

“A Call Of Desperation!”

Acts 16:1-15

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Teaching Aim: To examine the calling of young Timothy into ministry. To recognize the challenges the early Church faced from false teachers and to examine Paul’s resolve in addressing these issues. To realize the significance of Paul’s vision of a man of Macedonia and to see how this vision opened the door for the evangelization of Europe. To celebrate the salvation of a wealthy God-fearer named Lydia along with her household. To understand the importance of Christian baptism.

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 wanted to worship Paul and Barnabas. Why do you think they suddenly changed their minds? (See **Acts 14:19-20**) What violent act took place just outside of the city of Lystra? Why do you think the people stoned Paul? Did the stoning kill him or was he just severely injured? (See Commentaries) What happened after the disciples gathered around Paul and prayed over him? Was Paul’s rising a miracle? Would you have gone back into Lystra after the stoning or left the area? What did Paul do? Why?

2. How do you think the events of Acts 14:19-20 may have affected the people who witnessed it? Who were among the residents of Lystra at the time? (See **2 Tim. 1:4-5**) Is it possible young Timothy and his family witnessed this event? How do you think this would have affected young Timothy, or anyone else for that matter?

3. What do we know about Timothy’s father (**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 decide to take to replace John Mark (**vs. 3**)?

5. What did Paul require Timothy to do before having him on his missionary team (**vs. 3**)? Why? What was Paul's usual first stop every time he entered a city on the Sabbath? Timothy was uncircumcised at the time, probably because of his Greek father. Why would this hinder Timothy's ministry to the Jews? In the case of Titus (a Gentile), Paul forbid him from being circumcised? Why? (See **Gal. 2:3-4**) Is circumcision essential for Christian salvation?

6. Why do you think Paul had Timothy circumcised and yet forbid Titus from being circumcised (**vs. 3**)? How does Paul's philosophy of **1 Cor. 9:22-23b** work into each of these situations? Is this a good philosophy for us to follow today? (See **Rom. 14:13-15**) When should we 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. What can we learn about our own potential from the way God used a timid young man named Timothy?

8. What information did Paul and his missionary team pass on to the churches they visited (**vs. 4**)? (See **Acts 15:28-19**) Why do you think these four commands were especially important to Gentile believers? Has your background ever affected your Christian walk?

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

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

1. In what modern country were the territories of Phrygia and the region of Galatia located (**vs. 6**)? Was Paul's epistle to the Galatians written to believers in a certain city or to believers in a certain region? The Roman province of Asia is better known as Asia-Minor. What countries do most people think of today when we speak of Asia? What region is referred to in the Bible? What did the Holy Spirit forbid Paul and his team to do in **verse 6**?

2. What was Paul's next plan (**vs. 7**)? What happened this time? Why? Though it hadn't been in Paul's plans, God left one direction open for him. What was it (**vs. 8**)? Why is it important for us to be open to the leading of the Holy Spirit in our lives today? Are you?

3. Paul had tried to go west toward Ephesus and God said, "No!" Paul then tried to go north towards the Black Sea, but once again, God said "No!" Paul was left with one choice, go northwest towards Troas. God had Paul exactly where He wanted him in Troas. What unexpected event occurred while Paul was sleeping (**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 of some that Luke brought the message, the Bible clearly says Paul received a vision in the night (**vs. 9**). What was the significance of this call? What new territory was about to be opened up to the gospel?

5. How long did Paul wait after the vision before preparing to set sail for Europe? According to **verse 10**, where did Paul's vision originate?

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 team would remain at Philippi for some time. What was the significance of a city being a Roman colony? What special benefits did a Roman colony receive?

3. Paul's usual practice was to go to the synagogue on the Sabbath. What did he have to do in Philippi (**vs. 13**)? Why? How many Jewish males were required to form a synagogue?

4. What famous Bible personality did Paul find among the women (**vs. 14**)? What can we learn about this woman from **verse 14**? What was her trade and why did it make her wealthy? How difficult was it to extract this dye from the murex shell fish?

5. As Paul shared the gospel message with Lydia and the other women, God did something very special to the heart of Lydia. What did He do (**vs. 14b**)? Is the same required for our salvation today? (See **John 6:44; 6:64-65**)

6. The Bible never mentions Lydia had a husband, she may have been single or a widow. With Lydia's lucrative trade, she was able to have a large house and servants to go with it. What can 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 begs Paul and his team to join her and her servants at her house. What can we learn about the size of Lydia's house from **verse 15**? It is likely Lydia housed the first Church, not only in Philippi, but also in the continent of Europe. 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 repent right now in prayer and receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord?

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

- God took a young man from Lystra named Timothy; through Paul's discipleship and the work of the Holy Spirit in Timothy's life, he was turned into a spiritual giant!
- In witnessing, we need to be sensitive to the culture in which we live!
- When we do things God's way, the Church will be strengthened and will increase in number!
- Sometimes God's plans are different than ours; we need to be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit in our lives!
- Paul's vision of a man of Macedonia calling for help opened the door to the evangelization of Europe!
- Through baptism we identify ourselves with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ!