

Lesson 4 - 19 August 2012

The Second Missionary Journey Begins

Lesson Scope: [Acts 15:36-16:15](#)

Lesson Focus

Having delivered the conclusions of the Jerusalem Conference, Paul and Barnabas continued preaching at Antioch. Considerable time had elapsed since their first missionary journey, and they determined to visit the churches again. However, the two could not agree whether or not to take John Mark with them, so Barnabas and John Mark went one way while Paul and Silas went another.

Timothy joined Paul and Silas as they passed through Lystra. At Troas, Luke joined them, and the group voyaged from Asia Minor to Europe, where Paul spent the remainder of the second journey, answering the Macedonian call he had received in Troas.

The church of Jesus Christ has the message that the world desperately needs. As she proclaims that message, the Lord opens new doors of opportunity and enables her to expand her influence.

The vision for a new work often begins with a mere handful of individuals. Like a flame, enthusiasm spreads from one person to another until a large group is on fire with the same vision or an even broader one. Remember, unity in our evangelistic efforts will complement the testimony we want to give.

Notice that the apostles were not only church planters; they also spent much time nurturing. When we help new believers to grow, we increase our resources for evangelism.

Counseling together on outreach projects utilizes the insight and wisdom of a number of brethren. This helps to avoid unwise moves.

Emphasize the need for all of us to cast down any hindrances to responding promptly to God's call to serve. Remember that for-

oreign fields are not the only missions. Neither are they the only ones worth sacrificing for.

Lesson Aim: To see how the Lord leads the church to new areas of witness.

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

Lesson Text:

"Through Syria and Cilicia"

[Acts 15:36-41](#) ³⁶ 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.

"Throughout Phrygia and ... Galatia"

[Acts 16:1-9](#) ¹ 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. ⁴ 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. ⁶ 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.

"Into Macedonia"

Acts 16:10-15 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

"Through Syria and Cilicia"

1. What motivated Paul and Barnabas to return and "visit our brethren in every city"?
2. In the contention between Paul and Barnabas, was one opinion wrong and the other right? Explain.
3. Enumerate areas of service that illustrate how everyone is needed in God's kingdom work.

"Throughout Phrygia and ... Galatia"

4. How does valuing others' counsel relate to the success of a

mission outreach?

5. What contribution does a permanent, plural ministry make to a developing congregation?

6. What are God's purposes in permitting what seems to be a detour?

"Into Macedonia"

7. What are some hindrances to responding promptly to open doors?

Analyzing the Passage

With a burden to help God's work move forward, Paul and Barnabas both wanted to return to the churches they had established on their first journey. However, they disagreed on whether to take John Mark along. The positive outcome of the sharp contention was that not one, but two groups advanced from Antioch, with Barnabas and Mark following the route of the first missionary journey, and Paul and Silas taking the route described in this lesson.

In order to aid their efforts to reach the Jews, Timothy was circumcised, thus removing an unnecessary offense.

"Forbidden of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 16:6) and suffered ... not (Acts 16:7) give evidence that these brethren heeded the voice of the Holy Spirit. Upon their accepting this instruction, the Lord revealed a different opportunity He wanted them to pursue. In spite of there being but few Jews to promote it, the apostles found Biblical worship patterns being practiced by the believers in Macedonia.

Principles and Applications

"Through Syria and Cilicia"

1. A growing work includes concern for the welfare of new believers in existing churches (Acts 15:36). We are not only interested in planting new churches but also concerned with the care and maintenance of those new believers right among us. A new outreach may seem to offer excitement, adventure, and publicity, but quiet, unnoticed perseverance in nurturing new

believers in an established congregation is just as worthy a work. Congregations on the home front that consistently "keep house" are qualified to reach out to needs abroad.

2. The Lord is able to accomplish His purposes despite human imperfections (Acts 15:37-40). This does not excuse carnal responses. God will work in spite of human failure, but carelessness in interpersonal relationships could also result in a marred testimony and failed evangelistic efforts. God will work, but will we be available for His service and in line for His blessing?

3. Varied personalities and gifts contribute to an expanding work (Acts 15:39-40). "If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing?" (1 Corinthians 12:17). With the variety of tasks to be accomplished in God's great work, we need the help of everyone—from brethren who can make the pieces fly on a work project, to brethren who can help others put the pieces of their lives back together. From the careful and cautious to the dauntless and energetic, God has work for all.

"Throughout Phrygia and ... Galatia"

4. Mission work requires that believers value the counsel of their brethren (Acts 16:2, 15). When this is the case, those who are sent will appreciate and uphold the same standards that served them well at home. This creates trust between leaders and those whom they send. Our attitude toward counsel also has a direct bearing on the attitudes of new believers.

5. Adequate administration is essential for church growth (Acts 16:4-5). Children are happy when parents take their due responsibility to oversee and direct them. So in the church, when adequate leadership exists, even in small, remote congregations, the members' stability will be enhanced. God's people must be ready to go or stay as He wills, and sometimes we must be ready to let one of our leaders go so that others may have sufficient oversight.

