

September 29, 2024

God's Good News Story: The Church Alive & Growing

The Book of Acts Chapter 16

On The Road Again – Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey

Today we return to the book of Acts where we left off about 7 weeks ago. We have discovered from our previous messages there are Four (4) Key Elements of the 1st Century that we can learn from and apply as the 21st Century Church.

The Four Key Elements Are

- (1) Continuous Devotion & Worship.
- (2) Common Care & Concern
- (3) Courageous Obedience & Faithfulness.
- (4) Clear Commitment to Balancing Adherence to Biblical Doctrine & Gracious Application of Those Doctrines. (i.e. Truth in Love)

For those who have joined us in worship in the last 7 weeks or so, I encourage you to go to our website www.fcbroussard.com and click on ONLINE SERMONS and go back and watch from January the whole series so you can get the full picture.

Today we pick up with Chapter 16. Chronologically we can estimate the date for this chapter between 49-52 AD, This chapter is the 1st part of the record of the 2nd Missionary Journey of Paul. But, in order to set the stage correctly for this 2nd Missionary Journey, we must turn back to the last 5 verses of Chapter 15. Paul and Barnabas have returned from their 1st Missionary Journey

where (as you can see from the map) they had sailed to Cyprus then moved inland to the area know today as Turkey. *(By the way one of their co-workers, John Mark, abandoned them when they left Cyprus and returned home).* They had a successful church planting adventure and then returned to Antioch. There they had the confrontation with the Jewish Christian Judaizers who tried to tell them they need to follows the Jewish traditions in order to become a Christian. The debate was so strong they all went to Jerusalem to meet with the Church elders. After much debate James and the other elders composed a short letter to be distributed to all the Gentile Churches. Paul and Barnabas along with Silas and Judas (not the traitor) reutned to Antioch and began to share with the churches there the letter. This is where we pick up now with Acts 18:36-40... With Paul *“On the Road Again”*

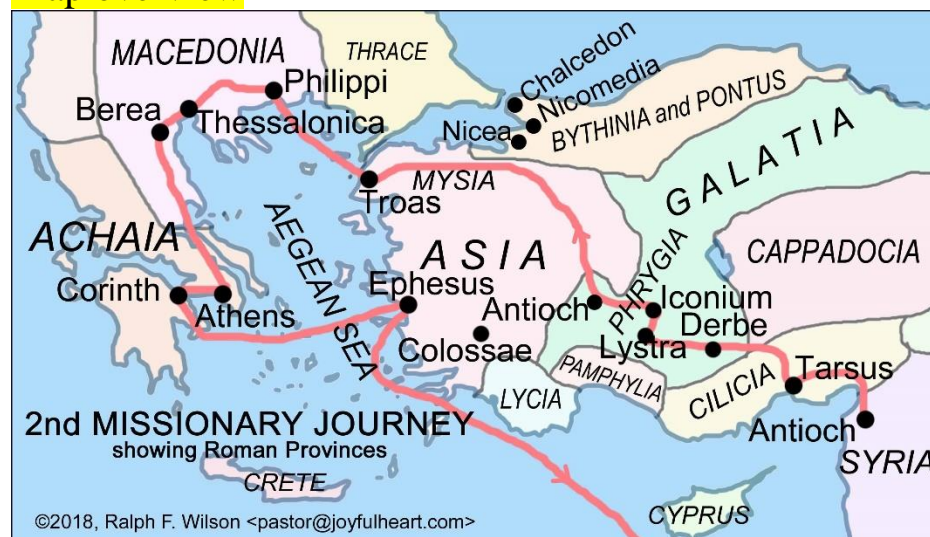
Acts 15:36-40...³⁶ *After some days Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us return and visit the brethren in every city in which we proclaimed the word of the Lord and see how they are.”*³⁷ *Barnabas wanted to take John, called Mark, along with them also.*³⁸ *But Paul kept insisting that they should not take him along who had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work.*³⁹ *And there occurred such a sharp disagreement that they separated from one another, and Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus.*⁴⁰ *But Paul chose Silas and left, being committed by the brethren to the grace of the Lord.*⁴¹ *And he was traveling through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.*

Let me pause here for a moment. I addressed this incident briefly in my Sunday, July 28 message. As a reminder these were the **Key Take-Away Points:**

- Recognize That Disagreements Have Always Existed And Will Continue To Exist.
- Remember That Disagreements Don't Have To Destroy The Love And Fellowship Between Christian Brothers And Sisters.
- Trust In God's Providence And Timing To Accomplish His Will.

