

CP — 9/24/23

Acts 15:36–16:5 - The Start of Paul's Second Missionary Journey

Sermon Outline

I. Fully Obeying the Great Commission (15:36)

- “after some days”
- We are called to “make disciples, not decisions.” (Matthew 28:19–20)
- The most effective tool for evangelism is to make disciples who make disciples.
- The greatest evangelist the world has ever seen was also the greatest discipler.
- Paul knew the ultimate priority of evangelism is discipleship — teaching believers to obey all that Christ has commanded them. (Ephesians 4:12–16, Colossians 1:28)
- Mature and spiritually strong local churches have far greater and lasting impact than evangelistic crusades.

II. Paul and Barnabas Separate (15:37–41)

- Disagreements happen
 - “sharp disagreement” (15:39) = violent action/emotion
 - This wasn't pretty, but we are reminded that they were mere men.
- It's ok to go separate ways.
- When one season ends, keep being obedient in what you know to do.
- Failure does not have to be fatal!
 - Colossians 4:10
 - 2 Timothy 4:11 — “Luke alone is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is very useful to me for ministry.”
 - Philemon 24 — Paul lists Mark as a “fellow worker.”
 - Mark wrote the gospel of Mark.
- Because of their dispute, God now had two groups of missionaries rather than one.
 - God can use whatever to advance His kingdom, even our division.

III. Timothy joins Paul and Silas (16:1–5)

- See map for reference/geography
- Timothy: Half Jew/Half Greek (possibly 16–21 years of age)
 - He became a believer in Acts 14 or immediately following. (2 Timothy 1:5, 3:14–15)
 - Paul loved Timothy as a son. (Timothy's father was most probably not a believer.)
 - 1 Corinthians 4:17 — “my beloved and faithful child in the Lord”
 - Philippians 2:22 — “as a son with a father”
 - 1 Timothy 1:2 — “my true child in the faith”
 - 2 Timothy 1:2 — “my beloved child”
- Rabbinic law taught that children born of Jewish mother were considered Jewish, so Paul had Timothy circumcised.
 - This is not salvific but strategic. Paul refused to circumcise Titus. (Galatians 2:3)

- Remember Paul's ministry principle of 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 to become all things to all people and serve them that they might hear the gospel and be saved.
- God is putting together quite the missionary team. Two men who could step anywhere in the known world and bring the gospel with them.
- Paul understood the culture and removed any unnecessary offense.
- "So the churches were strengthened in the faith..." and they grew. (16:5)
- Faith that is growing stronger also becomes louder and bolder.

Application:

- Christian maturity and obedience to Christ are the goal of the church.
 - Not just converts, but obedient followers of Jesus
- Disagreements and personality conflicts should be expected in the church.
 - The Church is made up of broken, yet redeemed people.
 - People will disappoint you!
 - But that doesn't have to be a source of resentment and bitterness.
- Sometimes God moves you from where you are because He has plans for you somewhere else.
 - When a job comes to an end, it's not final for you.
 - God still has a job for you somewhere else.
- Your failure does not have to be fatal.
 - Maybe you have messed up, and you think it's rendered you useless.
 - God makes it His business to use people who don't have it all figured out.
 - God takes the broken so that in our weakness His power can be perfected in us.
- How serious are you about reaching people for Jesus?
 - Are you willing to put down potential stumbling blocks so others can know Christ?

Small Group Discussion

1. How did the Holy Spirit use the Bible passage and sermon to speak to you? What stood out the most?
2. What does the passage teach you about the goal of evangelism?
3. What does the passage teach you about relational conflict?
4. What missional lesson(s) do we learn from Paul's decision to have Timothy circumcised?
5. What does it mean to "become all things to all people?" How do we do that and not compromise our conviction? Does "becoming all things to all people" have a limit? Discuss.