

Daily Readings

Please note: This week we cover the second missionary journey of Paul. Included in these readings are the narrative sections from the book of Act that deal with this journey

Monday, October 5 – Read Acts 15:40 - 16:10. Today you are invited to read about Paul’s second missionary journey and to reflect once more on the themes from yesterday’s sermon. After a disagreement with Barnabas over John Mark, Paul teams up with Silas for this journey. First they revisit churches that were started on the first missionary journey. Reread verses 9 and 10. How did God guide Paul in verses 6-10? Have you ever felt God closing doors to certain paths you might take, while giving you visions to pursue other courses of action?

Tuesday, October 6 – Read Acts 16:16-40. This passage includes the primary text for Sunday’s sermon. Two notes about this passage and two questions. The fortune teller not only is converted to Christ, but loses her ability to earn a living. Paul and Silas face an unjust beating and imprisonment with prayers and hymns to God. Would you have the courage to walk away from a job that compromised your faith in Christ? How do you face trials and challenges?

Wednesday, October 7 – Read Acts 17. Notice the accusation against the Christians that they are turning the world “up side down”. Can you identify ways the 21st century church is turning the world “upside down”? Are there things we can do in our church to “turn the world up side down”?

Thursday, October 8 – Read Acts 18:1-23. Notice how Paul takes up a trade in Corinth as a tentmaker. His job was the means of providing income for his calling. In what ways is this true for you? Notice in verse 11 how long Paul stayed in Corinth. Corinth was a city that could be described as the French Quarter of the Roman Empire. It was known for its wild living. Notice that others beside Paul are also suffering for their faith. Have you ever paid a price for your faith?

Friday, October 9 – Read II Corinthians 4:7-18. This passage describes Paul’s life and faith in the face of his hardships. What does it teach us about how we might face adversity? Spend time today giving thanks for the blessings God has given you.



STUDY GUIDE & DAILY READINGS

Sunday, October 4, 2009

PERSEVERE

STAGES *(Following the Journeys of Paul)*, Week 3 of 4

Acts 16:19-26 – The Word from the Bible (Today’s New International Version)

When her owners realized that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities. They brought them before the magistrates and said, “These men are Jews, and are throwing our city into an uproar by advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice.”

The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten with rods. After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. When he received these orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everyone’s chains came loose.

Paul and Silas

This is one of the most intriguing stories in the book of Acts. In Paul’s letters, we hear his encouragement to trust and pray in all circumstances. Even in his letters written from prison, he writes about rejoicing and giving thanks. In this passage, we see Paul exhibit the very qualities he calls us to practice. **“Pray without ceasing, rejoice always, and give thanks in every circumstance, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”** (I Thessalonians 5:16-18)

Paul’s Second Missionary Journey

The “second” missionary journey (15:36-18:22) begins with changed personnel – Silas (Silvanus) and later Timothy (16:3), instead of Barnabas (15:36-40), are the companions of Paul. After **“strengthening the churches”** in Syria and Cilicia (15:41), he revisits Derbe and Lystra. The journey through the enigmatic **“region of Phrygia and Galatia”** follows, and the divinely guided decision to go to Macedonia – Europe to us but not, of course, to Paul – with the significant planting of new churches at Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea; the incident at Athens; and the longer and more fruitful stay at Corinth.

Ephesus, destined to be a center for future evangelization, was briefly visited, and Paul sailed for Caesarea, **“went up and greeted the church”** (18:22), and then **“went down to Antioch.”** The graphic style and the highlighting of dramatic incidents, such as the stories of the slave girl, the jail delivery at Philippi (16:16-40) and Paul’s address at Athens (17:22-34), give us the authentic flavor of Paul’s mission.

Scripture Notes on Paul’s second missionary Journey – Acts 15:40-18:21

15:40-16:3 – With these verses begins the narrative of the “second missionary journey.” After passing through Syria and Cilicia (15:23) Paul and Silas revisit the churches of the previous mission (14:6-23).

16:6-10 – Paul and Silas travel west to Macedonia under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Roman province of Asia in New Testament times consisted of the entire western coast of Asia Minor. Apparently Luke, however, uses the name “Asia” to

mean, not the whole province, but the territory around the capital city, Ephesus. Thus Paul, being forbidden to preach around Ephesus, moves north toward Bithynia. Then, being forbidden again, he turns west to go through Mysia to Troas.

16:11-15 - From Troas, Paul and his company sail to Neapolis, stopping overnight on the island of Samothrace. Taking the Via Egnatia (the Roman road to the west) they travel inland some nine miles to Philippi.

The word translated place of prayer is a synonym for “synagogue.” However, Luke is probably describing an area where the river makes a bend providing a small natural amphitheater. Lydia is the first convert in Philippi. She is described as having a heart to receive the gospel. Her conversion involves the baptism of her relatives and slaves, since the decision of the master is valid for the whole household. The church which resulted from this conversion maintained good relations with Paul (Philippians 1:3-5 and 4:10, 15-16).

16:16-40 – Paul and Silas meet a slave girl who uses sorcery to tell the fortune. Evidently, she brings substantial economic gain for her owners. Paul identifies her possessed soul and casts out the spirits. She becomes the second convert of Philippi.

