

Acts 16:1-10

Last week: Paul & Barnabas agreed to part ways.

God facilitates the introduction of Timothy in the wake of the division between Paul & Barnabas. If we consider the role that Timothy eventually serves in Paul's life and the early church, could this have been what Paul had hoped of John Mark?

I. God's Provision Vs. 1-5

God Had Prepared a Helper for Paul - Timothy

Vs. 1-2 *"Son of a Jewish woman who was a believer."*

- 1. Timothy is a believer**
 - Luke refers to him as a **disciple**. In this context it would imply being a Christian, a Christ follower.
- 2. He is the son of a Jewish woman also a believer.**
 - 2 Timothy Eunice, and grandmother Lois.
 - Paul had great respect for Eunice, identified she and Timothy's grandmother
 - She obviously had a large role or influence in Timothy's life since he was
 - **2 Timothy 1:5, 3: 14-15** He was taught the scriptures from childhood.
- 3. Timothy's Father was a Greek**
 - *"But his father was a Greek"*
 - Luke introduces his father by saying **"BUT"**
 - We can generally assume his father was unsaved
- 4. He was well spoken of by the brethren in Lystra and Iconium**
 - You've heard the saying: **Your reputation precedes you.**
 - Timothy's reputation preceded him in this case. He was of good reputation.
 - This is a consistent qualification that we see through the scriptures of those who lead and minister. **"...Of good reputation and above reproach."**

Paul's Reaction to Meeting Timothy - "Come With Me"

Vs 3 *"Paul wanted this man to go with him, he took him and circumcised him...."*

- This is a very pointed statement. Timothy must have impressed Paul
- Here we see that Paul was so impressed with Timothy he wanted him to join.
- To desire his presence to go so far as to circumcise a grown man indicates a very intentional investment and desire for Timothy.

Paul & Timothy's Commitment & Investment - Circumcision

Vs 3b *"He circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those parts, for they all knew that his father was a greek."*

- Luke says that the circumcision was for the Jews in those parts.

Isn't Circumcision Legalism?

Weren't the Jews in Antioch being legalistic requiring Gentile circumcision?

- **Read Galatians 2:3** Paul didn't require Titus to be circumcised because he was a gentile.
- Titus's circumcision would have been a form of legalism distorting the Gospel
- Jews would know that Timothy's father would not have circumcised him.
- ON the other hand, Timothy's mother was a Jew, he would have been considered a Jew.
- Jews would have expected Timothy to adhere to customs.

Illustration: President Obama is half white, half black. Mostly identified as first person of color to become president. Black community expected he would represent their culture and values in office

- Paul immediately makes Timothy “palatable” to Jews, and removes any stumbling blocks.

God Was Also Providing Decrees for the Churches in the Area

- **Vs. 4** *“Paul & Silas were passing through the cities and carrying the decrees from the elders & apostles in Jerusalem.”*
 - Two weeks ago we saw that James encouraged Jews NOT to burden Gentiles with the Law
 - We also saw that James encouraged Gentiles NOT to flash their liberties & offend Jews.
 - Paul has removed any objections that Timothy’s audience might have.
 - Timothy is to be commended as a gentile believer and as a Jewish believer.
 - Neither audience can find offense.
- **Vs. 5** *“The church were being strengthened in the faith, and were increasing in number daily.”*
 - So Paul, Silas, & Timothy’s effort were being used by God
 - God was adding to the number of believers
 - These Decrees and the ministry of Paul, Silas, & Timothy were *“bringing strength in the faith and the churches were increasing in number.”*

Principle I: God’s Provision Will Precede Our Assignments

God provided a disciple who was of great reputation

God provided a circumcised Jew who was palatable to the Jews in the area.

God provided a Greek who would be received by the Greek churches they would go to.

God provided decrees that were delivered to the churches and provided encouragement and strength.

II. God's Prevention Vs. 6-8

Luke notes that God specifically prevented Paul Silas and Timothy from preaching the word in Asia and Asia Minor.

First They are Prevented From Going East

Vs 6 *“Passed through Phrygian & Galatian regions forbidden by the Holy Spirit from speaking the word”*

- Verb **“Prevent”** Passive Voice. They were prevented by some external influence.
- Presumably headed to Asia, or maybe Asia minor and intend to preach the Gospel maybe as a destination or maybe just on their way through.
- Either way, they are being prevented from speaking the word.
- God is intervening, not allowing their plans. Instead guiding them to something else.

Secondly They Are Prevented from Going North

Vs. 7 *“when they had come to Mysia (or Asia Minor) they were trying to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them.”*

- The tone seems to change a little here. We get the impression that this is more than them just passing through and being prevented but actively seeking Bithynia and God preventing them.