God was able to still work great things for His Glory out of this situation. Rather than just ONE Missionary Team going to just one route, there are now TWO Missionary Teams with a new area being witnessed to.

Map overview



New Team Member:

Acts 16:1-5...¹ Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. And a disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek,² and he was well spoken of by the brethren who were in Lystra and Iconium.³ Paul wanted this man to go with him; and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those parts, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.⁴ Now while they were passing through the cities, they were delivering the decrees which had been decided upon by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem, for them to observe.⁵ So the churches were being strengthened in the faith and were increasing in number daily.

New Vision/Calling:

Acts 16:6-12...⁶ They passed through the Phrygian and GALATIAN region, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia;⁷ and after they came to Mysia, they were trying to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them;⁸ and passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas.⁹ A vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing and appealing to him, and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us."¹⁰ When he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.¹¹ So putting out to sea from Troas, we ran a straight course to Samothrace, and on the day following to Neapolis;¹² and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia, a Roman colony; and we were staying in this city for some days.

This account is where the phrase “Macedonian Call” comes from. Paul & his team had grand plans to go to many places to preach, but God had a specific plan that He wanted Paul to follow. We can learn from this passage some unique things about seeking, discerning **and adjusting to God’s Will**. Platt gives these points. (p.252)

1. **God guides us through both closed and open doors.**
2. **God’s guidance requires our wise conclusions** (vs 10)
3. **God’s guidance is both personal and communal.**
4. **God’s guidance often comes gradually and unpredictably.**

When it comes to following God’s guidance, begin by knowing and obeying God’s revealed will found in the Bible. Then trust in God, be sensitive to the Holy Spirit’s promptings, seek godly counsel, wisely make conclusions, think carefully and make a faith decision and go with it.

Next, we see some wonderful and unique results of salvation from their Good News Journey. We see three new converts to the faith from very different backgrounds.

New Convert – Cultured Sinner

¹³ And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to a riverside, where we were supposing that there would be a place of prayer; and we sat down and began speaking to the women who had assembled. ¹⁴ A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul. ¹⁵ And when she and her household had been

baptized, she urged us, saying, “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and stay.” And she prevailed upon us.

Paul and his team were now in the city of Phillippi. It was known as “Little Rome”. Apparently, there was not a synagogue because Paul went to a place of prayer ‘Down by the Riverside’, literally. A group of godly Jewish women would gather for prayer and Paul joined them. One woman named Lydia was there. She was ‘a worshipper of God’, which meant she was a faithful follower of the Jewish faith and believed in Yahweh. She was not aware, however, that the Messiah, Jesus, had come. She was a genuine seeker who listened with an open heart to Paul. She was a very cultured, wealthy woman who was a dealer in purple clothes. Purple clothes were for royalty and the wealthy. She along with her household, who were there with her at the prayer meeting were gloriously saved and then baptized to affirm their faith in Jesus. She then invited Paul and his team to her house to stay and eat.

This salvation account is the first of three wonderful conversions that showed the diversity of God’s plan for the church. She is an example of those who are wealthy, well-educated and powerful, and their need to be saved just like anyone else.

Next the pendulum swings to the total opposite side to a captured slave girl fortuneteller.

New Convert – Captured Sinner

¹⁶ It happened that as we were going to the place of prayer, a slave-girl having a spirit of divination met us, who was bringing her masters much profit by fortune-telling. ¹⁷ Following after Paul and us, she kept crying out, saying, “These men are bond-servants of the Most High God, who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation.” ¹⁸ She continued doing this for many days. But Paul was greatly annoyed, and turned and said to the spirit, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her!” And it came out at that very moment.

