

The Way
Birth of the Church
Lesson 11: Antioch to Philippi

We are indebted to [Ethnos360](#) for providing the basis of these lessons

Review (Where We've Been)

The "Over Time" Spread of the Gospel...

30AD Jesus Promises Empowerment from the Holy Spirit for the Gospel (Acts 1)

31AD Church Scattered because of Stephen's Martyrdom (Acts 6-7)

34AD Saul Converted/Commissioned to Take the Gospel to Gentiles (Acts 9)

37AD Gentiles Receive First Witness of the Gospel from Peter (Acts 10)

42AD Antioch Church Receives the Gospel/Barnabas Sent (Acts 11)

48AD Paul, Barnabas, John Mark Launch First Missionary Journey (Acts 13)

51AD Paul, Silas begin their Second Missionary Journey (Acts 15)

BIG Idea

Salvation is God's Work that we get to participate in.

It happens over time not overnight.

Are you prepared for God's opportunities?

What kind of Christianity do you exude?

Information (What You Need to Know)

As the 2nd Missionary Journey begins, they set off from Antioch (takes place after the Jerusalem Council)

Discipling new Christ followers was extremely important.

Acts 15:36 (ESV) And after some days Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us return and visit the brothers in every city where we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they are."

- Follow up
- Continued guidance and teaching
- Utilizing prophets like Judas and Silas (15:32)

Prophets were still needed at this stage of the early church because the New Testament canon was still being formed. God would speak and give them the words we have today. Paul would be the one chosen to write down most of God's words to the early church. We don't have prophets today because we have God's complete Word. As we found with our 1-year trip through the Journey most Christians today do not know it. Judas and Silas were needed in Antioch because false teaching about circumcision was growing. These prophets come with Paul and Barnabas to address the pernicious lies that try to overshadow the gospel that truly changed lives. In Galatians we saw the same problem addressed again by Paul.

Godly leaders sometimes see things differently.

Acts 15:37-40 (ESV) Now Barnabas wanted to take with them John called Mark. 38 But Paul thought best not to take with them one who had withdrawn from them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work. 39 And there arose a sharp disagreement, so that they separated from each other.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.

We need kindhearted forgiveness as well as conviction and determination to serve Christ.

Deep disagreement split the team of Barnabas and Paul.

Barnabas practiced mercy, kindness, and forgiveness for his cousin John Mark. (Colossians 4:10). Spirit guided Barnabas to utilize his gift of encouragement to draw back and restore John Mark.

Paul practiced conviction and determination as he brought along Silas and eventually Timothy. The Spirit guided Paul to continue in ministry and to disciple another young man.

Paul and Barnabas reconciled, and Paul received and even valued John Mark (2 Timothy 4:11)

God took man's mess and created two effective teams, two directions, and saw two young men disciplined for the next generation of ministry.

Paul's Second Missionary Journey Begins...

Paul Revisits Planted Churches

Acts 15:41-16:2 (ESV) And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches. 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.

Timothy Joins Paul and Silas

Acts 16:3-5 (ESV) 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.

Paul did not believe the circumcision was necessary for acceptance by God. We saw Paul dealing with the circumcision party in Galatians this week. So, why does he do this to poor Timothy?

Timothy was assisting Paul in ministry. He typically always began in the synagogues. And he was in Lystra. Remember back in Chapter 14 the Jews incited a riot against Paul and he was stoned and left for dead. He is back and heading to familiar places, so he doesn't want Timothy to be offensive to the Jews in Synagogues. Timothy's mom was a Jew, and his father was Greek. He was not a circumcised Jew and would have been considered an apostate (one who had utterly rejected his Jewishness). Paul wanted to be sure to keep all lines open with all people. So, to deal with the question before it was asked, he took care of the issue himself. And Timothy wanted to obey God and was willing to learn from Paul.

Paul Obeys the Spirit's Leading (Paul wanted to go south-west toward Ephesus. But it was not the right time. And God said, "No.")

Acts 16: 9 (ESV) 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.

Paul lays down his plans and follows God's plans and heads toward Troas.

