

Chapter 16

1. Paul and Silas arrive in Lystra where they meet Timothy. What do we learn about Timothy?

How do you believe Timothy came to become a believer?

What can we learn from this about raising children?

2. In verse 2 we read that the brothers spoke well of Timothy. What do you think this means? In other words what do you think they said that caused Paul and Silas to notice Timothy?
3. Paul was so impressed with Timothy that he wanted to take him with them. However, before Timothy could join them, Paul circumcised him. In light of the ruling by the Jerusalem council in chapter 15, why did Paul insist Timothy be baptized?

Can you think of an example where the Lord asked you to do something not because it was "necessary" for your salvation, but because it was necessary for you to reach others?

How do we usually react?

4. Paul was traveling to the Gentiles but he was still concerned about the Jews. Why?

What does this tell us about Paul's ministry? About ministry in general?

5. As they traveled from town to town, what did they do?

What was the effect on the churches?

Why do you think this "news" had that affect on the churches?

6. Find a map and locate the places Paul, Silas, and Timothy are visiting. What do you think traveling was like?

Why do you think the traveling conditions are rarely mentioned?

7. In verses 6-7 we read that the Holy Spirit kept them from preaching the word in Asia and prevented them from entering Bithynia. Why would the Holy Spirit keep them from spreading the gospel in Asia?

This is a speculative question, but how might the Holy Spirit stop one from going to a certain place?

Should we still expect the Holy Spirit to lead us like this? If so, are we?

Would you share a time when you felt the Holy Spirit guide you by either leading you to a certain place or preventing you from going?

8. In verse 9 we read Paul received a vision to go to Macedonia. What is a vision?

Have you ever experienced a vision? If so, would you share it?

9. Now for a little grammar lesson. So far Acts has been written in the third person (using they, he, or names). However, in verse 10 the pronoun changes to "we". Instead of saying Paul and Silas got ready to leave for Macedonia, it reads "we got ready." What is the significance of this change?

10. The group leaves immediately for Macedonia and travels to Philippi. A key word here is "immediately". What keeps you from immediately obeying the Holy Spirit?

11. What can you learn about Phillippi?

What challenges do you think they would face in taking the gospel to Phillippi?

Are we likely to face the same or different challenges in our home town? Please explain?

12. Verse 13 states that they went outside the city gate to find a place of prayer. Why did they have to go outside the city?

13. We read that Paul and the others shared the gospel with the women who gathered. Why would this be unusual?

How would you feel "preaching" to hundreds of prominent citizens verses a few women?

Would your message change? Please explain.

What can we learn from this about preaching the gospel? (What is the Great Commission?)

14. What can you learn about Lydia?

Who enabled Lydia to receive Paul's message?

So, what is our responsibility in sharing the gospel?

Before Lydia heard Paul's message, it states that she was a worshipper of God. If so, then why did she need to receive Paul's message?

15. Verse 15 states that after Lydia received Paul's message, all the members of her household were baptized. Why all of them?

16. Read vv. 16-18. Paul and the others encounter a slave girl. Why was this girl valuable to her owners?

What did the slave girl shout about Paul and the others? Was this statement true?

If so, then why did Paul object to this "truth"?

What spiritual lesson can we learn from this encounter?

Why do you think Paul waited "many days" before rebuking the spirit?

What should be our reaction to anyone or anything that "predicts" the future?

Upon whom should we rely solely for guidance about the future?

17. Why did the owners become so angry?

From their reaction, what is one of the main reasons people might reject the gospel?

What are some of the reasons people have given you for not coming to church?

18. Up to now, Paul and the others had not met any resistance. However, when their message affected the financial status of some, opposition rose against

them. Is this still a possibility today? In other words, how might the acceptance of the gospel affect the "livelihood" of some?

19. What happened to Paul and Silas as a result of their message and their setting the slave girl free?

What can you learn about the beating or flogging they received?

What does it mean to be put in stocks?

20. Now, the men were instructed by the Holy Spirit to go to Macedonia. They obeyed. They were instructed to preach the Good News. They obeyed. They did not hold back because of small crowds, gender, or cultural differences. They upheld the truth and set people free. As a result, they are stripped, flogged, and thrown in prison. Yet, what were Paul and Silas doing at midnight? How, under these circumstances, could they be praying and singing hymns?

What might you have been doing around midnight?

21. The last part of verse 25 is very important. It states that the other prisoners were listening to them. Our words are powerful and people are listening to us even when we are not aware of it. What are they hearing from us?

What did those prisoners hear from Paul and Silas?

22. How do we know that the earthquake was not an ordinary earthquake?

Why was the jailer ready to kill himself and why did Paul care?

According to the scriptures, how are we to treat those who persecute us?

Why do you think the prisoners did not run?

23. Why did the jailer fall trembling at Paul and Silas' feet?

24. The jailer asks a question that has been asked many times since then: what must I do to be saved? What was Paul's response?

Has the answer changed any in the last 2000 years? Please explain.

25. What was the result of Paul and Silas' being imprisoned?

What can we learn from this?

26. What did the jailer do immediately after receiving Jesus as His savior and being baptized?

How was the jailer, a brand new Christian, living the gospel of Jesus Christ?

How important is it for us not only to preach the gospel but also to live it?

27. Read vv. 35-40. Why does Paul decide not to go in peace?