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THE BEGINNING OF THE SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF ACTS
NUMBER 65
ACTS 16:1-10

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ACTS 16:1-10 "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: Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. 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. 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. And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily. 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, After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not. And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas. 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. 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."

With the beginning of the second missionary journey, a new era of Christian progress began. Paul and Silas joined together for the tour on the continent, and Barnabas and John Mark toured the Island of Cyprus. Paul and Silas went north by land from Antioch, passed through Paul's home town of Tarsus, and then went through the Cilician Gates of the Taurus Mountains, and approached Derbe, Lystra and Iconium from the East. On their first missionary journey they had approached these towns from the West. When the Bible speaks of Asia, it is referring to what we call Asia Minor, for at that time Asia was a province of the Roman Empire. In the town of Lystra Paul and Silas will pick up Timothy.

You see, Jerusalem had become legalistic, so the missionary center had moved to Antioch. Later the center will move to Ephesus. But at this time Ephesus was not yet prepared for Paul's visit. In our study today we will come to Troas, and Troas is the same as the ancient city of Troy. Troy, you recall, was the center of the famous Trojan war of Homer's great poems, the Iliad and Odyssey. Some have thought it was a city of legend, but the ruins have been discovered. Troas was a strategic center, for from here would go the gospel to the whole continent of Europe. Paul would cross to Europe from Troas and thus the gospel would go to Philippi, Thessalonica, Athens, and Corinth. This second missionary journey will terminate in Jerusalem, and we will discover that this was a bad blunder for Paul.

ACTS 16:1 "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:" Timotheus is the Latin for Timothy. Now to get to Lystra and Derbe you had to pass through the famous Cilician Gates of the Taurus Mountains. All the great armies of the world had moved through that pass. So in Lystra Paul picked up Timothy and he will remain with Paul, except for short interruptions, for the rest of his life. Timothy was a half-Jew, his mother being a Jewess and his father being a Greek. The words "Certain disciple" simply means a believer. Timothy served the Lord faithfully in that area, and when Paul and Silas arrived, Timothy had already established himself as an effective witness and worker. Timothy was a native of Lystra rather than Derbe. We know this from 2 Timothy 1:5. His mother, Eunice, and his grandmother, Lois, were both strong believers. Timothy had the gift of pastor and teacher. 1 Timothy 4:14 and 2 Timothy 4:5 tell these facts.

Paul used Timothy as a trouble shooter, and he was a good one. Paul left Timothy behind at Philippi and Timothy did a very acceptable work there. Later on Paul will send Timothy back to Corinth from Ephesus. Evidently Timothy was not able to cope with the situation and Titus had to come along and bail him out. Titus was one of the strongest believers and he could go into most any situation and settle the trouble. Later on Timothy was to become the Pastor at Ephesus and Paul had to tell him to take a little wine for his stomach's sake. The reason for this was quite obvious. The Ladies Missionary Society was about to take over the church and the young bachelor Timothy didn't know what to do about it. So Paul simply told Timothy to relax and not fail because of tension. Because of this situation much instruction concerning women in church activity is given in 1st and 2nd Timothy. Paul did this in order to help young Timothy cope with the situation. When Paul died Timothy was pastor in Ephesus and both of the letters Paul wrote to him were addressed to him at Ephesus.

So here in Lystra Paul drafted Timothy and brought him into the missionary team. The words "And believed" as used here in reference to Eunice, Timothy's mother, is a noun and simply adds emphasis to the fact that she was an established and strong believer. Evidently his father, being a Greek, was an unbeliever.

ACTS 16:2 "Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium" Timothy had a good reputation there. "By the brethren" simply means Timothy was a man of good reputation among the members of the Board of Deacons of the church at Lystra. Evidently they had been using him in and around Lystra, and he had given a good account of himself.

ACTS 16:3 "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." Timothy is now a member of the team. He went through the ritual of Jewish circumcision for Paul didn't want anyone to criticize him for taking in an uncircumcised missionary team member. There were many Jews in that area and Paul wanted to do everything he could to win those Jews. Now this came under what the Bible calls "The law of expediency". Christians operate under four laws, so let us look at those four laws right here.

1. THE LAW OF FREEDOM

This law of freedom or liberty is the law under which all believers operate when they are filled with the spirit. This is freedom to serve based on the filling of the Holy Spirit. No one has the right to tell you how to live your Christian life, for you are living and serving as unto the Lord.

