

Lesson 163: Paul's Second Missionary Journey

Scripture: Acts 16-18

Memory Verse: Acts 18:9 Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent.

Around three years after returning from their first missionary journey. Paul and Barnabas decided to visit the churches where they had previously preached, beginning on land and ending by boat. The opposite direction as before. Barnabas strongly wanted to bring along John-Mark, but Paul strongly did not. This disagreement caused two journeys. Paul chose Silas to go with him and Barnabas and John-Mark went a different route.

Paul and Silas headed north from Jerusalem through Antioch, Tarsus and to Derbe. Luke came too. There they met Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who believed in Jesus. Timothy's father was a Greek. Timothy was valued by the members of the church in Lystra and Iconium. Paul wanted Timothy to go with them. Paul encouraged Timothy to be circumcised, not because it would save him, but because it would be respectful to the Jews they would be meeting with. Timothy agreed and joined Paul and Silas and Luke. They encouraged and instructed believers in towns nearby to follow decisions made by the leaders of the church in Jerusalem. Through them the churches were strengthened in their faith and they grew larger.

They attempted to head north to Asia to preach, but the Holy Spirit closed those doors. Then Paul had a vision of a man from Macedonia pleading for Paul to visit. They decided to go through Mysia to the port of Troas. Where they sailed to Neapolis which is close to Philippi. They stayed in Philippi for several days. On the Sabbath, they headed to the riverbank hoping to find some Jews gathered to pray. There they met Lydia, a wealthy merchant who worshiped God. She heard the gospel and the Lord opened her heart. She was baptized along with other members of her household. She invited and urged them to stay at her home.

Also in Philippi, a demon possessed girl who told fortunes making her master money, kept following them around and shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God, and they have come to tell you how to be saved." This eventually got on Paul's nerves and he turned and said, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." The demon left at once and the girl was no longer able to tell fortunes to make her master's money. This made her master's upset. The master's dragged Paul and Silas to the city officials and accused them of teaching customs that were illegal for Romans to practice. That caused the whole crowd to be upset and Paul and Silas were thrown into jail with extra chains and clamps. They did not want Paul and Silas to escape. But first, they were beaten with sticks!

That night, Paul and Silas were singing songs and God sent an earthquake. It shook the prison and all the prisoners' chains and clamps came undone. The guard was afraid he would be killed because they all escaped! But the prisoners had all been listening to Paul and Silas singing and praying, none of them had left. This amazed the guard and he asked, "What must I do to be saved?!" Paul told him to believe in Jesus, he and his household! They believed, took care of Paul and Silas and were baptized that very night! There was much rejoicing because they all believed in God!

The next morning, the city officials wanted to release Paul and Silas, after the officials apologized for not following the rules, Paul and Silas went once more to visit Lydia and encourage the believers with her, then they left Philippi and went to Thessalonica.

In Thessalonica, Paul perched at the synagogue for three Sabbaths. As usual, he shared the news of Jesus as the Messiah to the Jews first. He explained the prophecies and explained that the Messiah must suffer and die on the cross for their sins and rise again. Some of the Jews believed and some of the Greek men and women too!

Others were jealous of Paul's success in teaching and they gathered angry people to start a fight. They went looking for Paul and Silas at Jason's house who they had been staying with. They were not there, so they took Jason out into the streets and accused them of treason, allegiance to King Jesus, not to Caesar. The believers in Thessalonica helped Paul and Silas leave town quickly, next they went to Berea.

In Berea, the Jews eagerly listened to Paul's teachings. They even checked what they said with the scriptures to see if it was true. Many Jews and Greeks believed! Soon the trouble makers from Thessalonica came along and caused more trouble. Paul quickly went to Athens and Silas and Timothy soon followed.

In Athens, Paul was troubled by all of the idols he saw in the town along the streets. The people of Athens enjoyed learning and discussing religious things. Paul saw one idol to an unknown God. He boldly reasoned with the Jews in the synagogue and in the people in the city square. Soon philosophers heard what Paul was saying and they were intrigued. They invited him to share to the city council too. Paul began telling them about their unknown God.

Paul explained that this God made the world and everything in it. He is the Lord of heaven and earth and doesn't live in temples, he doesn't need an earthly home or help from earthly beings, people, God has no needs. God's purpose is for nations to seek and find him because people are his offspring. He commands people to turn from their sins of not believing in him and to believe that he is the one true God. One day he will judge the world and he can do this because his son, Jesus rose from the dead.

When they heard about the resurrection from the dead, some laughed, some were curious to know more and some believed. Soon Paul left and went to Corinth.

He met Aquila and his wife Priscilla, they were Jews who believed in Jesus and tentmakers like Paul. He worked alongside them and preached in the synagogue for many sabbaths, trying to convince the Jews and Greeks alike that Jesus was the messiah. After they opposed him, he stayed in Titius Justus' house. He was a gentile believer who lived nearby the synagogue. Soon Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, believed in the Lord as well as his household and they were all baptized.

One night, the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision and told him, "Don't be afraid! Speak out! Don't be silent! For I am with you, and no one will attack and harm you for many people in this city belong to me."

Paul stayed and taught in Corinth for another year and a half! After that some other Jews got together and accused Paul of persuading people to worship contrary to the law. They tried to bring him to court, but the governor dismissed it as a conflict between Jews and Christians not Rome. He stayed in Corinth a little while longer, but then he began his return journey home sailing through Ephesus and Caesarea then to Jerusalem and back to Antioch.