

Sent by Love: A Study of Acts, Part 2

Acts 15:36—16:5 - “Paul & Barnabas Separate; 2nd Missionary Journey Begins”

September 5, 2021 – Beth Case

Welcome & Prayer

Read: Acts 15:36-16:5 (**Review:** Acts 15:22:35)

Acts 15:36-16:5

After some time Paul said to Barnabas, “Let’s go back and visit each city where we previously preached the word of the Lord, to see how the new believers are doing.” ³⁷ Barnabas agreed and wanted to take along John Mark. ³⁸ But Paul disagreed strongly, since John Mark had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in their work. ³⁹ Their disagreement was so sharp that they separated. Barnabas took John Mark with him and sailed for Cyprus. ⁴⁰ Paul chose Silas, and as he left, the believers entrusted him to the Lord’s gracious care. ⁴¹ Then he traveled throughout Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches there.

16:1 Paul went first to Derbe and then to Lystra, where there was a young disciple named Timothy. His mother was a Jewish believer, but his father was a Greek. ² Timothy was well thought of by the believers in Lystra and Iconium, ³ so Paul wanted him to join them on their journey. In deference to the Jews of the area, he arranged for Timothy to be circumcised before they left, for everyone knew that his father was a Greek. ⁴ Then they went from town to town, instructing the believers to follow the decisions made by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem. ⁵ So the churches were strengthened in their faith and grew larger every day.

Discuss: the Breakup of a Ministry Relationship in Acts 15:36-41.

- Paul and Barnabas gear up for a second journey; Barnabas wants to take John Mark again
- Reference to incident on first journey when John Mark (Barnabas’ cousin), left the tour
- Paul and Barnabas disagree and part ways:
 - Cyprus: Barnabas’ home
 - Tarsus: Paul’s birthplace
- Acts’ narrative follows Paul and Silas. In this way it seems to affirm their mission, with no further mention with Barnabas and John Mark
- Much conjecture about the “real reason” for fallout

—Are Paul and Barnabas models we should follow? Why or why not? How should Christians disagree with one another?

—What other Scriptures may help us with this question?

- Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. -Eph 4:3



- *Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. -Rom 12:10*
- *Live in harmony with one another. -Rom 12:16*
- *If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. -Rom 12:18*

—*Why do you think Luke is so searingly honest in this text? He could have simply said that Paul went North, Barnabas went West. What value does it add for readers then and now?*

—*Is conflict always bad or wrong? When have you been part of a conflict that was necessary? How did things turn out?*

Note: Paul, Barnabas, and John Mark reconcile later (1 Cor 9:10, Col 4:10, 2 Tim 4:11)

—*We all know people who have been hurt by a church fight. It's likely that you or a dear family member has been wounded by a disagreement with another faithful Christ-follower!*

—*How can we move through anger, disappointment, and pain? How do we allow others to do that as well?*

Discuss the introduction of Timothy in Acts 16:1-3

- While revisiting Derbe and Lystra, Paul and Silas meet Timothy
 - Jewish mom (also grandma, 2 Tim 1:5), Greek dad
 - well-received at Iconium
 - Paul had Timothy circumcised: was this compromise unfortunate or helpful?
 - *even Titus, who was with me, was not forced to be circumcised... -Gal 2:3-5*
 - *To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. -1 Cor 9:20*

Disciple =
 "mathētēs (from math-, the "mental effort needed to think something through") properly, a learner; a disciple, a follower of Christ who learns the doctrines of Scripture and the lifestyle they require; someone catechized with proper instruction from the Bible with its necessary follow-through (life-applications)." -Strong's

—*Paul is excited about Timothy serving with them. Why do you think this is the case? What does Timothy bring to the table that would be helpful?*

—*Is Timothy's circumcision a mistake by Paul? Or a benefit to the ministry?*

—*In our world, sometimes we need to compromise. Other times we must stand firm. How do we discern which approach to take? What keys do we look for?*

Discuss the continuation of ministry in Acts 16:4-5

ESV: *As they went on their way through the cities, they delivered to them for observance the decisions that had been reached by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem. ⁵ So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and they increased in numbers daily.*

MSG: *As they traveled from town to town, they presented the simple guidelines the Jerusalem apostles and leaders had come up with. That turned out to be most helpful. Day after day the congregations became stronger in faith and larger in size.*

- **Discipleship = deliverables:** who needs to know? what do they need to know? and when?

—Discipleship is a continuing emphasis by Paul and now Silas and Timothy. Why do you think this gets repeated time and time again? What does it say to us now about the importance of growth in discipleship?