

# Evangelism & Relying on God

## Acts 16

**Icebreaker:** *When was the most scared you have ever been?*

Tonight's lesson will be the start of Paul's "Second Missionary Journey." It will start in Jerusalem (Acts 15) and in a couple of weeks it will end in Jerusalem (Acts 21). When he arrives back in Jerusalem in 6 chapters Paul will be arrested and stand trial that will eventually lead to Paul being sent to Rome where he is executed. Little does Paul know as he leaves Jerusalem at the end of Acts 15 that his return will be his last.

### Acts 15:36-41

*Why did Paul and Barnabas decide to go back to the churches they had previously planted?*

- They wanted to strengthen and encourage them.

Sometimes we give people more attention before they are baptized than afterward. Paul and Barnabas show us that follow up is essential to healthy Christianity. It also shows how much they cared about those they had converted. They couldn't just hop on a plane and be there in a couple of hours. This journey would be long and difficult.

*Has anyone ever gone out of their way to help you mature spiritually? How?*

### Acts 16:6-10 [get ready for some tough words!]

Again and again we see the importance of God working through his Holy Spirit to put people in the places they are supposed to be. *Who are a few of the people we have seen that happen to so far in Acts?*

- Philip and the Ethiopian
- Peter and Cornelius
- Saul and Ananias

The team has split. Barnabas and John Mark head south to the island of Cyprus. Paul, Silas, Timothy, and probably Luke decide to work in modern-day Turkey. God sends Paul a vision in the night. *What did he see?*

- A man from Macedonia (just north of Greece) asking them to come and help

We will see that more good will come out of these two groups than by one group on its own. The same is true about our LIFE groups. There will come a point in time when a LIFE group will become two groups. *What can be difficult about that?*

*What blessings can come out of that?*

- We will be able to include more people and get more accomplished for the kingdom.
- It is a sign that we are growing.

*How quickly do Paul and company respond to the vision?*

- At once they began traveling westward to Macedonia.

We may not have visions of people calling us to preach, *but have you ever felt strongly like there was someone you really needed to talk to about Christ? How did you respond?*

Next they went to Philippi. Later, after Paul's return to Jerusalem, his arrest and being put in chains, he would write a letter back to those he met in Philippi (Philippians 1:13).

### **Acts 16:13-15**

*What three things came together to bring Lydia to Christ?*

- Paul's preaching
- God's working
- Lydia's listening

The effectiveness of evangelism is based only to a very small degree on how well we present it. It is based to a greater degree on the fact that God is in the business of opening people's hearts to respond to the message. Because of that evangelism should always go hand in hand with prayer as we realize our dependence on God for a harvest. *How does understanding that take a lot of the pressure off of getting evangelism "right?"*

### **Acts 16:16-25**

Not everyone in Philippi appreciated Paul and Silas' message. *What realization caused the owners of the fortune-teller to turn on them?*

- When they realized they weren't going to make any more money.

*What punishment was inflicted upon them?*

- Stripped, beaten with rods and thrown in prison.

*How did Paul and Silas respond?*

- They prayed and worshiped God even from within the prison.

*Would it be hard for you to worship God after you were following his calling and ended up beaten and in jail?*

*Why do you think Paul and Silas kept such a good attitude in such a difficult time?*

Sometimes what God does doesn't make sense right away. You have to wait patiently to see why God put you through the tough times to see how it makes sense. Paul and Silas are about to see what good will come out of it.

### **Acts 16:26-34**

*After all the harm that came to Paul and Silas what good came out of the whole event?*

- A second household had been converted in Philippi.

Just like with Lydia's conversion, God initiates the conversion of this jailor by causing the earthquake. Evangelism requires that we rely on God and not on self.

### **Application**

*How could you lean more on God and less on self when it comes to evangelism?*

*In what areas of your life could you use more gratitude even though things aren't perfect?*