Thirdly They Are Prevented from Going West by Mediterranean Sea

God Squeezes Them NW Up to Troas

Vs. 8 *“and passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas”*

- Troas may be where Luke first unites with Paul, Silas, & Timothy
 - We do not know for sure. We will see Luke begin to refer to these experiences in the 1st person
 - **Vs. 10** *“We sought to go into Macedonia...”*
 - **Vs. 11** *“...we put out to sea from Troas....”*
 - **Vs. 12** *“...we stayed in Philippi....”*
 - **Vs. 13** *“we went outside the gate, we sought a place of prayer, we began speaking to the women”*
- Luke was a Greek believer. Likely picked Luke up in Troas.

READ Acts 21: 4, 10-14

God privileges Paul with information about what will happen when he goes to Jerusalem.

In this case, the Holy Spirit **DOES NOT** prevent Paul from going.

This is part of God's plan. God's plan includes directing us in certain ways and sometimes preventing us in other ways.

Principle II: Sometimes the Holy Spirit Prevents Us & We Are to Embrace Him

This should NOT be misunderstood to mean acceptance by consolation.

This does NOT mean accepting as a fatalist.

God desires that we EMBRACE His will and joyfully follow His leading....even when unknown.

God may prevent us for our own protection.

He may prevent us for the protection of others

God may simply prevent us so that we end up where He has planned us to be.

Illustration: 300 East Long Street
Worthington Property - God closed the door
King Avenue Church - God closed the door
He finally led us Downtown

III. God's Plan 9-10

After they are prevented from preaching in the other regions, God uniquely and specifically directs them to Macedonia. God is sending them to a Grecian region among many gentiles with Silas a Jewish Prophet and evangelist, Paul a Pharisee of Pharisees steeped in the law and a total bond servant for Jesus, Timothy who identifies as both a Greek and Jew (with credentials now) and Luke who is a Greek physician.

Vs. 9 *"a vision appeared to Paul of a man appealing to him to come help..."*

- This was a petition for help, a plea to come.
- Word used is parakaleo implying beseeching someone to come and provide comfort & aid

Vs. 10 *"immediately we sought to go into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the Gospel to them."*

- They decide to go immediately
- There doesn't appear to be consternation about the decision
- There doesn't appear to be a delay or need for clarification from God

Their Conclusion is Completely Rooted In God's Agenda

- How often is the Gospel front & center in our minds?
- Are we consistently looking through a lens of the Gospel as we live?
- Are we living as Kingdom minded people or just merely bouncing around as pinballs in life?

Their Response to God's Call & His Prevention in Asia Sends Them to Greece & Macedonia

- God provided them with Timothy half Greek & half Jew accepted by everyone in Macedonia.
- Timothy was a strong believer and of great reputation
- In Troas they unite with a Greek Physician named Luke
- God prevented them from Asia and Asia minor so they could minister in Grecian regions
- Phillippi, Thessalonica, Corinth, Athens, Ephesus (kind of Greece kind of Asia Minor)

Look At How God Ultimately Uses This Young Man Timothy Whom he Provided to Paul

- **Acts 17:14** Silas & Timothy remained with the Bereans while Paul moves on
- **Acts 18:5** Silas & Timothy join Paul @ Corinth so He can devote himself to preaching
- **Acts 20:4** Third missionary journey accompanied Paul to Macedonia & Greece again
- **1 Cor. 4:17, 16:10** "My beloved faithful child in the Lord", "Timothy is doing the Lord's work"
- **2 Cor. 1:19** "Son of God was preached to you by us, Silvanus & Timothy"
- **Phil. 2:19** "I hope to send Timothy to you soon so I may be encouraged by his report of you"
- **Colossians 1:1** "I Paul & Timothy greet you..."
- **1 These. 3:2, 6** "We sent Timothy, our brother and God's fellow worker in the gospel of Christ to strengthen and encourage you in your faith."
- **1 Timothy 1:2, 18** "My true child in the faith.", "This command I entrust to you my son, fight the good fight."
- **1 Timothy 1:3** "remain in Ephesus and do not let men teach strange doctrine"
- **1 Timothy 6:20** "guard what has been entrusted to you"
- **2 Timothy 1:2** "my beloved son"
- **Hebrews 13:23** "take note that Timothy has been released." (arrested at some point).

Principle III: God's Plans Are Designed For His Glory & We Are Privileged to Participate

Proverbs 3:5-6 *"Trust Lord with all your heart, do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and he will direct your paths."*