

God Advances His Mission Through Prepared Servants (Acts 16:1-15)

I. Preparation and Partnership (Acts 16:1-5)

- a. **Cultivating Young Leaders:** Paul recruits Timothy, mentoring the next generation for mission
- b. **Contextual Wisdom:** Paul circumcises Timothy not for salvation, but to remove obstacles to sharing the gospel among the Jews
- c. **Strengthening the Church:** They deliver the Jerusalem council's decisions, leading to growth in faith and numbers.

II. The Closed Doors and the Call (Acts 16:6-10)

- a. **The Holy Spirit's Guidance:** The Spirit forbids preaching in Asia and Bithynia, showing that "No" can be a form of divine direction.
- b. **Obedience to the Vision:** Paul immediately acts on the Macedonian vision to go where God has prepared the way, transitioning to Europe.
- c. **Trusting God's Plan:** Sometimes, closed doors are meant to redirect us toward greater opportunities.

III. The Conversion of Lydia (Acts 16:11-15)

- a. **Seeking Out the Receptive:** Paul finds a place of prayer, looking for those seeking God.
- b. **God Opens Hearts:** The gospel is proclaimed, but it is the Lord who opens Lydia's heart to respond to Paul's message.
- c. **A Life Transformed:** Lydia's baptism and hospitality demonstrate the practical fruits of true conversion.

Conclusion/Application

- Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's guidance, even when it interrupts your plans.
- Focus on building up the next generation of believers.
- Trust that God is working to open hearts to the gospel, even in unlikely places.

Key Takeaway: "God's work, done in God's way, will never lack God's supply" (or direction).