

ACTS CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Read vs. 16:1-5

- 1 Timothy was from the Derbe-Lystra area. His mother was a _____ and his father was _____.

What sort of problems do you think Timothy might have encountered because of his mixed heritage? He probably wasn't accepted by either group. He probably felt ostracized for his whole life. There is no indication that Timothy's father ever converted to Judaism, or else Timothy would have been circumcised. Most likely Timothy's mother had been condemned by her family for marrying a Gentile.

2. What two relatives of Timothy's probably influenced his decision for Christ?
(see 2 Tim. 1:5)

No doubt they were the ones who gave him Old Testament instruction, too. Notice that his grandmother was supportive even in this mixed marriage. These two women had a "sincere faith". Their religion went beyond being Jewish. They truly loved the creator God and had faith in Him even when others rejected them. They had passed their faith on to Timothy.

3. Who first preached the gospel in Lystra and Derbe? (see Acts 14:6 & 7)

This may have been when Lois and Eunice were saved.

4. Why do you think Paul called Timothy his "son" in I Cor. 4:17?

Paul had a parental kind of love for everyone that he saw come to Christ. He cared deeply for their spiritual welfare and wanted to see them growing and serving. Do you have spiritual children in your life? Remember your responsibility to see them mature. Keep praying for them and help them become disciples.

5. Vs. 3 seems to contradict Acts 15. (See vs. 1-5 and 23-29) Why do you think Paul wanted Timothy to be circumcised? (Consider also I Cor. 9:19 & 20)

Why wasn't he circumcised before? This is an illustration of giving up some of the liberty we have in Christ in order not to offend other believers. Even though Timothy was under no obligation to keep the law (and be circumcised), he made the choice to submit to this for the sake of other believers. Love for others should always outweigh our own desires. If we are aware that some action of ours, that we feel totally free to do, may be a stumbling block

to others, then we should always be willing to forego doing it. Christians vary in their convictions because of their past experiences, their communities, their upbringing, etc. Convictions can also change as a person matures in their faith. It is our responsibility to love our fellow believers and to put their needs before ours. Consider these verses: I Cor. 8:9-13 and Ro. 14:13-21.

Read vs. 6-15

6. *Who forbade the missionaries to preach in Asia? (vs. 6)*

Why do you think that was so? (consider also Acts 19:10)

Our Heavenly Father does not live in a state of stress and panic like we often do. He knows the future. He knows whether there are years or minutes left to accomplish things. We can trust Him to guide us about how and when to do things. We can also have peace that He is working even when we don't see the evidence as quickly as we'd like.

7. *How did the Holy Spirit direct the men to Macedonia? (vs. 9 & 10)*

The man turned out to Lydia!

8. *Where were the worshippers of God found in Philippi? (vs.13)*

Apparently there were not ten Jewish men in this city or they would have had a synagogue. Paul expected to find worshippers near the river bank. Possibly he had inquired around town previously. When he arrived he found a group of women who had gathered to pray. God had heard their prayers and responded by sending them the gospel delivered by Paul himself.

9. *What information can you glean from vs. 14 & 15 about Lydia?*

She was probably a widow. Her salvation was very quiet and not spectacular. She was ready to believe because the Holy Spirit had been at work in her life already. Her first response was to serve her Savior with her gift of hospitality.

Read vs. 16-24

10. *Why was the girl, described in vs. 16, profitable to her masters?*

How was she able to do that? Consider Deut. 18:10-13. Consider also I John 4:1-3. There are two tests for a person who claims to be able to predict the future. Are they 100% accurate? If it is from God, then it will always be exactly accurate. I John gives us the other test. Does this person acknowledge Jesus Christ as the Son of God? If they do not, then there is no more reason to have any association with them.

Christians need to be cautious and discerning. Jesus often warned His followers about

false teachers who come in sheep's clothing, but are really wolves. (Matt 7:15) 2 Peter 2:1 warns us about false teachers who will creep in and "introduce" heresies. They will make up their own stories to convince people of what they are saying. Everything that we hear needs to be compared to Scripture. God hasn't changed. He isn't changing the way He thinks about things or the way He deals with things. Jesus warned us that the false teachers would look like sheep.....acceptable to us, not threatening, speaking words that are easy to listen to. But if their words can't be supported by Scripture, then we need to explore the possibility of them actually being wolves or Satan's representatives disguised as angels (2 Cor. 11:13 & 14). Remember, Satan has a vested interest in confusing believers and in leading them away from the truth. One of his most effective tools is to mix truth and error. Beware!

