

Building Your Faith: Exploring Scripture with the Pastors
September 12, 2021 - 9:45 and 11:15 A.M.
Acts 16:6-15 (NIV)
Clay Brown, Adult Discipleship Pastor

OUTLINE

1. Greet one another, begin with prayer, and read Acts 16:6-15.

2. Remind the class of the discussion from Acts 15:36—16:5.

3. Discuss the guidance of the Holy Spirit to Macedonia in Acts 16:6-10.

- Paul and Silas begin their journey, but hit a roadblock: The Spirit, in some manner, stops them from going to Asia or Bithynia (not told the methods the Spirit uses)
- Note the equating of the Holy Spirit in v. 6 with “the spirit of Jesus” in v. 7 (ESV)
- Paul receives a vision: Macedonian man saying, “Come over to Macedonia and help us” (v. 9, ESV)
- Paul and team act on the vision ASAP, concluding this is the path God desires
- Luke apparently part of the team now, based on v. 10, “immediately we sought to go...” (v. 10, ESV)
- How do you think the Spirit kept Paul and team out of Asia and Bithynia? Direct visions? Still small voices? Situations and “closed doors”? Other? How does God direct us today?*
- How are circumstances and events in our lives possible guidance from the Spirit? How can we, at times, misread these same circumstances and events and go away from what the Spirit wants?*
- How important is Paul’s desire to act immediately upon the guidance he received? How important is it for us to act when God guides us? What keeps us from doing so on many occasions?*

4. Discuss the first steps in Macedonia in Acts 16:11-13.

- From Troas, Paul and team make a beeline to Samothrace and Neapolis in Macedonia
- Next stop: Philippi, the leading city of Macedonia
- Philippi as Roman colony gives the city advantages many other cities lack
- Evidently not enough Jews there to establish a synagogue, so the usual method won’t work
- Instead, they go to the riverside, reputed to be a place of gathering and prayer, and sit down with a group of women (very counter-cultural, especially for a group of Jewish men)
- Paul and his team choose to go to the leading city of the region, Philippi. Why do you think they chose this destination? What, if anything, does this choice say to us in our day?*
- Flexibility appears to be a key component of this second missionary journey thus far. How do you see the ability to adapt and change to be part of your own Christian ministry?*

5. Discuss the significance of the conversion of Lydia in Acts 16:14-15.

- Among the women gathered in vv. 11-13 is Lydia originally from Thyatira
- A woman of financial means (merchant of expensive cloths and textiles), and a God-fearer
- Responds to the gospel shared by Paul, responds, and is baptized along with her household
- But she is willing to take next steps: her home becomes the base for the ministry in Philippi.
- Note how unusual it is in that day for Jewish men to associate with Gentile women. How does God break through these barriers? How is God breaking through such barriers today?*
- Who in your life needs to hear the good news of Jesus? How can you pray for them? How may you share with them in a conversation or some other means?*

6. Close in prayer.

SCRIPTURE (New International Version)

6 Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. **7** When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. **8** So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. **9** During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” **10** After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.



11 From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, and the next day we went on to Neapolis. **12** From there we traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district[a] of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days.

13 On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. **14** One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message. **15** When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us.

Footnotes

- ^a Acts 16:12 The text and meaning of the Greek for *the leading city of that district* are uncertain.