



JOURNEY WITH PAUL: CALLED TO SUFFER

Study Guide

October 16, 2022

Opening Prayer

Holy God, help us to continue to discern your call that we might be responsive as we listen to your voice.

As we embark on our journey of faith, push us to go further than we first imagined that we might see you in new and wondrous ways, and that others may be blessed by your presence and power.

Help us to remember our baptismal call that we belong fully to you. And with that realization to remember we have nothing to fear for our lives are in your hands. But also to remember our lives are meant for your mission to the world. Empower us with that Spirit to go and proclaim Christ as Lord.

Amen.

Video Teaching

Read Acts 15:36–16:5

Once the Jerusalem Council decided Gentile converts did not need to be circumcised, Paul was eager to travel and preach again. Barnabas was, too, and wanted to take John Mark (his cousin—cf. Colossians 4:10) with them. Paul disagreed strongly—John had deserted them on the first missionary journey (cf. Acts 13:13). Instead of using up their energy fighting with one another, they multiplied their outreach. Barnabas took John Mark to Cyprus; Paul took Silas to Derbe and Lystra, and there recruited Timothy, who became a trusted protégé.

- What a blow it would have been to the early church if Paul and Barnabas had stayed in Antioch feuding, trying to get church members on their side of the disagreement. What inner qualities did it take for them to “make lemonade out of a lemon,” turning their one evangelistic team into two? Paul later seems to have reconciled with John Mark (cf. 2 Timothy 4:11). What helps you leave past differences behind, and focus on building God’s kingdom even with those you may have disagreed with?
- Barnabas helped Paul (cf. Acts 9:26-28). Barnabas believed John Mark deserved a second chance. Paul took Silas, and then Timothy, under his wing to instruct and model for them. Who has inspired, encouraged and helped you? Do they know how much you appreciate that? Who can you encourage and help by sharing what you’ve learned?

Read Acts 16:6-10

In some way (Luke didn’t say how), the Holy Spirit seemed to put limits on Paul’s work in Asia Minor. Finally, in the port city of Troas, Paul had a vivid vision of a man from Macedonia (see map) asking him to come there and help them. So Paul and his companions left promptly for Macedonia, taking the gospel for the first time into a part of Europe.

- Paul usually began preaching in the synagogue—but Philippi, though sizeable, had no synagogue. So Paul found a place of prayer by the river, and spoke with the women who met there. Lydia, “a dealer in purple cloth” (i.e. high end fabric in royal colors), was one of his first converts. Paul baptized her and her household, and she offered her hospitality while they were in Philippi. How good are you at moving into unknown territory (physical or mental) if that’s what it takes to carry out God’s mission for you?
- A fascinating detail occurred in this reading. In verses 7-8, the writer spoke of Paul and his companions as “they.” But after the dream, verse 10 said, “WE prepared to leave for the province of Macedonia.” With no elaborate fanfare, Luke told his readers that he joined Paul’s group in Troas. How did the use of “we” highlight the trust Theophilus (cf. Acts 1:1-2) (and we) can have in the eyewitness quality of Acts? How did the writer’s refusal to use “we” except when it was accurate stress the writing’s integrity?



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Read Acts 16:16–34

After Paul and Silas had been in Philippi for several days, they were put in prison (ironically, for setting an exploited woman free). Around midnight, in stocks in prison, they were praying and singing hymns. Luke reported that an earthquake shook the prison (again with no further explanation). Paul and Silas calmed their jailer's fears (if a Roman jailer let prisoners escape, he usually suffered the prisoners' penalty), and led him and his family to new life in Christ.

Key points 2nd Missionary Journey

- Jerusalem Council reauthorizes Paul
- Paul parts ways with his long-time companion, Barnabas
- Paul adds Silas, Luke, and Timothy as his companions in ministry
- Paul goes to continental Europe into Macedonia/Greece converting Lydia at Philippi
- Paul is imprisoned in Philippi and miraculously is freed
- Paul in Thessaloniki
- Paul in Athens
- Paul in Corinth
- Paul returns to Antioch

- Okay, let's think about this—"Around midnight, in stocks in prison, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns." To what extent can you deal with even a long line at the store or the DMV office by praying and singing hymns (inwardly if not outwardly)? In what ways does Paul and Silas' example provide a benchmark to help you assess how much room you have to keep growing toward spiritual maturity?
- After the earthquake, Paul's jailer prepared to kill himself rather than face the sentence of any prisoners he let escape. Scholar N. T. Wright said his question in verse 30 meant, "Will you please tell me how I can get out of this mess?" Paul and Silas' reply—"Believe in the Lord Jesus"—reached beyond his immediate concern, and spoke to the whole broken, lost mess we humans face. It's a basic question each of us has to answer: do you believe in (not just "about") Jesus?

Paul's Journey



Closing Prayer