11. *What was she doing that Paul found so irritating? (vs. 17&18)*

Since that was true, why did it bother them? They knew that she was demon-possessed. They didn't want to be associated with her in any way and they didn't need her to be witnessing about their work. Here is another example of a wolf trying to sound like a sheep. Her intention was not spreading the gospel. We can only imagine what would have happened if this situation hadn't been dealt with.

12. *How did Paul solve the problem? (vs. 18)*

One of the signs of an apostle was the ability to drive out demons and do miracles. Compare Mark 3:14 & 15 with 2 Cor. 12:12. Paul had this ability because he was an apostle, appointed by Christ. The instructions for a believer's spiritual warfare for today are found in Eph. 6:10-18. It does not include casting out demons but to resist them with the spiritual armor of truth, righteousness, the gospel, faith, salvation, the word of God and prayer. This armor is sufficient to allow us to stand against his attacks.

13. *Why were her owners disturbed by Paul's actions? (vs. 19)*

Her owners had no concern for this girl. They didn't rejoice that she had been freed from this demon possession. She was expendable in their sight. She was of no importance except for the profit she could bring to them. Compare I Tim. 6:9 & 10. Surely their love of money was "plunging them into ruin and destruction." Satan was only too happy to use them and the possessed girl to corrupt and discourage the new believers.

14. *What did they accuse the missionaries of? (vs. 20 & 21)*

15. *From vs. 23 & 24, what punishment did the men receive?*

This prison would have been underground and completely dark. There was no fresh air and no window. Their backs would have been extremely sore and tender. Imagine the agony of having your feet immobilized for any length of time.

Why does God allow such suffering? Certainly he could have protected them in a hundred

different ways. But God choose instead to use this persecution to further the gospel. Even before the night is over God will perform both physical and spiritual miracles. How awesome it is to read about the faith of Paul and Silas. They trusted their God without question even while in the worst of trials.

Read vs. 25-40

16. At midnight, Paul & Silas were _____ . (vs. 25)

God must draw very near to people in this kind of distress. There is no other explanation for them being able to sing and praise God under these circumstances. Consider Phil 4:4-7. Paul and Silas were able to praise God and were experiencing the peace that passes understanding.

17. From vs. 26, list 3 things that resulted from the earthquake.

If this had been an ordinary earthquake, certainly the building would have collapsed, too. God was in control. He only used this earthquake to accomplish His plan. God is in control of your life and your circumstances, too. Can you trust Him? Can you give up trying to control and let God accomplish His will? You can experience great freedom and even the ability to sing praises to Him.

18. Why was the jailer contemplating suicide? (vs. 27)

Remember the Roman rule – if you let your prisoners escape, you get their punishment.

19. How did the jailer respond when Paul told him that nobody had escaped? (vs. 28-30)

Was there any doubt in his mind that this was a supernatural event? Did God's plan work?

20. What plan of salvation did Paul explain to him? (vs. 31)

Discuss the difference between this and James 2:14. The belief in Christ must be mixed with faith that He is the Son of God and the redeemer of mankind. Satan believes, but he will never bow down to Christ and beg for mercy and grace.

21. What happened to the jailer's family that night? (vs. 32-34)

Notice verse 32 in particular. The whole household heard and responded to the gospel. The jailer could not secure salvation for his family; they all responded individually and they were all saved individually. What Satan had attempted to do by having Paul and Silas arrested and put in jail had been totally turned around by God. It resulted in more people putting their faith in Christ. This is another illustration of Ro. 8:28.

22. *The next day, the authorities sent word to _____ (vs. 35 & 36)*

23. *What bombshell of information did Paul send back to the authorities? (vs. 37-39)*

It was illegal to beat a Roman citizen or put him in jail without a trial. Paul was helping to establish a precedent and to possibly give some protection to other believers in this city.

24. *After their release, the men returned to Lydia's house. What did they do there? (vs. 40)*

Think what an encouragement it would have been to realize that the God they had just put their faith and trust in could care for them so completely.

25. We see the Spirit's presence in this chapter many times. It is a good illustration of John 15:5 which tells us that we can do nothing without Him. How was the Spirit involved in these verses?

Verse 5 –

Verse 6 –

Verse 7 –

Verse 10 –

Verse 14 –

Verse 18 –

Verse 25 –

Verse 26 –

Verse 31 –

Verse 34 –

Verse 40 –