attempt the daily practice of reading scripture? What have you learned through this experience so far?

Opening Prayer

O, Lord, we give thanks for those who brought the message of the risen Christ to us. Strengthen us to be your witnesses in this time and place. Make us willing to be bold, faithful followers of "The Way." Keep us alert to the places you are calling us and remind us that you always know best. In Christ we pray. Amen.

People, Places, and Problems

Bible Study Acts 17:1-4, 10-12, 34, 18:8 (CEB)

What?

1. What groups and individuals came to believe in Christ through Paul's message?

Lesson Notes: Throughout chapters 17-21, many individuals were faithful supporters and companions with Paul—Titus Justus, Jason, Timothy, Aquilla, Priscilla, Erastus, Gaius, Alexander, Sopater, Aristarchus, Secundus, Tychicus,

Trophimus, disciples in Syria, Philip the Evangelist, and many more. At this point in his travels, Paul has journeyed to Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, Macedonia Troas, and Jerusalem. Imagine the difficult travel conditions, dealing with opposition, and the need for food and lodging. Along the way and in each place where Paul ministered, faithful people supported him, cared his needs, and often protected him.

1. How do you see the work of the Holy Spirit as you review Paul's missionary journeys?
2. What does this tell us about our faithfulness and God's provision?

Assign the following scriptures to be read:

Acts 17:3,18,24-30 18:5,11 19:8 20:21,24-25

1. What message was Paul preaching in the synagogue and among the Gentiles?
2. What problems did Paul encounter as he stayed faithful in his mission of bringing the message of Jesus to the Gentiles?

So What?

1. Men, women, Jews and Gentiles responded to Paul's message about Jesus. So, what does this say to us about the Gospel?
2. Paul encountered many difficulties in his ministry. How might we interpret difficulty when we are involved in ministry? Lack of faith? Not following the Spirit? Using the wrong approach? Resistance due to evil, etc.?
3. What people and circumstances influenced you in coming to Christ?
4. Who or what supported you in your faith development?
5. If we were bolder in our discipleship, what problems might we run into?

Now What?

1. Where and with whom do you have influence?
2. How can you be supportive of others in their faith development?
3. How can you faithfully support the ministries of Living Word?

Closing

Go in my name, and because you believe, others will know that I live.

(Hymn, Freely, Freely)