

Tuesday, May 5, 2026

The Greatness of God

Acts 16:6-7

As you enter your time with God today, take a moment to quiet your mind. Breathe this prayer: "Come, Lord Jesus, come. Fill me with your Spirit. Open my heart that you might share your words of life with me."

We read today from Acts 16:6-7. Read the passage now or at the end of this devotion. What does this passage teach us about the greatness of God?

Where has God been at work in your life over the past week? What has he done to show you his love?

Usually when we answer that question, we speak of what God has given us. We speak of his provision. We speak of his activity that we can clearly see. "God spoke to me in a text from a friend." "The sermon on Sunday was the Spirit's encouragement for me." "I watched the sunset and heard Jesus say, "I love you!" to everything he has made." This recognition is appropriate. God shows himself to us in all those sorts of ways.

But what about in the stuff that God *did not* let happen to us? There may be a movement of the Spirit that we notice, ("The Spirit told me to keep my mouth shut so I would not get myself in trouble!), but often we will not even understand how God has shown his greatness to us in how he protected us from things that did not occur.

We may not understand that a delay of 30 seconds to retrieve our forgotten phone was the Spirit guarding us from a traffic accident. We will not see that coffee with a friend that we wanted to cancel but committed to meeting kept us from another afternoon of depression and doom scrolling. We cannot know the things that the Spirit actively intervened in to not happen because they didn't happen.

But we know he does this work. He shows us in the text.

"Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to."

My guess is that these are not verses that you memorized for VBS as a child. We see Paul and his entourage NOT doing something. We are much more interested in what they did. But for a moment, let's wonder about just how God's greatness might be shown in such an activity.

Maybe Paul enters Asia, and on the road gets bitten by a snake and unlike elsewhere, he is poisoned and the mission gets delayed for months during his recovery. Maybe Paul gets caught up in some temptation if he crosses the border. Perhaps Paul building churches in Asia hinders the calling and faith of another group of evangelists whom the Spirit is already preparing for that specific work. Lots of different things could have been prevented from happening by the Spirit, but we do not know about them, because they did not happen.

Yet those 'non-events' are important and actively blocked by the Spirit. The work of making things not happen is just as real and active as a prayed-for healing or longed-for word of comfort. God's greatness is

shown to us in what does not happen, because he is the only one who sees all things as they really are and actively works for his will to be done. He can know the unknown and anticipate the future to craft his intended one for his kingdom.

May we see God's greatness in what he does, and may we moved to praise for how he has shown us his power. May we see God's greatness in what he does not allow to happen and see that as another sign of his great love for us. May we know that we are in relationship with a God who is the only one who can make happen what is intended and prohibit what is not, and he does all this out of his great love for us and to build his kingdom.

May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you. May the Lord turn his smile towards you and give you his peace.

In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

I love you all. Blessings.

Feel free to share this devotion with others.

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