

Lesson 4 25 November, 2018

Paul's Second Missionary Journey Begins

Lesson Scope: Acts 15:36 to Acts 16:15

References in brackets refer to Acts 15 & 16 unless otherwise specified

Lesson Focus

About five years after the first missionary journey, Paul and Silas began the second missionary journey, also from Antioch. Antioch was the second early church centre, the centre for taking the Gospel to the Gentiles.

This second journey began during a time of rest and peace in the church which had come as a result of the clear direction given by the Jerusalem Conference in Acts 15. The zeal to spread the Gospel to others grew out of the teaching and preaching of the Word (15:35).

The world desperately needs the Good News of salvation. By working with God and with each other, the church can spread this message to many seeking souls.

There must be an emphasis of the importance of each member being involved in mission work. We do not need to travel a thousand miles to share the Gospel. God has called us to witness, first of all, right where we live.

One person felt compelled to witness in the “uttermost part” of the earth; however, he was neglecting to tell his next-door neighbour about Christ. Finally, he realized that, if he were to circle the entire world, the last person he would reach, before returning home, was his next-door neighbour. He changed his attitude toward his neighbour, and effectively won him to Christ.

God still does great things today when men surrender to God and follow Him all the way. The work of the church is God's work; we are privileged to be a part of it.

Lesson Aim: To identify principles for effective church extension.

Theme Verse: 1 Corinthians 16:9. For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.

Lesson Text

Appointing Workers

Acts 15:36-41

³⁶ (KJV) And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, *and see* how they do. ³⁷ And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark. ³⁸ But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work. ³⁹ And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus; ⁴⁰ And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God. ⁴¹ And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.

Acts 16:1-3

¹ (KJV) Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father *was* a Greek: ² Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. ³ Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek.

Delivering the Decrees

Acts 16:4-5

⁴ (KJV) And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem. ⁵ And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.

Following the Call

Acts 16:6-15

⁶ (KJV) Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, ⁷ After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not. ⁸ And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas. ⁹ And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. ¹⁰ And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had

called us for to preach the gospel unto them. ¹¹ Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next *day* to Neapolis; ¹² And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, *and* a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days. ¹³ And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted *thither*. ¹⁴ And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard *us*: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. ¹⁵ And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought *us*, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide *there*. And she constrained us.

Questions for Study

Appointing Workers

1. Why do godly leaders desire to visit the brethren and “see how they do” (15:36)?
2. How can each member exhibit a healthy concern for the spiritual welfare of his brethren?
3. How did God’s work prosper with the proper resolving of conflict (15:39)?
4. Why is it both a blessing and a safeguard for mission workers to relate to a faithful sending church (15:40)?

Delivering the Decrees

5. Why is cohesion in practice essential for the home church and the mission church?
6. How did Paul’s clear direction to the churches promote peace and growth?

Following the Call

7. What are some open doors God is giving us today?
8. Why is it imperative to seek and follow God’s direction in spreading the Gospel?

Analysing the Passage

“The contention was so sharp between them” (15:39) has the thought of “inciting intense feelings, irritation.” Paul and Barnabas were good

men, but not perfect men.

“Being recommended by the brethren” (15:40) shows Paul and Silas were entrusted with a responsibility and sent by the brethren.

Paul and Silas began by “confirming the churches” (15:41), or “supporting them further, i.e., re-establishing.”

Principles and Applications

Appointing Workers

1. Follow-up support for new believers is essential to effective church extension (15:36). It is not enough for men to become saved; they must stay saved. As young plants need nurture, so young Christians need strengthening. Paul had these brethren on his heart; he purposed to visit his brethren in every city, and “see how they do.”

Maybe we cannot each go visit the mission churches, but we can be faithful in praying for the brethren there. We can give financially to the work; we can also send letters of encouragement.

2. Varied personalities and differing ideas can create tension and conflict in the work of church extension (15:37-39). We will not always think alike. There may be more than one right way to do many things. It is important that all self-interest is crucified.

As a result of this disagreement, Paul took Silas, and Barnabas took John Mark. Thus the Gospel was spread in several places at once. Paul and John Mark did work together again later (see Colossians 4: 10).

3. Conflict between brethren must be brought to a satisfactory conclusion for church extension to be effective (1 5:39-40). In all of life and in relationships with others, a proper give-and-take is necessary for things to work smoothly. There is too much at stake to spend time in disagreement. Sometimes we may need to agree to disagree on issues that are neither right nor wrong.

4. Leaders appointed for church extension need to experience the grace of God and the support of the brethren (15:40-41). It is because of God’s grace that we are saved; it is because of His grace that we remain saved. Because of God’s daily work in our lives, we have a message to share with others.

As we evangelize in our daily work and in our mission efforts, it is imperative to work under the direction and blessing of a Biblical church body. We are sure to face questions that we need help for, and we come

back to the sending body. Also, the church that sends workers is faithful in praying for and supporting them.

5. Potential church workers need to be nurtured and guided in their daily walk (16:1-3). This nurturing is best done by the younger working together with the older faithful brethren, as Paul included Timothy in his work. Harnessing the energies of younger brethren provides fresh insights and new inspiration for the work of the church. The well-seasoned advice of older brethren helps to avoid pitfalls today.