2. THE LAW OF LOVE

Now there comes a time when the law of love takes precedence over the law of liberty. The law of liberty is beamed toward you, but the law of love is beamed toward others. There are times when you have the liberty to do certain things but you will refrain because you do not wish to place a stumbling block before other Christians.

3. THE LAW OF EXPEDIENCY

This law is beamed toward others. In order for the issue of the gospel to be made clear, it is expedient to do certain things. Illustration-- In a Jewish community Paul would not eat pork, though he had the freedom to do so. Paul lived so as not to alienate others. In a Gentile community he would avoid certain other things in order to focus attention on the gospel and not on some lesser thing.

4. THE LAW OF SUPREME SACRIFICE

This law is beamed toward God. This law comes into play when a believer sets aside certain natural and normal things in order to carry out God's plan for his life. In 1 Cor. 9 Paul said that he could not carry a wife around with him like his friend Simon Peter did because the nature of his work was such he just had to sacrifice marriage.

So Timothy received the ritual of circumcision under the Law of Expediency so as not to offend the Jews of that area, and thereby focused the main attention on the gospel. We should be willing to do many things, to sacrifice many things, in order to reach others.

ACTS 16:4 "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." So they went through Lystra, Derbe and Iconium and delivered the "Decrees for the keep". The word "decree" comes from the word "dogmata" and is the word from which we get dogma and dogmatic. This was the report of "decrees" or "dogma" from the recent Jerusalem Conference and Paul would be so glad to report to them that grace had won a great victory over legalism in the recent Jerusalem conference. "For to keep" comes from "phulasso" and means to guard that which belongs to you.

ACTS 16:5 "And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily." The churches kept on being stabilized in doctrine. Now here is a very important point. If you want a church to be strong, secure, and stabilized, then you have to build that church on the truth of the Word of God. Many churches fall apart because they are not built on sound doctrine. They had doctrine and on this basis they could learn more doctrine. They were winning souls to Christ daily. Now let us get this straight--The gospel should be proclaimed by every member of the church. This idea that a few paid workers at a church ought to do all the witnessing did not come out of the New Testament. The purpose of the worship service, in the main, is to teach the people doctrine so they can go out and win others to Christ. We always start with evangelism but we move on from that to something more. We are wrong in asking people to come to the church to hear the gospel. We should : take the gospel to them.

Dr. Marshall Craig used to say, "The gospel is not something to come to the church to hear but it is something to go from the church to tell". Communication of doctrine is for all believers. If you have a contagious disease and go into a room where there are other people, then most of them will soon come down with the same disease. We ought to so communicate the gospel that others will catch our Christianity just like they catch a contagious disease. The gospel is to be given out by those who know Christ. Stability in the church that comes from doctrine also sends people out to witness to others.

ACTS 16:6 "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" In this verse we have come upon something new, the phrase "Forbidden to preach the word in Asia by the Holy Spirit". In other words, God is now guiding Paul by closing certain doors. So Paul leaves this area and crosses between Bithynia and Asia and goes to Troas. You see, the point is this-- There was a strong area of positive volition in Macedonia at that time and they were ready to hear and respond.

ACTS 16:7 "After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not." To add to the point made in verse six, we read here that, "they tried to go into Bithynia but the Spirit suffered them not". Why these closed doors?

1. The discipline and training of Paul is involved at this point. Paul is pouting and chafing a good bit because he can't go. But these areas are prone to legalism. 1 Peter was written to these Christians of Bithynia. So Paul was not ready to go into this area.
2. The principle of divine guidance is involved here. God often guides by closing certain doors. God wants to get Paul to the coast and on over into Europe. God knows what he is doing at all times.
3. God has a plan for Simon Peter and Peter is going to minister to this area and not Paul. He keeps Paul out of the area so later on Simon Peter could do good work there.
4. God has one plan for Paul and he wants him to go to Europe. Small doors close so big doors will open. But Paul is not discouraged so he gets up and moves on.

