

## FIVE SMOOTH STONES

*The Book of Acts: Fights, Fidelity, and Freedom for the Furtherance of the Gospel*

Acts 15:36-16:15

According to Acts 15:39-41,

*" ... they separated from each other. Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus, 40 but Paul chose Silas and departed, having been commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord. 41 And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches."*

What can we learn from this story of strong disagreement between brothers in Christ, two supremely spiritual men who loved God and loved each other?

### ❖ **God Overcomes Our Flaws and Failures to Achieve His Plans and Purposes**

Acts 16:1-5 says,

*"Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek. 2 He was well spoken of by the brothers at Lystra and Iconium. 3 Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him, and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. 4 As they went on their way through the cities, they delivered to them for observance the decisions that had been reached by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem. 5 So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and they increased in numbers daily."*

- Paying the Price for the Gospel

*"I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some." (1 Corinthians 9:22b)*

How much pain are we willing to endure for the sake of the gospel?

What won't we do for Jesus as a church body because it makes us feel uncomfortable?

- Patient in Prayer for the Gospel

*"And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. 7 And when they had come up to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them. 8 So, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas. 9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing there, urging him and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." 10 And when Paul had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them." (Acts 16:6-10)*

*"So, setting sail from Troas, we made a direct voyage to Samothrace, and the following day to Neapolis, 12 and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city some days. 13 And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to the riverside, where we supposed there was a place of prayer, and we sat down and spoke to the women who had come together. 14 One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul. 15 And after she was baptized, and her household as well, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to*

*be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." And she prevailed upon us." (Acts 16:11-15)*

## ❖ **God Executes His Plans and Purposes in Unique and Unusual Ways**

- A Woman Named Lydia from Asia is Brought to Paul

God saved a woman named Lydia. She happened to be from Asia, the place God wouldn't let Paul enter.

- An Argument Between Friends Couldn't Hinder the Work of God

God's grace over Paul and Barnabas despite their separation gives us comfort that God's will can still be done.