

Shall We Gather at the River?

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Acts 16:6-15

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Synopsis:

I want to ask one question today:

How does the Holy Spirit work with us to proclaim the good news of Jesus successfully?

The story about Paul, Silas, Timothy, possibly Luke and the women by the river is a case study for how this happens. Here's a preview: It involves

Frustration

Discernment

Cooperation

Listening

Action

Let's listen and learn.

I.

What's the Right Question?

Acts 16:9 "Come over to Macedonia and help us."

Life is determined by asking the right question.

Questions we ask:

How do I find *happiness*? Boomers
-look to be happy

How do I find *security*? Traditionalists
-look to be safe

How do I find *authenticity*? Gen XYZ
-look for real people, things

Questions point out our direction in life.

I want to suggest the following question, which points us in a certain direction:

How do we proclaim the good news of Jesus with success?

I want to look at three groups in this narrative to answer the question.

Paul, Silas, Timothy, Luke

Lydia and the women

The Holy Spirit

II.

The Group

Acts 16:6 “They went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia”

Who’s on this journey?

Who? Paul, Silas, Timothy, We (6:10)

READ Acts 15:40; 16:1-3; 16:10

Where?

Journey west from Iconium (central Asia Minor), hindered, NW towards Mysia towards Bithynia, hindered, end up in Troas (port city)

What happens to these people?

Plan: Have to have a plan (READ 16:7)

-Plan and go (whole narrative is about going)

-Everyone has a plan and goes
happy, safe, authentic, lazy

*What’s your plan?

Can’t “Let go and let God”

Plan is frustrated: READ 16:6, 7

-Everyone is frustrated

*What if frustration is from God?

Where are you frustrated right now?

Where are we frustrated right now?

See a vision: READ 16:9-10

-Everyone gets a vision

-Notice “convinced that God”

*Is your vision from God?

What’s the vision for your life?

What’s the vision for this church?

Is this from God?

People act: READ 16:14

-Paul acts on his plan, frustration, vision

*Where is God calling you to act?

III.

The Women

Acts 16:13 “We sat down and spoke to the women”

The women:

Who is Lydia?

Thyatira

Purple (rich)

Business

Household

Leader

Worshipper (proselyte or God fearer)

What do they do?

They go to pray (READ 16:13)

-many pray outside this church

-like Cornelius last week

*Are you searching for God?

They listen (READ 16:14)

*Are you listening?

They are faithful to respond (READ 16:15)

-Baptized (seal her new found faith)

-Hospitality (act on her faith)

*If God has acted in your life, how do you respond?

IV.

The Holy Spirit

Acts 16:6 “Having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit”

Notice God in Acts 16

READ vv 6, 7, 10, 14, 15

Holy Spirit
Spirit of Jesus
God
Lord

What does God do in this story?

God hinders: READ 16:6-7

-Frustrates their plan

*Where is your plan frustrated?

Usually think of God confirming plans

Is this God speaking?

God guides: READ 16:8

-Enables direction

*Where can you go if you are being frustrated?

God calls and asks for discernment: READ 16:9-10

- Come and help us
- Convinced that God called us

*Where is someone calling for your help?

*Is this God calling?

God opens hearts: READ 16:14

-God causes Lydia to listen

*Who's listening to you?