When the owners realize the lost of income as the result of her conversion, Paul and Silas are dragged ... into the market place. The agora of a Greek city, like a Roman forum, was both and judicial center. The ruins of the agora at Philippi include a platform used for public speeches and trials. The missionaries are charged with being Jews who have disturbed the city.

The victims are stripped as a preparation to beat them with rods. The jailer is probably the warden of the prison, holding perhaps the rank of centurion. The inner prison was probably underground with no windows; the traditional site can be visited today. The description of feet being put in stocks (literally “wood”) and the other extreme security measures serve to enhance the miracle of escape. When the doors are opened and the chains are released, the other prisoners obey Paul’s request to stay. The indicates the impression Paul and Silas have made on them.

The jailer’s attempt on his own life is an effort to avoid humiliating judgment, torture and execution by his superiors. His question, which historically would be no more than a call for help, becomes the cry of one ready to obey the gospel: **“What must I do to be saved?”** The answer is a simple confession of the Pauline faith (Romans 10:9). The prediction in verse 17 that Paul and Silas proclaim . . . the way of salvation is fulfilled.

The jailer takes the Paul, Silas and the prisoners to his house for further preaching of the gospel. Then the whole group goes to a place where the wounds can be washed and the entire family can be baptized.

The magistrates send police to release the prisoners. The police are “lictors” (literally “rod bearers”) – men who carry the fasces (an ax bound with rods), which symbolizes their power to execute the judgments of the magistrates. Paul is told of his release by the jailer, who employs the biblical admonition **Go in peace**. Paul is incensed, insisting that officials who have beaten a Roman citizen must come themselves and release them. Paul, as a Roman citizen, is referring to his right of a full investigation and fair trial.

17:1-9. Paul and his companions travel west to Thessalonica by way of the Via Egnatia through Amphipolis and Apollonia. The trip is over 100 miles. Thessalonica is the most important city of Macedonia. As well as being the territorial Roman capital, it was also a free city with its own administration. This section ends when Jason and some of the local converts are dragged before the city authorities. The charge is ironic. They are accused of disturbing the order, of having turned the world upside down. This is exactly what the early Christians are doing – the world will never be the same again.

17:10-19:41 - The missionary journey ends with a tour through Beroea, Athens, Corinth, and Ephesus. We know of Paul’s work in Corinth and Ephesus through his letters, but little is known of his work in Athens and Beroea. Some have assumed that Paul had little success in Athens because of its wealth and wide spread pagan practices.

Corinth was similar to Athens with its wealth and reputation for pagan cults and immorality, but it is here that Paul meets Aquila and Priscilla. These two have recently been driven out of Rome by the emperor and dedicate themselves to establishing a church in Corinth and later in Ephesus.

It is also at Corinth that Paul is joined again by Silas and Timothy. This seems to allow Paul to concentrate on preaching. Paul stays a year and six months in Corinth. According to an inscription Gallio became governor of Achaia in A.D. 51 or 52. If Paul’s appearance before him occurred at the end of the apostle’s stay in Corinth, the mission must have begun in 50 or 51.

Paul leaves Corinth and travels on to Ephesus. Ephesus was the capital of the Roman province of Asia. The temple of Artemis, one of the Seven Wonders of the World, had been built outside its walls. Paul stays in Ephesus for over two years. Afterward he visits Jerusalem on his way back to Antioch.

Prayer Focus

Trietsch is a praying church. This morning, as you worship, one of our prayer volunteers is praying for everyone in each section of our worship center. We believe that prayer changes lives and hearts for good and for God.

We invite you to join these volunteers by praying for those persons around you. We believe these prayers will have an immediate impact on those for whom you are praying. **Remember... someone is praying for you. Here is a prayer to guide you, written by one of our church members.**

Lord,

You are Creator

You are Counselor

You are Shepherd

You are Provider

Everyone here needs your life-giving spirit, your healing, your forgiveness, your support and protection, your provision.

Bring us together to invite your full power into our lives.

Below are prayers to use during this worship service or during the week as you face life’s challenges.

- Psalm 121

I look up to the hills,

but where does my help come from?

My help comes from the Lord,

who made heaven and earth.

He will not let you be defeated.

He who guards you never sleeps.

He who guards Israel

never rests or sleeps.

The Lord guards you.

The Lord is the shade that protects you from the sun.

The sun cannot hurt you during the day,

and the moon cannot hurt you at night.

The Lord will protect you from all dangers;

he will guard your life.

The Lord will guard you as you come and go,

both now and forever.

- Isaiah 40:28-31

Surely you know.

Surely you have heard.

The Lord is the God who lives forever,

who created all the world.

He does not become tired or need to rest.

No one can understand how great his wisdom is.

He gives strength to those who are tired

and more power to those who are weak.

Even children become tired and need to rest,

and young people trip and fall.

But the people who trust the Lord will become strong again.

They will rise up as an eagle in the sky;

they will run and not need rest;

they will walk and not become tired

The Serenity Prayer (adapted)

God grant me serenity to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference. Living one day at a time; enjoying one moment at a time; accepting hardships as the pathway to peace; taking, as Christ did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it; trusting that He will make all things right if I surrender to His Will; so that I may be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with Him. Amen.