

## THE MACEDONIAN CALL (Second Missionary Journey)

Acts 16:1-40

Key Verse: 16:9

“During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, “Come over to Macedonia and help us...”

Paul set out on his second missionary journey. He and Barnabas had separated and Paul took with him Silas, a young leader in the Jerusalem church who had accompanied Paul when he returned to Antioch. They brought the good news that changed the direction of the Christian Church. One doesn't have to become a Jew in order to become a Christian. We are saved through God's grace alone, by faith alone. Christians do not have to be circumcised nor must they obey the dietary laws or the traditions of the Pharisees. Paul and Silas went overland to revisit the churches in southern Galatia.

\* Timothy and Luke (1-10)

Paul and Silas visited the churches which had sprung to life on Paul's first missionary journey. When Paul came to Lystra he met Timothy again. Timothy's mother and grandmother were Christians. He was a promising young man, a second gen (or third gen) who had personally accepted Jesus as his Savior. His mother was Jewish, but his father was Greek, so Timothy had never been circumcised. Paul had just settled the matter of circumcision in Jerusalem. It was a Jewish rite and it was not necessary to salvation. But Paul did not want to fight the battle over ritual. His missionary policy was to be all things to all men. He invited Timothy to join their mission journey as an intern shepherd and he circumcised him. He did not want to offend the Jews whom he would meet on this journey. They visited and encouraged the small pioneering churches and shared the good news of the decisions of the Jerusalem council. The churches were strengthened in faith and grew in number daily.

After these visits, Paul had wanted to spend more time in Asia Minor and then

go east, but the Holy Spirit helped him set his course in the other direction. He went toward Europe rather than toward India and China and the course of history was changed. When he arrived in Troas, a port city on the Aegean sea, he met Luke the physician. We know this because Luke, the writer of Acts, begins to describe his journey in the first person. Paul had been led to Troas by the Holy Spirit. He waited there for God's direction and one night he had a vision of a man from Macedonia reaching out his hands and begging for help. "Come over to Macedonia and help us." Macedonia was in northern Greece. The leading city of Macedonia was Philippi. It was named for Philip of Macedon, the father of Alexander the Great, who conquered a large part of the world for Greece. Paul heard the Macedonian call and decided to leave immediately for Philippi. They crossed the neck of the Aegean Sea and passed through several towns and arrived in Philippi.

\* Philippi

Philippi was a Roman colony and had its own independent government. It was governed like Rome and many retired Roman officers had come there to live. There were few Jews there, so there was no Jewish synagogue. On the Sabbath day Paul and his companions went down by the riverside looking for a prayer meeting of some kind so that they might worship God on the Sabbath. They found some women gathered there, and Paul began to speak to them. One of the women was Lydia. She was a business woman. She was evidently not a Jew, but a Gentile, for she is described as "a worshipper of God." She listened to Paul and the Lord opened her heart to Jesus. She and the members of her household were baptized. She invited Paul to her home and insisted that he make her home his headquarters. He continued to go to the place of prayer every day.

The second person who responded to his witness to Jesus was a crazy girl. She was a slave and she was possessed by an evil spirit. But this evil spirit gave her clairvoyant powers. Her owners made a lot of money from her power to tell fortunes. But she was miserable as a slave of men and a slave of demons. She recognized Paul as a servant of the true God. Then, she began to follow Paul and his team around shouting, "These men are servants of the 'Most High God. They are telling you the way to be saved.'" Paul was really troubled by this.

We don't know whether he had compassion on the girl or whether he was just irritated by her continual following and shouting. At any rate, he decided that enough was enough and one day he turned around and, in Jesus' name commanded the evil spirit to come out of her. Immediately the spirit left her. She became an ordinary girl. She could no longer make money for her unscrupulous owners. They were furious because their money source had dried up. So they dragged Paul and Silas to the market place to face charges. They made false charges against Paul, and Paul and Silas were dragged away to jail. They were severely beaten and flogged. They were put in stocks and confined in the lowest dungeon. Their situation didn't look so good. They were foreigners-Jews in a Roman city. They were in prison. They had no one to intercede for them. What did they do? They prayed and sang hymns very loudly. They were singing hymns to God, and God heard. There was a violent earthquake and the prison doors flew open. All the chains of the prisoners fell off. The jailor was overwhelmed. He was responsible for the jail. It looked as if all the prisoners had escaped. He was ready to commit suicide, but Paul stopped him. "Don't harm yourself. We are all here." The Jailor fell before Paul and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

This is the most important question that one can ask. The answer is the most important answer that one can hear: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved, you and your household." Then Paul taught the Bible to him and his household. The jailor made a decision to believe in Jesus. He made this decision on behalf of himself and his household. He washed their wounds. They were all baptized immediately. He took Paul and Silas to his home and gave them dinner. He and his whole family were filled with joy because Jesus had come into their hearts.

At daylight the magistrate sent officers to the jailor instructing him to release Paul and Silas. But Paul demanded an apology. He was a Roman citizen and he had been punished without any formal charge and without a trial. The city magistrates came and apologized and escorted him out of the city. But before he left he visited the small group of believers in Lydia's home and encouraged them with the word of God.

These people—Lydia, a crazy girl and the Philippiian jailor were the first converts

in Europe. They were the nucleus of the church of Philippi and the nucleus of the the church in Europe. The gospel spread to all nations through western culture, on Roman roads, utilizing an artificial peace created by Rome—Pax Romana. The gospel of Jesus brings real peace.