

# Lesson 15: The Second Missionary Journey Begins

Acts 15:36-16:40

I heard a song last weekend by Kari Jobe, and the lyrics have stuck with me:

“Come all ye weary and ye broken; Come to the table of the Lord; Come sing the song of the forgiven; Come lay your burden on the Word. Come and find peace; Everyone needs a little rest; Everyone needs a little joy and a song to sing in the darkest night...”<sup>20</sup>

*A song to sing in the darkest night.* According to our text this week, when Paul and Silas landed in a Philippian prison, they sang “hymns to God” (Acts 16:25). They had been beaten with rods and thrown into the inner room of the prison – their feet chained in the stocks. I imagine they were bruised and bloody, singing words of worship through split and swollen lips. And then, in the midst of their song, an earthquake shook the ground to which their feet were chained, and “all the doors were opened and everyone’s chains were unfastened” (Acts 16:26).

I wonder what burdens we bring today to a Lord inviting us to lay them out before Him, to “lay them on the Word.” He invites us to come to Him to find peace and rest and joy. He dares us to find “a song to sing in the darkest night.” To look up through tear-filled eyes. To reach for Him with weary hands. To choose to worship Him even in the midst of circumstances that tempt us to do otherwise. Could it be that when we do, we might find that the earth’s shaking around us is just enough to open the doors of our prisons and unfasten the chains of our bondage?

*“But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them; 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.”*

*Acts 16:25-26*

## Complicated Relationships

Read Acts 15:36-16:5. Begin to trace Paul’s second journey on your map, *The Second Missionary Journey of Paul*, as you come to references.

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<sup>20</sup> Jobe, Kari. “Everyone Needs a Little.” *Kari Jobe*. Gateway Create Publishing, 2008.

1. How did the idea for the second missionary journey come about according to Acts 15:36? What was the issue that arose between Paul and Barnabas in Acts 15:37-38? You can look back to Acts 13:13 to see the incident they're discussing. Summarize each man's point.

We don't know *why* Mark left them in Pamphylia. We only know that he did leave them and that Paul apparently thought it disqualified him for service on this next journey, which is only about two years after his desertion. Barnabas, on the other hand, thought that Mark could handle it. I'm reminded of Acts 9 when Barnabas took the newly converted Saul to the apostles at Jerusalem and persuaded them to accept him – a reformed slayer of believers. Want to talk about a risk? Barnabas may have been thinking that Mark was less of a liability than Paul had been back then!

2. What did Paul and Barnabas do as a result of their disagreement in Acts 15:39-40?
3. From Paul's words in Colossians 4:10, 2 Timothy 4:11 and Philemon 24, what apparently happened later between Paul and Mark? What is suggested about Paul and Barnabas in 1 Corinthians 9:6 – a letter Paul wrote several years after this disagreement?

In this portion of Scripture, we meet two new, key players in the Book of Acts.

4. Who accompanied Paul from Antioch? What do you learn about him in Acts 15:22, 15:32 and 16:37? (In some of Paul's letters he is also referred to as *Silvanus*.)
5. Who did Paul pick up in Lystra? What do you learn about him in Acts 16:1-3 and 2 Timothy 1:5?
6. How did Paul later feel about Timothy according to 1 Timothy 1:2? From 1 Timothy 4:11-16, what did Paul recognize about Timothy?
7. Why did Paul have Timothy circumcised in Acts 16:3? Consider also 1 Corinthians 9:19-23.

8. From Acts 16:4-5, what was the people's reaction to the decision that Paul brought from the Jerusalem Council regarding Gentiles?

Earlier in Acts 15, we saw another disagreement among believers, it concluded with a Council's decision, which then went forth and strengthened the believers in their walks with the Lord. It is possible that disagreements and dissensions among believers can be resolved, unity can be restored and the faith of many can be strengthened!

### **The Women by the River**

Read Acts 16:6-15. Continue to plot Paul's journey on your map.

9. How did the Spirit guide Paul and Silas in Acts 16:6-7? You may want to mark on your map the directions that the Spirit gave.
10. From Acts 16:9-10, how were Paul and his party called to Macedonia?
11. Who do you notice has joined Paul in Acts 16:10?
12. Once they arrived in Philippi in Macedonia, where did Paul and his companions go and who did they meet there in Acts 16:13?
13. What do you learn about Lydia in Acts 16:14?
14. Who opened Lydia's heart, and how did she respond to Paul's message?

### **The Prison Miracle**

Finish reading Acts 16:16-40.

15. Paul and company met another woman in Acts 16:16-18. What was her situation?
  
16. What do you see is true of demons in this encounter and in Mark 3:11 and James 2:19?
  
17. What did Paul do in Acts 16:18, and how did the demon respond?
  
18. In Acts 16:19, the girl's owners were angered because they lost the profit that they had made off of her. Have you ever profited from someone else's bondage? Perhaps it was their desire to please man that made the more "useful" to you. Perhaps their frailty and need made you feel needed and valued. Let's take some time to search our hearts in the presence of the Lord and ask for forgiveness where we have been wrong.
  
19. What happened to Paul and Silas as a result of their bringing freedom to the slave girl in Acts 16:20-24?
  
20. In Acts 16:25, Paul and Silas *chose* – actively decided – to worship God even from their prison cell. Are you currently in the midst of any situation that makes worship feel more like a choice than a feeling or natural response? What do you see as the difference? How might you worship God even when you don't feel like it?
  
21. What happened during the night in Acts 16:26. How did the jailer respond to the events of the night in Acts 16:27-34?

22. What happened the next day according to Acts 16:35-36? The Greek word translated *police* is literally “one who carries the rods.”<sup>21</sup> These were likely the very same men who, less than 24 hours earlier, had beaten Paul and Silas. In Acts 16:37, how did Paul respond to the police – to *the ones who carried the rods*?

What the magistrates had ordered was illegal. They had had Roman citizens beaten with rods without a formal hearing or trial to establish their guilt (Acts 16:37).<sup>22</sup> Needless to say, the magistrates showed up with apologies (Acts 16:39), and Paul – in typical fashion – took a moment to encourage some believers before departing.

### Prepare for Life

A lot of commentaries are quick to point out how a sovereign God used Paul and Barnabas’ disagreement in Acts 15:36-41 to increase the number of missionary journeys. I think, however, that we would be wise to sit in the mess of it for a moment.

23. How might the people at the church in Antioch (Paul and Barnabas’ home base) have felt as they watched this disagreement?
24. Have you been wounded by a disagreement or division that took place in your church or within a body of believers of which you are a part? Take some time to remember that situation and the effect that it had on you at the time.
25. As you remember that situation, how do you feel about it now? Has the Lord brought up any pain that is still there that needs His healing touch? Or, how can you see that the Lord has already brought healing in that area?

**\*\*Please don’t share specifics about the actual disagreement with your small group. Our tongues slip quickly to gossip and slander, especially when we’ve been wounded. But do consider sharing ways that it affected you personally, particularly if you need prayer for healing or if you have a testimony of how God has used the situation or brought healing to you.**

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<sup>21</sup> Blue Letter Bible. "Dictionary and Word Search for *rhabdouchos* (Strong's 4465)". Blue Letter Bible. 1996-2013. 5 Feb 2013. <  
[http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?  
Strong=G4465&t=NASB](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong=G4465&t=NASB) >

<sup>22</sup> *English Standard Version Study Bible*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008. Page 2120.

**Lecture Notes: Lesson 15**