One thing about traveling with Paul, there was never a dull moment. A captured slave girl fortuneteller was following them and the demons within her recognized the power of Jesus in Paul and his team. They were greatly disturbed and possibly trying to slander the team by proclaiming truth, but with obvious wrong motivation. Paul had enough of this slander and cast out the demon “In Jesus Name”. This poor, slave girl was gloriously set free from her bondage. Her conversion reiterates that the Good News is for everyone, no matter your background or situation.

Sub-Point – Captured Missionaries

¹⁹ But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the market place before the authorities, ²⁰ and when they had brought them to the chief magistrates, they said, “These men are throwing our city into confusion, being Jews, ²¹ and are proclaiming customs which it is

not lawful for us to accept or to observe, being Romans.” ²² The crowd rose up together against them, and the chief magistrates tore their robes off them and proceeded to order them to be beaten with rods. ²³ When they had struck them with many blows, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to guard them securely; ²⁴ and he, having received such a command, threw them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

Sadly, Paul was not well received by the men who had owned this poor slave girl as they realized they had lost their ‘cash cow’ so to speak. They rallied the crowd into a frenzy and the local magistrates beat them without even a legal hearing. Paul and his team found themselves captive prisoners in jail. How ironic, Paul had just set a captive slave free and now he finds himself a captive in jail. The story does not end here, let us see how God miraculously sets Paul, the Prisoner free and at the same time sets a Callous Jailer free from his sin...

New Convert – Callous Sinner

²⁵ But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them; ²⁶ and suddenly there came a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison house were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone’s chains were unfastened. ²⁷ When the jailer awoke and saw the prison doors opened, he drew his sword and was about to kill

himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. ²⁸ But Paul cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Do not harm yourself, for we are all here!” ²⁹ And he called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas, ³⁰ and after he brought them out, he said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” ³¹ They said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.” ³² And they spoke the word of the Lord to him together with all who were in his house. ³³ And he took them that very hour of the night and washed their wounds, and immediately he was baptized, he and all his household. ³⁴ And he brought them into his house and set food before them, and rejoiced greatly, having believed in God with his whole household.

Just as Peter was delivered from his prison captivity, Paul and his team are delivered as well, and in the process the *Callous Jailer* is turned into a *Caring Convert*.

These three distinct and unique conversions remind us that the Good News Story is for everyone, anywhere. No one is too far gone or too well off to be made new.

Verses 35-40 tells of how Paul demands that the good name and reputation of Christians be cleared. He insists that they be cleared, and the name of Christ honored.

³⁵ Now when day came, the chief magistrates sent their policemen, saying, “Release those men.” ³⁶ And the jailer reported these words to Paul, saying, “The chief magistrates have sent to release you. Therefore, come out now and go in peace.” ³⁷ But Paul said to them, “They have beaten us in public without trial, men who are Romans, and have thrown us into prison; and now are they sending us away secretly? No indeed! But let them come themselves and bring us out.” ³⁸ The policemen reported these words to the chief magistrates. They were afraid when they heard that they were Romans, ³⁹ and they came and appealed to them, and when they had brought them out, they kept begging them to leave the city. ⁴⁰ They went out of the prison and entered the house of Lydia, and when they saw the brethren, they encouraged them and departed.

As we close, this passage today gives us wise directions for seeking God’s will, and challenges us to be ...say it with me...

We Are Called to Be Powerful Witnesses of God’s Good News Story, Motivated by Love, & Empowered by the Holy Spirit.

My challenge to you that are Christians, earnestly seek God’s guidance and be faithful and fearless sharers of God’s Good News Story to everyone, everywhere. To those of you who are not yet Christians, what are you waiting for, join Lydia, the slave girl and the jailer in turning your life over to Christ in full submission and be born again.