DISCUSSION GUIDE

Acts 16:13-40 | 05/07/2023

Message Main Idea

The Lord will grant us everything necessary to bear fruit as we walk with Him on mission. If we are going to be used, we must be faithful to what we can do, while totally relying on Him to do His part. If God fails to act at any point, we will fail. By His grace, let's leave a trail of gospel witnesses and transformed lives wherever He leads us.

Explanation & Discussion

After being led to the Roman Colony Philippi, Paul, Silas, and Timothy were used to plant the first church in Europe. The team preached, prayed, performed miracles, and suffered, so that at least two families came to Jesus and one demon possessed girl was delivered from bondage. This was the first church plant that was not started with Jewish converts. After being beaten, jailed and released, they moved on to Iconium.

What types of people were impacted by Paul's ministry in Philippi? What were the obstacles to their conversion? What does this teach us about God's role and our role in the gospel mission?

Have you ever led someone to Christ? How did you know they were really saved? What fruit of salvation did God produce through them?

The New Testament talks a lot about Satan and demons. Where are they now? How do we see them at work in our world today? What does this teach us about our need to walk in the Spirit?

God performed several miracles in Acts 16 to guide his people and cause them to bear fruit. Discuss these miracles and how they encourage us in our daily walk.

What can we learn about suffering from the afflictions Paul and Silas faced in Philippi? How did the Lord use this to convert the Philippian jailer? What were some of the signs of the jailer's transformation?

What does this chapter teach about the importance of opening our homes in hospitality? What are some ways you can use your house for the sake for the gospel?

Do you pray regularly for Kelsey in North Africa? What do you pray for? Since her pioneer work in a dark region of the world looks much like Paul and Silas entering Philippi, how does Acts 16 teach you to pray for her team?

If you were put in Philippi where there was no organized church, no pastor, no teachers, no worship services, Sunday school, or small groups, how would you do spiritually? How could Paul expect these new believers to grow when he left them no resources?

How can we know when it is right to defend ourselves and when we should simply yield our rights? How does Paul respond differently to being arrested in Acts 16:35-39 and in Acts 22:23-29? Why do you think this is?

Our faith has great potential for glorifying God when we are mistreated. How do you generally respond to the criticism, ridicule, and attacks of others? What kind of gospel do you think your responses preach?

After being severely beaten and imprisoned, how easy would it be for you to share the good news with your captor and enjoy hospitality of his family? Would it be hard for you to count your attacker as a brother/sister in Christ? Discuss the powerful witness of forgiveness.

In what ways is our church reaching out to people where they are instead of expecting them to come to our church building? What evangelistic results is our church having? How are you participating in these activities?

How is God currently using you to bear fruit for His Kingdom and glory?

Additional References

Philippians 1:27-30 [27] Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, [28] and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God. [29] For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake, [30] engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

Romans 5:2-5 [2] Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. [3] Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, [4] and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, [5] and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

Romans 8:18 [18] For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

1st Corinthians 1:3-5 [3] Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, [4] who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. [5] For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too.

1 Peter 2:20 [20] For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God.

Philippians 1:3-6 [3] I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, [4] always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, [5] because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. [6] And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

John 15:4-8 [4] Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. [5] I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. [6] If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. [7] If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. [8] By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.

Arthur Glasser "Western powers crushed the Boxer uprising of 1900 in China, in which approximately 30,000 Chinese Christians died. The Chinese were forced by the Western powers into agreeing to pay high compensation for losses. Hudson Taylor's China Inland Mission and several other Christians refused this compensation in accordance with the Spirit of Christ. Arthur Glasser reports: The Chinese were amazed. In Shanxi province a government proclamation was posted far and wide extolling Jesus Christ and his principles of forbearance and forgiveness.… This official endorsement served to diminish the antiforeign spirit of the people and contributed not a little to the growth of the church in China in the years that followed."

John Piper "The greatest joy is joy in God. This is plain from Psalm 16:11: "You [God] will make known to me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; in Your right hand there are pleasures forever."

Tim Keller "If the gospel were primarily about what we must do to be saved, it could be communicated as well by actions (to be imitated) as by words. But if the gospel is primarily about what God has done to save us, and how we can receive it through faith, it can only be expressed through words. Faith cannot come without hearing."