God Plants a Church in Philippi

Acts 16:11 (ESV) 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.

Did you catch the important pronoun in those verses? Luke the author of Acts was no longer using “they” in describing Paul and Silas and their journeys. It now says, “We” and “Us.” Luke begins traveling with Paul (firsthand observation).

Philippi did not have a Synagogue for the Jews to worship. When that is the case, they would have to worship outside the city next to the river. It is there is met a God-fearer named Lydia, who was from (Asia) Thyatira where he wanted to originally go. God would likely have this wealthy new Christian woman take the Gospel back to her hometown. In the meantime, her home would become the place for the church of Philippi to meet. She would be the first listed convert in Philippi.

What does “her household as well” mean? We will be seeing this again soon. Does this mean that because the head of the household was saved everyone automatically became saved and baptized? No, each of those family members, servants and houseguests like Lydia put their faith in Christ for the forgiveness of their sins. Reference to a household is just an easier way to communicate that others believed and were baptized.

The second important Philippian Church convert and move on to the third. Acts 16:6-24 Satan is trying to infiltrate the gospel message by having a demon-possessed girl follow Paul and his team around declaring that “These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation.” Paul did not need this demon-possessed girl as a marquee. This poor girl was doubly in bondage. A slave to wicked men who used her demon possession for their own financial gain and she was possessed by a demon. In the name of Jesus she was set free.

Paul and Silas Imprisoned

This of course created a problem for her masters who could no longer make easy money off her torturous possession. So, they lie about Paul and Silas and they foment a riot and Paul and Silas are beaten with rods and are imprisoned.

Paul and Silas Praise God

Paul and Silas are thankful to be able to stand for Christ and even suffer for His sake. Especially considering all that He suffered for their sins. Yes, God forbid them from going south-west but here God was working, giving new life, and setting the bound free.

God Opens the Doors and Loosens the Chains

Acts 16:25-28 (ESV) About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, **26** and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's bonds were unfastened. **27** When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. **28** But Paul cried with a loud voice, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here."

God's people cannot be held if God doesn't want them held.

***Acts 12:18-19** - After God had set Peter free Herod had all of the prison guards killed. This is likely why the Jailer tried to kill himself. He knew the consequences.

At the same time when God is ready for us to come to Him he will allow it like Stephen and James. Paul and Silas had no idea if they would be set free. And YET they praised God.

God sends an earthquake so strong and specific that it opens the prison doors and loosens every prisoner's chains. But God did not release everyone only Paul and Silas so they could fulfill God's continuing plan at Philippi.

God Opens Hearts and Changes Lives

First, a woman who was a wealthy entrepreneur, then a demon-possessed girl, and finally an uncaring jailer.

Acts 16:29-35 (ESV) And the jailer called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas. **30** Then he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" **31** And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." **32** And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. **33** And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family. **34** Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God.

He no doubt heard about the young girl set free from demonic bondage. He no doubt heard Paul and Silas' songs of praise after being beaten for helping the young girl. And now God had set free Paul and Silas. He wanted to be a part of this new life. He wanted to be saved.

Paul points this desperate man to the only name that sets people free from their bondage of sin.

Paul does not go into some deep theological response. He simply explains the essence of the Gospel. Believe on (trust in, cling to, rely on) the Lord (one of authority over yours and all life) Jesus Christ and be saved. Like Cornelius, Lydia, and anyone else. Faith alone in Christ alone is the only way of Salvation.

The jailer and his household immediately begin to live out their new faith by lovingly taking care of Paul and Silas' wounds. The jailer who punished them is tenderly caring for them. And then they responded by wanting to be baptized. The next step that follows salvation. And they all rejoiced. They now knew hope, life, the Way.

This is the birth of the church of Philippi.

- A wealthy businesswoman
- A demon-possessed girl
- And a jailer

What a motley crew. This is the church.

Application (What You Need To Do):

What kind of Christianity do you exude?

Our lives (our words, our responses, our attitudes, our actions) all of who we are should exude Christ. We should be Christ magnets drawing in those who want to know the reason for our peace and joy. Our lived-out faith should make others want what we have in Christ.