

“A Call From Macedonia”

Acts 16:1-15

Message by Michael J. Barnard

January 14, 2024

Teaching Aim: To examine the call of Timothy into ministry. To recognize the challenges false teachers brought to the early church. To see how Paul handled these challenges as they came. To recognize the significance of the vision Paul had of a man in Macedonia calling for help and to see how this vision initiated evangelism into Europe. To explore the circumstances surrounding the salvation of Lydia and her household. To recognize the radical change that takes place in a new believer at regeneration.

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD’S WORD (*BIBLE STUDY*)

Part I: The calling of Timothy into ministry (Acts 16:1-5)

1. The people of Lystra had initially wanted to worship Paul and Barnabas. What caused their focus to change to murder? (See **Acts 14:19-20**) What violent act took place in **Acts chapter 14**? Why do you think the citizens decided to stone Paul? Did the stoning kill Paul, or was he just severely injured? (See Commentaries) What happened after the disciples gathered around Paul and apparently began praying? Was the raising of Paul a miracle? What would you have done if you were in Paul’s shoes, gone back into Lystra after the stoning, or left the area as quickly as you could? What did Paul do? Why?
2. How do you think the events of **Acts 14:19-20** must have affected those who witnessed it? What people of future biblical fame were living in Lystra at that time? (See **2 Tim. 1:4-5**) Is it possible young Timothy and his family witnessed the stoning and the raising of Paul? How do you think this would have affected them?
3. What can we learn about Timothy’s father from the biblical account? (**vs. 1**)? Was Timothy’s father alive at the time of Paul’s visit? What do we know about Timothy’s mother Eunice? What kind of reputation did Timothy have among the people of Lystra and Iconium (**vs. 2**)?
4. At the time of Paul’s visit, Timothy was probably in his late teens or early 20’s. Paul had recently refused to travel with John Mark because the young man had deserted him during Paul’s first missionary journey. Who did Paul choose as the replacement for John Mark (**vs. 3**)?

5. What did Paul require Timothy to do before joining his missionary team (**vs. 3**)? Why? Where did Paul usually go when he entered a city on the Sabbath? Timothy was uncircumcised at the time, most likely because his father was a Greek. Why would this hinder Timothy's ability to ministry to the Jews? How would the Jews know he was uncircumcised? In the case of Titus (a Gentile), Paul forbade him from being circumcised? Why? (See **Gal. 2:3-4**) Were the circumstances different? Is circumcision essential for the salvation of a Christian?

6. Why do you think Paul had Timothy circumcised and yet forbid Titus from being circumcised (**vs. 3**)? How did the philosophy of Paul in **1 Cor. 9:22-23b** work into each of these situations? Is this a good philosophy for us to follow today? Why or why not? (See **Rom. 14:13-15**) When should a Christian not be all things to all people? (See **Rom. 6:12-14**)

7. What can we learn about Timothy's ministry from the following verses: **1 Cor. 4:17; 2 Thess. 3:2; Phil. 2:19-23a**? Timothy was known to be timid at times, do you ever find yourself being timid when it comes to the things of the Lord? What can we learn about our own potential from the way God used Timothy?

8. What information did Paul and his missionary team pass on to the churches they visited (**vs. 4**)? (See **Acts 15:28-29**) Why do you think these four commands were so important to Gentile believers? Has your background ever influenced your Christian walk, or detracted you in any way from the liberties you have in Christ?

9. What can we learn about the success of Paul's ministry from **verse 5**? Why do you think so many churches are in decline today? (See **Amos 8:11**) What are some things that can be done to strengthen today's churches?

Part II: Paul's vision of a man in Macedonia (Acts 16:6-10)