Delivering the Decrees

6. The teaching and directives of the church need to form the backbone for church extension (16:4-5). Paul was not busy promoting a personal agenda such as talking about how wrong Barnabas was in his viewpoint. Rather, he was bringing word to the churches of the decision at the Jerusalem Conference. He was upholding the decision of the church body. As a result the churches became more firmly established and they increased daily.

We must beware of the present-day tendency to de-emphasize the church in our evangelism. All who come to salvation in Christ should also desire to unite with a Scriptural body of believers.

Following the Call

7. The Holy Spirit leads in church extension by closing and opening doors of opportunity (16:6-9). As we seek God's will through prayer and by obedience to what we know, God is faithful in leading us forward. Sometimes He works clearly through circumstances to stop us or redirect our paths. Other times a call comes at just the right time, making the way apparent. It is always easier to look back in our lives to see how God has led us.

8. Confidence in God's leading is important for effective church extension (16:10-12). "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31). Where God calls us, He is faithful in guiding us. When we enter a field of service, we walk by faith, knowing God will unfold the pathway, one step at a time. "For we are labourers together with God" (1 Corinthians 3:9). We need not fear the opposition or rejection that may come. If the work is of God, it cannot be overthrown.

9. Church extension is effective only as the Lord opens men's hearts and they are attentive to the Gospel message (16:13-14). We can only preach the Word and live it out in our lives; the Holy Spirit must bring

conviction to men. The Gospel always brings a response in the hearts of those who hear it; either there is a softening and responding to the message, or there is a hardening and rejection of it.

What men observe in our lives will greatly influence the effectiveness of our message. Do men see my love for God and my fellow men? Do I live a consistent Christian life? Or do I bring reproach to the name of Christ by my speech and actions? God forbid.

10. Effective church extension results in new believers faithfully serving the Lord (16:15). It is a joy to see others come to know the Lord and become His disciples.

It is not so much our human efforts that will win souls for Christ. Rather, it is as we follow the Lord, that we become effective “fishers of men.” We bring men to Christ, who has the answers to all of mankind’s needs.

Important Teachings

1. Follow-up support for new believers is essential to effective church extension (15:36).
2. Varied personalities and differing ideas can create tension and conflict in the work of church extension (15:37-39).
3. Conflict between brethren must be brought to a satisfactory conclusion for church extension to be effective (15:39-40).
4. Leaders appointed for church extension need to experience the grace of God and the support of the brethren (15:40-41).
5. Potential church workers need to be nurtured and guided in their daily walk (16:11-23).
6. The teaching and directives of the church need to form the backbone for church extension (16:4-5).
7. The Holy Spirit leads in church extension by closing and opening doors of opportunity (16:6-9).
8. Confidence in God’s leading is important for effective church extension (16:10-12).
9. Church extension is effective only as the Lord opens men’s hearts and they are attentive to the Gospel message (16:13-14).
10. Effective church extension results in new believers faithfully serving the Lord (16:15).

Answers to Questions

1. Why do godly leaders desire to visit the brethren and “see how they do” (15:36)?

They are called to watch for our souls. They desire fruitful Christians. They give themselves to preaching, encouraging, edifying, listening. They have the brethren in their hearts.

2. How can each member exhibit a healthy concern for the spiritual welfare of his brethren?

Take an interest in others, visit mission points, visit in each other’s homes, take a personal interest in new Christians in your congregation. Listen to others and their needs. Pray for each other.

3. How did God’s work prosper with the proper resolving of conflict (15:39)?

As long as there is disagreement, much time and energy is spent for the issue at hand. When conflict is resolved, the work can progress.

Conflict is not attractive to our families or to seeking souls. Paul and Silas began a second journey, and Barnabas and John Mark visited other areas.

4. Why is it both a blessing and a safeguard for mission workers to relate to a faithful sending church (15:40)?

It provides insight, counsel, financial support, prayers, personnel, visits, encouragement, different perspectives, balancing of ideas. God speaks through our brethren.

5. Why is cohesion in practice essential for the home church and the mission church?

Allowing a different practice on the mission field will undermine the position of the church. Holding to the same practices gives stability and safety.

6. How did Paul’s clear direction to the churches promote peace and growth?

Clear direction on the issues of the day provides answers for questions, rather than uncertainty. The church was given authority to address issues and make solutions.

7. What are some open doors God is giving us today?

We enjoy freedom of travel, freedom of speech, freedom of press, the privilege of Christian schools, foreign missions, street meetings, jail services, and many more.

8. Why is it imperative to seek and follow God's direction in spreading the Gospel?

If God does not direct and bless our efforts, they are in vain. It is not our work, but God's.

Summarizing the Lesson

“And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Matthew 4:19). It is through our consecration to God's service, and by following Christ's perfect example, that we can bring men to God. God uses men and women today to touch others for Him. Can He depend on you?

Research Guide

1. Familiarize yourself with the route of the second missionary journey. You may want to use a Bible dictionary to research the cities Paul visited.