6. The Holy Spirit directs the church by closing and opening doors of opportunity (Acts 16:6-9). God at times tests our alertness to His direction by placing apparent roadblocks in our

plans. Even if His direction appears to be a detour, remember that time spent following God is never wasted time. God may also use detours to help us realize that He has another place or work in mind for us than what we thought.

"Into Macedonia"

7. Clear direction from the Lord calls for prompt response (Acts 16:10). How often do our business interests and priorities get in the way of our prompt response? Delayed obedience (as we teach our children) is not true obedience. It misses the blessings God desires to bestow on us. What aspect of life are we most prompt in? An honest answer should tell us something about ourselves.

8. A successful work may spring from a seemingly insignificant beginning (Acts 16:13). More than one congregation has begun because of a brother who was faithful in keeping contact with an individual who showed spiritual interest. Whatever good seed is sown, God is able to make it grow.

9. The Lord uses the sown seed of the Word to bring forth fruit (Acts 16:14-15). Brethren have made contact with seeking persons in remote parts of the world whose standards of conduct and dress were very similar to our own. Albeit through varied paths, God always leads sincere seekers to a faithful church.

Important Teachings

1. A growing work includes concern for the welfare of new believers in existing churches (Acts 15:36).
2. The Lord is able to accomplish His purposes despite human imperfections (Acts 15:37-40).
3. Varied personalities and gifts contribute to an expanding work (Acts 15:39-40).
4. Mission work requires that believers value the counsel of their brethren (Acts 16:2, 15).
5. Adequate administration is essential for church growth (Acts 16:4-5).
6. The Holy Spirit directs the church by closing and opening doors of opportunity (Acts 16:6-9).

7. Clear direction from the Lord calls for prompt response (Acts 16:10).
8. A successful work may spring from a seemingly insignificant beginning (Acts 16:13).
9. The Lord uses the sown seed of the Word to bring forth fruit (Acts 16:14-15).
10. The Lord knows where the seekers are and leads them to a faithful church (Acts 16:10, 14).

Answers to Questions

1. What motivated Paul and Barnabas to return and "visit our brethren in every city"?

They had shepherds' hearts and wanted to see their brethren prosper. They understood that encouraging existing believers was just

as important as evangelizing others. Many of them were still young in the faith and needed close guidance.

2. In the contention between Paul and Barnabas, was one opinion wrong and the other right? Explain.

Both men seemed to have reasons. Because they went separate ways, God was able to use two teams. We cannot say that either Paul or Barnabas was more or less at fault.

3. Enumerate areas of service that illustrate how everyone is needed in kingdom work.

We need bishops and ministers, but we also need trustees. We need brethren gifted in singing and brethren gifted in explaining Scripture passages. We need brethren who can make the pieces fly on the work project, and brethren who can help others to put the pieces of their lives together. We need writers, teachers, maintenance men, fathers, mothers, and children. We also need prayer warriors.

4. How does valuing others' counsel relate to the success of a mission outreach?

This creates trust between those who are in charge and those who are assigned. Those who are sent will appreciate and up-

hold the standards that served them well at home. It prevents a handful of people from leading a congregation on an individualistic course.

Our attitude toward counsel has a direct bearing on the attitudes that new believers will develop.

5. What contribution does a permanent, plural ministry make to a developing congregation?

Members' stability is enhanced when they see the steadfast example of their leaders. The congregation can grow because they have faithful leaders who know them and work with them. Leaders who faithfully serve their congregation year after year build trust within their flock.

6. What are God's purposes in permitting what seems to be a detour?

Any seeming detour should help us grow in faith and trust God's way above our own. It may be to help us realize we are not where He wants us to be, or it may simply be His way of directing us to where He wants us. Sometimes God wants us to marvel at His wisdom, which is "past finding out."

7. What are some hindrances to responding promptly to open doors?

Prompt response will be hindered by a selfish love for the comfortable lifestyle at home or by an unwillingness to leave familiar territory and people. Others may be unwilling to lay aside business pursuits, goals, and dreams in order to answer the call. Procrastination or indifference may lead some to assume that another can answer the call. The opportunities are all about us, but it is those who have a vision for the importance of the work who answer the call.

Summarizing the Lesson

The fields have been "white already to harvest" for over two thousand years. The day of opportunity is drawing to a close. Jesus' command to "Go ... into all the world" is still for us today.

God's rewards for prompt obedience to His call are immeas-

urably greater than the fleeting, temporal, material goods we spend so much time acquiring. This is a current test of faith and loyalties. No one ever loses by answering God's call.

Research Guide

1. Acquaint yourself with the route of the second missionary journey and with the individual cities visited.
2. It may be inspirational to research any record of Barnabas and Mark's "missionary journey."