1. In what modern country are the territories of Phrygia and Galatia located in today (**vs. 6**)? Was Paul's epistle to the Galatians written only to believers in a certain city, or was it a circulatory letter written to various churches in the region of Galatia? The Roman province of Asia is better known as Asia-Minor. What countries do most people think of when we speak of Asia today? When mentioned in the Bible, what region does Asia (particularly Asia-Minor) refer to today? Where did the Holy Spirit forbid Paul and his team to go in **verse 6**?
2. Where did Paul plan to go next (**vs. 7**)? What happened this time? Why? Though it wasn't originally in Paul's plans, God left only one direction open for Paul to travel. What was it (**vs. 8**)? Why is it important for us to be open to the leading of the Holy Spirit in our own lives today? On a scale of 1-10, how open have you been?
3. Paul had tried to go west toward Ephesus but God said, "No!" Then Paul tried to go north towards the Black Sea, but once again, God said "No!" Paul was left with one choice, go northwest towards the city of Troas. In God's providence, He had Paul exactly where He wanted him to be, in Troas. What unexpected event occurred while Paul was sleeping in Troas (**vs. 9**)?
4. At this point in the narrative, Paul, Silas, and Timothy were joined by the Greek doctor Luke in what scholars call "*the we passages*" of Acts (**vs. 10**). This has led some students to believe Luke may have been the man of Macedonia (modern Greece) calling for Paul to come and bring the gospel. Despite the speculation by some that Luke brought the message, the Bible clearly states Paul received a vision from the Lord in the night (**vs. 9**). What was the significance of this vision? What new territory was about to be opened to the gospel message? How has God called you in ministry?
5. How long did Paul wait after the vision before preparing to set sail for Europe? According to **verse 10**, who initiated Paul's vision? Has God ever called you to do something that you never thought of doing in ministry? If so, what was it?

Part III: The salvation and baptism of Lydia and her household (Acts 16:11-15)

1. The trip from Troas to Neapolis was approximately 120 miles (**vs. 11**). Why did the ship stop in Samothrace? How far was Neapolis from Philippi? (See Commentaries)
2. From Neapolis, Paul and his team traveled on "*the Egnatian Way*," the major east/west road of the Roman Empire to Philippi (**vs. 11**)? The Bible indicates the team remained at Philippi for some time. What was the significance of this city being a Roman colony? What special benefits did a Roman colony have that other cities did not? What kind of people became residents of Roman colonies?
3. As mentioned earlier, Paul's usual practice was to go to the Jewish synagogue on the Sabbath. What day of the week does the Sabbath fall on? Was there a Jewish synagogue in Philippi (**vs. 13**)? If not, why not? (See Commentaries) How many Jewish males in a city were required to form a synagogue?
4. What woman in this prayer group at Philippi would become a famous Bible personality (**vs. 14**)? What can we learn about this woman from **verse 14**? What was her trade and how did she become so wealthy? How difficult was it to extract this purple dye from a shellfish? Was it time consuming? What class of people most often wore purple clothes?
5. As Paul shared the gospel message with Lydia and the other women, God did something very special to the heart of Lydia. What was it (**vs. 14b**)? When did God open your heart to receive the gospel? (See **John 6:44; 6:64-65**). Are you thankful for what God did?

6. The Bible never mentions if Lydia had a husband or not, she may have been single or a widow. With Lydia's lucrative trade in purple dye, she was able to afford a large house; large enough for herself, her own servants, and even Paul and Silas as guests. What do we learn about her household from **verse 15a**? Why is it important for Christians to be baptized shortly after coming to faith in Christ? (See **Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 2:38**)

7. What is the significance of Christian baptism? (See **Rom. 6:1-14**) When and where were you baptized? What are some ways that your life has changed since that time? If you have not followed the Lord in water baptism, what is stopping you?

8. Lydia all but begged Paul and Silas to stay with her and the servants in her household. What can we learn about the size of Lydia's home from **verse 15**? It is likely Lydia's house hosted the first Church, not only in Philippi, but also on the continent of Europe. Perhaps the Philippian jailor eventually attended there as well. Are you willing to use your home for small group Bible studies and for the furtherance of the gospel to our community?

9. If you have never received Jesus Christ as Savior, why not do so right now by repenting of your sin and receiving Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord?

MINER'S CORNER ~ *Manna to live by!*

- It is important for every Christian to be discipled; not only do we need to be discipled, but we too should be discipling other believers as well.
- Through the work of God in Timothy's life and Paul's discipling him, Timothy became a spiritual giant in the early church.
- In ministry, we need to be sensitive to the culture in which we are ministering.
- When we minister God's way, the Church will blossom and grow, even if small in number.
- Sometimes God's plans are different from ours, it is important for every Christian to be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit in his or her life.
- Paul's vision of the man in Macedonia calling for help drew Paul and the gospel message to Europe for the first time.
- Through baptism, we identify with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ; by being baptized we publicly declare our love for Christ and desire to follow Him.