**THE INDISCRIMINATE GOSPEL**

**Acts 15:35-16:40**

**IN ORDER TO REACH ALL TYPES OF PEOPLE WE OFTEN HAVE TO BE WILLING TO GET OUT OF OUR COMFORT ZONE**

* *“Paul went on to Derbe and Lystra, where there was a disciple named Timothy, the son of a believing Jewish woman, but his father was a Greek. 2 The brothers and sisters at Lystra and Iconium spoke highly of him. 3 Paul wanted Timothy to go with him; so he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, since they all knew that his father was a Greek.”* (Acts 16:1-3)
* **Understanding and embracing cultural sensitivities enables us to be used more effectively by God to reach people with the gospel.**
* *“Although I am free from all and not anyone’s slave, I have made myself a slave to everyone, in order to win more people. 20 To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win Jews; to those under the law, like one under the law—though I myself am not under the law[d]—to win those under the law. 21 To those who are without the law, like one without the law—though I am not without God’s law but under the law of Christ—to win those without the law. 22 To the weak I became weak, in order to win the weak. I have become all things to all people, so that I may by every possible means save some. 23 Now I do all this because of the gospel, so that I may share in the blessings.”* (1 Corinthians 9:19-23)
* **Laying aside our personal preferences for the sake of reaching others with the gospel demonstrates that we truly love God above all, and love our neighbors as ourselves.**
* *“As they traveled through the towns, they delivered the decisions reached by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem for the people to observe. 5 So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers.”* (Acts 16:4-5)

**SOMETIMES CLOSED DOORS ARE PART OF GOD’S PLAN**

* *“They went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia; they had been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. 7 When they came to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them. 8 Passing by Mysia they went down to Troas. 9 During the night Paul had a vision in which a Macedonian man was standing and pleading with him, ‘Cross over to Macedonia and help us!’ 10 After he had seen the vision, we immediately made efforts to set out for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.”* (Acts 16:6-10)
* **Knowing God’s will begins with what is already revealed in Scripture, and then seeking the Lord in prayer and obtaining godly counsel.**
* *“Your word is a lamp for my feet and a light on my path.”* (Psalm 119:105)
* *“Now if any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God—who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly—and it will be given to him.”* (James 1:5)
* *“Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.”* (Romans 12:2)
* *“Plans fail when there is no counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.”* (Proverbs 15:22)

**THE GOSPEL OF JESUS UNITES PEOPLE AS KINGDOM CITIZENS FROM EVERY BACKGROUND, SOCIAL CLASS, AND NATIONALITY**

* *“On the Sabbath day we went outside the city gate by the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and spoke to the women gathered there.”* (Acts 16:13)
* **God calls men, women, young, and old from all backgrounds into the family of God to be used for His purposes.**
* *“A God-fearing woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, was listening. The Lord opened her heart to respond to what Paul was saying. 15 After she and her household were baptized, she urged us, ‘If you consider me a believer in the Lord, come and stay at my house.’ And she persuaded us.”* (Acts 16:14-15)
* *“Once, as we were on our way to prayer, a slave girl met us who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She made a large profit for her owners by fortune-telling. 17 As she followed Paul and us she cried out, ‘These men, who are proclaiming to you a way of salvation, are the servants of the Most High God.’ 18 She did this for many days. Paul was greatly annoyed. Turning to the spirit, he said, ‘I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her!’ And it came out right away.”* (Acts 16:16-18)
* **Whether in calm and quiet fashion, or in the demonstrative power of deliverance, God changes lives from all walks of life for His glory!**
* *“About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.”* (Acts 16:25)
* **When we walk in the Spirit and live in obedience to God we can have peace even in the midst of the most severe circumstances.**
* *“The jailer called for lights, rushed in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. 30 He escorted them out and said, ‘Sirs, what must I do to be saved?’ 31 They said, ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.’ 32 And they spoke the word of the Lord to him along with everyone in his house. 33 He took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds. Right away he and all his family were baptized. 34 He brought them into his house, set a meal before them, and rejoiced because he had come to believe in God with his entire household.”* (Acts 16:29-34)
* **When a person is saved by Jesus the first act of obedience is to follow through with being baptized.**
* **The Gospel of Jesus saves and unites people from every nation, tribe, tongue, and background for the glory of God!**

**CONNECT GROUP DISCUSSION**

**ICE-BREAKER:** If you started a new talk show, who would be your first guest and why?

**START THINKING (Observation):**

* What does Acts 16:1-40 teach us about God?
* Why do you think Paul wouldn’t let Barnabus bring John Mark along for the missionary journey?
* Why did Paul have Timothy circumcised before bringing him on the missionary journey?
* Why do you think Luke chose the 3 individuals he did to highlight their salvation?
* How did Paul and Silas respond to being beaten and jailed?

**DIGGING DEEPER (Understanding and Application):**

* What can we learn from Timothy’s willingness to be circumcised for the mission?
* What does this passage of Scripture teach us about God’s guidance?
* How does Paul and Silas’ prison experience impact your view of suffering/struggles? (Note how they responded)
* What can we learn about opening our homes/hospitality from Lydia?
* What will you do differently as a result of this message?

**LOVING OUTWARD**

* Who in your life needs to hear the truth of the Gospel? How has this message/text affected and/or inspired you to reach them?
* Who are you inviting to Church next Sunday?