ACTS 16:8 "And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas." This is the persistence of Paul. Everytime he hit a closed door he did not quit and go back. He moved on and waited for the next door to open. Paul knows that God has a plan and he just waits for God to reveal that plan to him. This place Troas is a famous and fabulous place. This is the scene of the famous Trojan wars. This is the scene of the epic poems of Homer and Virgil. This is the place of the famous Trojan horse. This is the place where Alexander the Great began his excursion into the Persian Empire. It had been destroyed many times but once Alexander the Great rebuilt it and once Julius Caesar rebuilt it.

ACTS 16:9 "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." This is the great vision in the night. Please remember that this was before the completion of the Canon of Scripture. A vision was a legitimate way of communication in that time, but since the Canon of Scripture was finished, God does not communicate with one in a vision. We have the Bible and that is enough. Once the Canon is closed, from then on God speaks through his Word. Beware of the wild and strange people who are always floating around and telling about some big amazing vision they have had from the Lord. So today we depend on the Word of God. But there stood a man from Macedonia in front of Paul in a night vision. The word for man here is "A noble man". How could Paul recognize him? He was dressed like a Macedonian and they dressed differently from people of other nations. The Macedonians wore those helmets and had a typical Macedonia type dress. Immediately Paul knew he was a Macedonian man. Let us remember that for a thousand years Roman military dress didn't change and you could recognize a Roman soldier anywhere in the earth. So immediately Paul knew it was a Macedonian man calling him to come over into Europe.

The message of the Macedonian man was this--"We now have positive volition in Macedonia and our people are ripe for the gospel. Come and help us gather the harvest". So in this connection let us review again the doctrine of heathenism.

FIVE POINTS ON THE DOCTRINE OF HEATHENISM

1. Let us apply the idea of divine essence to the situation. God is righteous and just and can only act according to his righteousness and justice. God cannot be unfair to any member of the human race. He never has been and never will be.
2. Let us apply the doctrine of unlimited atonement
Jesus did not die on the cross for some select group but for all members of the human race. Under the doctrine of unlimited atonement all members of the human race are savable. 1 John 2:2

3. Look at God's will concerning every member of the human race.
 2 Peter 3:9 tells us that it is God's will that all be saved.
 "Not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."

4. Look at the point of God consciousness.
 This does not mean hearing the gospel but rather the time when man becomes aware of the existence of God or the person of God. Either his essence or his personality. Now at this point a man desires relationship with God or he doesn't. If he desires relationship with God, then God assumes the responsibility of giving the gospel to him.
 The issue of hearing the gospel is faith.
 The issue of God consciousness is volition. These are the two areas where the decision must be made.

If any member of the human race regardless of geographical location or linguistic barrier desires relationship with God after reaching God consciousness, God will provide gospel information for that individual. This truth covers the most cultured or the most primitive.

John 7:17 "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God or whether I speak of myself."

Acts 17:27 "That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us."

Jeremiah 29:13 "And ye shall seek for me and find me when ye search for me with all your heart."

The whole issue is brought out in Isaiah 55. Man has the ability to arrive at God consciousness. There are five ways a man can become God conscious and we will explore those five ways in this study tonight.

5. Heathen are heathen not because they have never heard the gospel, but because they have heard it and rejected it.
 The world has been evangelized again and again. The world was evangelized in the first century.

1 Timothy 3:16 and Col. 1:6 and Acts 17:6 makes this clear.
 Matthew reached India and part of the book of Hebrews discovered in India. Many missionaries go into areas and missionaries say the people hear the gospel and reply, "We have been waiting for you all of our lives".

Two ways the mechanics operate

1. THE RELIGIOUS ASPECT
 God exists because men universally believe in him. Men are possessed by what we call religious instinct. Creatures do not pray to and reach out to that which does not exist. The religious instinct. Younger people hear older people talk about God and this arouses this religious instinct.
2. THE MORAL OR ANTHROPOLOGICAL ASPECT
 To a greater or lesser degree man possesses a conscience with an urge to choose right over wrong. This indicates that there is a norm or standard of right and wrong which human society has for a foundation. This is a phenomenon that cannot be explained apart from the existence of a supreme being who possesses absolute righteousness. A material unguided universe would know nothing of moral values or distinction. Since these distinctions do exist then there must be some super being behind these concepts.

ACTS 16:10 "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." Please notice the change from "he" to "we". This "we" refers to Luke, Timothy, Silas and Paul. This is the Pauline team which entered Europe for this great Second Missionary Tour.