

Acts 16:1-15 God Superintends the Gospel Ministry

I. God Calls Timothy To The Ministry (1-3)

A. Paul Meets Timothy (1-2)

1. Timothy Was an Ordinary Young Man

- a. He wasn't as strong and tough as Paul
 - i. 1 Timothy 5:23 – (Paul writing to Timothy)
Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities.
 - ii. Paul repeatedly encourages Timothy in his letters to not be afraid and not let others look down upon him
- b. He was faithful to the gospel and to Paul
 - i. Paul refers to Timothy repeatedly as his “son in the faith”
 - ii. Paul desired Timothy's company in his last days (see 2 Ti. 4:9, 21)

2. Timothy is Half Jew Half Gentiles (1)

- a. Timothy is a disciple of Christ in Lystra
 - i. Remember the church was established there during Paul's first mission
 - ii. Timothy may have been converted then, or as the church grew and ministered after Paul's departure
 - iii. Timothy would prove to be very important in Paul's ministry and the church
- b. Timothy's Mother was Jewish
 - i. According to 2 Ti. 3:15, Timothy had been instructed in the Scriptures since childhood
 - Timothy's mother made sure he was schooled in the Old Testament
 - Timothy's mother made sure he was acquainted with his Jewish heritage
 - ii. Although Jewish, Timothy's mother is said to be a believer (1)
 - She may have been converted during Paul's first mission there.
 - According to 2 Ti. 1:5 both Timothy's mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois were believers
- c. Timothy's Father was Greek
 - i. This may have been a blemish against Timothy according to the Jews
 - Jewish women were looked down upon for marrying Gentiles

- This may have added some amount of embarrassment to Timothy
 - ii. Certainly Timothy's uncircumcision was a blemish against him in their eyes
 - Most likely, since Timothy's mother schooled him in Judaism – His father had forbidden his circumcision at birth
 - While Timothy would have been considered Jewish, being uncircumcised would have labeled him outside of the covenant in the synagogue
- 3. Timothy's Christian Testimony Was Well Known (2)
 - a. The Believers spoke well of him
 - b. We aren't told how his testimony was known
 - i. Perhaps he was vocal about the gospel
 - ii. Perhaps he was heavily involved in ministry
 - iii. Certainly his life showed the characteristics of following Christ
- B. Paul Prepares Timothy For the Mission (3)
 - 1. Paul Desires Timothy to Accompany Them (3a)
 - a. Timothy was already well known as a disciple among the believers in that area
 - b. Timothy would be valuable in areas where the church needed strengthening
 - 2. Paul Has Timothy Circumcised (3b)
 - a. To Aid in the Spread of the Gospel
 - i. Paul had just fought for the right not to circumcise Gentiles
 - ii. Timothy would be circumcised not in order to be saved, but in order to be a witness
 - Paul always started the mission in a new city in the Jewish synagogues
 - Timothy, as an uncircumcised man would have immediately turned the Jews against them
 - Paul was clearing an obstacle to the reception of the gospel
 - iii. Timothy was circumcised so that he would not be a hindrance
 - b. To Become all things to Win people to Christ (1 Co. 9:20)
 - i. Timothy's mother was Jewish so that made him an uncircumcised Jew rather than just a Gentile
 - ii. The Jerusalem council didn't command Jews to abandon their traditional practice – they only understood them as having no saving power

- iii. This is Paul and Timothy demonstrating the “love” principle of restraining a freedom so as to not offend someone else’s conscience.

II. God Uses The Ministry To Grow The Churches (4-5)

A. The Missionaries Deliver The Apostles Decrees (4)

- 1. The decree was that the Gentiles didn’t have to become Jews
- 2. The decree was that the Gentiles could also no longer remain pagan
- 3. The decree was that the Gentiles must walk in love with their Jewish brethren

B. The Churches Grew in Strength

- 1. Because of the ministry of Paul and Timothy’s sacrifice, the churches grew in strength
- 2. Discipleship and seeing others grow in Christ was a passion for the Apostle Paul

C. The Churches Grew in Number

- 1. Growing churches are churches that grow numerically
- 2. Growing believers are believers who are reaching out to the lost
- 3. The true proclamation of the gospel grows the believers in the church and it grows the church as well.

III. God Directs the Ministry (6-12)

A. Christ Restricts the Mission To Certain Areas (6-8)

- 1. The Missionaries are Forbidden to Go to Asia (6)
 - a. This is not the continent of Asia today
 - b. This was the Roman province of Asia which was in modern day Turkey.
 - c. This province included Ephesus and the churches to whom John wrote in Revelation
 - d. The gospel was brought to this area at some point later
 - i. Even Paul visited and ministered in Ephesus later in Acts
 - e. This area was SW from Paul’s location
- 2. The Missionaries are Forbidden to go to Bithynia (7)
 - a. This area was also later evangelized
 - b. Peter writes to believers in Bithynia in 1 Peter (see 1 Peter 1:1)
 - c. This area was North of Paul’s location at Lystra
- 3. The Missionaries Go down to Troas (8)
 - a. The only way open to the missionaries was North West
 - b. We are not told exactly how they were “forbidden” or “hindered” from going the other directions

B. Christ Leads the Mission to Macedonia (9-12)

- 1. Paul is urged to go to Macedonia by a vision (9)
 - a. God gives Paul a vision of where he is to go
 - b. A Man from Macedonia asks for their help

- i. The Gospel is the help people need
 - ii. Social help is necessary, but not the focus of the Great Commission
 - 2. Paul intends to obey God and preach in Macedonia (10)
 - 3. Paul Voyages to Philippi in Macedonia (11-12)
 - a. Macedonia was on the edge of what is Europe today
 - i. They left from Troas
 - ii. They arrived at Samothrace
 - iii. They went to Neapolis
 - iv. They travel to Philippi
 - Philippi was “a leading city” in Macedonia
 - b. The reason the west has been predominantly “Christianized” over the course of history may be in part because Paul and Silas were hindered from going in another direction?
- IV. God Uses The Ministry To Convert Souls (13-15)
 - A. The Missionaries Find a Prayer Meeting (13)
 - 1. Lydia will be the first recorded convert in Europe
 - 2. She was from Thyatira which was in “Lydia” so some people take her name to mean “The Lydian woman”
 - 3. She was a business woman – a seller of purple
 - a. Purple dye was a sought after commodity
 - b. Latin inscriptions from Philippi and Thessalonica document a guild of purple dyers
 - B. Lydia was a Wealthy Worshiper of God (14a)
 - 1. She is a “God-fearer”
 - a. She is a gentile who adheres to the Jewish faith
 - b. She attends the gatherings of the Jews (i.e. synagogue)
 - C. Lydia’s Heart is Opened by God (14b)
 - 1. Notice that God takes the initiative in Lydia’s Salvation
 - 2. Man’s heart is dead in sin – the Spirit moves as the gospel is preached by Paul and Lydia’s heart is opened
 - D. Lydia Believes and Is Baptized (15a)
 - 1. Lydia’s trust in Jesus and is saved
 - 2. Lydia is baptized in obedience to the command of Christ, demonstrating her faith
 - E. Lydia Desires to Aid God’s Mission (15b)
 - 1. Lydia immediately offers aid to the commission of Christ
 - 2. Lydia offers what she has to aid the missionaries

**Apostle Paul's
Second Missionary Journey
49 - 52 A.D.**

