

Paul's Second Missionary Journey



Background Reading

Acts 16:1-5; 16:6-17; 32-36;
17: 11-32; 18:1-3; 20:22;
Romans 8:14

Devotional Reading

Acts 15:36-41



Central Verse

“And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas; Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the Word of the Lord, and see how they do.”

Acts 15:36, KJV

“After some time, Paul said to Barnabas, ‘Let’s go back and visit each city where we previously preached the Word of the lord, to see how the new believers are doing.’”

Acts 15:36, NLT

Key Terms

Opposition—The action of resisting: hostile or contrary action or condition.

Synagogue—The house of worship and communal center of a Jewish congregation.

Philosophers—A person who seeks wisdom or enlightenment: a student of philosophy.

Introduction

We have been studying how the Holy Spirit was working in the disciples to establish the New Testament Church. Many believers were instrumental in establishing the work, one of whom was the Apostle Paul, who had been a fierce opponent of this new movement, but God had arrested him on the Damascus Road. Just as fierce as he was against the church, he became one of the greatest champions of the gospel. The Holy Spirit used him to take several missionary journeys. In this lesson, we will talk about his second journey.

On his first missionary journey, he and Barnabas went to several cities and established several churches amidst many conflicts. God was with them, and they were able to accomplish much. In this lesson, they decided to return to those cities and see how the saints were getting along.

Discussion

Although their primary purpose was to revisit the new believers, the Holy Spirit had a different agenda. The Holy Spirit led Paul and Barnabas to avoid Asia but led them to go to new areas, especially Greece. "They that the Spirit leads, they are the Sons of God." (Romans 8:14).

Apostle Paul teaches believers that the true sign of sonship in Christ is recognizing the leading of the Holy Spirit and following Him. As believers follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit, they can reach a level of maturity in the faith that allows them to be called the sons of God.

Paul knew that God had a glorious destiny prepared for him. He also knew that it could only be fulfilled if he followed the Holy Spirit's directions. Life demands that each believer make critical choices. The only way a believer can be effective is by developing the ability to discern how to measure what he has been taught against the truth of God's Word, to have a life-giving connection with God, and the path to finding clear directions from the Holy Spirit. A man can make his plans, but those plans must line up with the leading of the Holy Spirit. There is a way that seems right unto man, but the end is the way of death.

Paul's second missionary journey lasted about three years. He spent about a year in Antioch teaching and interacting with the believers there after his first missionary journey; before he started on his second journey. He asked Barnabas to go with him but a disagreement concerning John Mark led them to part ways. This caused Paul to allow Silas, along with another team member, to join him on this second journey.

This second missionary journey played a crucial role in the growth of the church. Paul and Silas began their journey by traveling through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the Saints. They left there and came to Derbe and Lystra, where Paul met Timothy, a young convert highly regarded by the local believers. Paul circumcised Timothy because of the Jewish community, as Timothy's father was a Greek, and he had joined Paul and his mission (Acts 16:1-3).

Guided by the Holy Spirit, Paul and his companions didn't preach in Asia and Bithynia, but instead traveled to the regions of Phrygia and Galatia. The Holy Spirit would not allow them to tarry there and preach so they traveled to Troas, where Paul received a vision of a man from Macedonia asking for help. In the vision, the man said, "Come over into Macedonia and help us." This caused them to sail for Europe.

They arrived in Philippi, a leading city of Macedonia, where Paul and Silas preached the gospel. They left the town and found women praying down by the riverside and they spoke unto them. Lydia, a businesswoman, a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, heard them and worshipped God. Paul baptized her and her household. She invited Paul to stay and use her home as a gathering place for the believers. Her house became the first church in Europe. It was in Philippi that Paul casted out the spirit from the slave girl that caused him and Silas to be beaten and put into prison. They prayed and sang at midnight, and God sent an earthquake that shook the jail, causing them to be released. The jailer and his family were also saved.

God had released them from jail by His supernatural power. The jailer who was charged with keeping them had become a believer. He took them to his house, washed and treated their wounds, and allowed them to share the gospel with him. Paul refused to allow the authorities to dismiss them from the city as they desired quietly. He said that they had beaten them openly, and they must openly dismiss them. When the magistrates heard that they were Roman citizens, they were afraid. They came and released them, asking them to leave and they went to Lydia's house, comforted the brethren, and left.

They passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia and stayed at the Synagogue of the Jews in Thessalonica for three weeks. Their preaching persuaded some of the Jewish men and women, as well as many of the Greeks. There arose opposition which forced them to leave the city.

They left Thessalonica and went to Berea, where the Bereans received the message with eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily. Many believed, but because of the opposition from the Jews of Thessalonica, Paul and his team had to leave. They went on to Athens, where he engaged with philosophers at the Areopagus. It was in Athens that he delivered the message on the "unknown god" and the resurrection of Jesus. Some mocked, but many believed, including Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris.

He left Athens and went to Corinth, where he stayed for 18 months. It was in Corinth that he spent time with Aquila and Priscilla, working as a tentmaker while sharing the gospel. He preached in the Synagogue to the Jews and later to the Gentiles after facing opposition. The Lord later encouraged Paul in a vision, assuring him of safety and success in Corinth. After a brief stop in Ephesus, where he reasoned with the Jews, he sailed to Caesarea, greeted the Saints, and returned to Antioch. That ended his second missionary journey.

Conclusion

Believers must understand that the Holy Spirit works in extraordinary ways, guiding believers and performing bold miracles that lead to powerful testimonies. These testimonies enable believers to emulate Paul and the other disciples, who became vessels for God's work and were guided by the same Holy Spirit that ignited the early church.

Staying connected to the Holy Spirit fosters consistent interaction with the Word of God. It provides believers with verses for meditation and reflective questions that help them delve deeper into scripture, thus connecting them with God. God's strengthening Word will cause believers to be renewed by the Holy Spirit, and they can therefore be led, as Paul was, to obey the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Questions

1. What was the purpose of this second missionary journey?
2. What was accomplished on this journey?
3. Why did the Holy Spirit forbid Paul to stay away from some cities and allow him to go to others?
4. What happened in Philippi?
5. Why did Paul leave Thessalonica?

Essential Thought

To accomplish the will of God, the believer must recognize the leadership of the Holy Spirit in their life.