

Acts 15:36-16:5, Establishing the Team
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H. Van Dyke Parunak

A. Overview

1. The three cycles of Acts 1:8

a) Jerusalem, 2:5-6:7

b) Judea and Samaria, 6:1-11:18

c) Ends of the Earth, 11:19ff, which falls into two parts:

1) 11:19-15:35, The Acts of the Church at Antioch

a> 11:19, summary

b> 11:20-26, Founding of the Church; also gets Barnabas and Saul together.

c> 12-15, Three Characteristics of the Church, each bracketed by the departure and return of Barnabas and Paul:

1> 12, a Loving church

2> 13-14, a Missionary church

3> 15, a Disciplined church

2) The subsequent missionary journeys

a> 15:36-16:5, Establishing the Team (Today)

b> 16:6-18:23, 2nd journey

c> 18:24ff, third journey

2. Lessons

a) The Lord's superintendence even through divisions in the church.

b) The need to work in teams to advance the kingdom of God.

c) God's ability to change people over time.

B. 36, The Motive

Follow-up. "Visit" is same root as "overseer." Implies that the purpose of the visit is to care for them, and look out for their needs. "See how they do."

They are agreed as to WHAT needs to be done, though they differ on HOW it should be carried out.

Application: Need to keep in touch with those with whom God gives us a ministry. The compassion that leads us to initiate evangelism also compels us to nurture them on.

C. 37-38, The Disagreement

Around John Mark:

1. His failure, 13:5,13.
2. Barnabas' support
 - a) physical relation, Col. 4:10 (Mark was Barnabas' nephew).
 - b) B's spiritual role (cf. how he recovered Saul from Tarsus after the latter had been overly aggressive in Jerusalem, 9:30).
3. The later outcome:
 - a) With Paul in Rome during first imprisonment:
 - 1) Col 4:10 Aristarchus my fellowprisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him;)
 - 2) Phm 23 There salute thee Epaphras, my fellowprisoner in Christ Jesus; 24 Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellowlabourers.
 - b) A desirable companion during the second imprisonment:
 - 2 Tim. 4:11 Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry.
4. *Application*: The first of two lessons in dealing with failure. If someone fails us, we need to be patient toward them.

D. 39-40, The Division

Covers all the ground that Paul suggested in 36, though in a different way than he had anticipated. In fact, puts two teams into the field instead of just one! God can work even through strife.

Application: The second lesson in dealing with failure. The one who has failed (in this case, John Mark) must be willing to get up and try again. Go back to the place where he last messed up. Cf. Jonah, whose whale brought him back to his starting place. If Mark had remained frozen in place, unwilling to try again, Paul would never have come to recognize him as "profitable."

E. **40-16:5, Paul's New Team**

1. The makeup of the team.

Paul knows that he cannot work alone. Cf. the Lord's command. Mark 6:7 (the twelve); Luke 10:1 (the seventy). Also:

Eccl. 4:9 Two [are] better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. 10 For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him [that is] alone when he falleth; for [he hath] not another to help him up. 11 Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm [alone]? 12 And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

As we proceed, we will observe how this team operates.

- a) Silas takes place of Barnabas

- 1) 15:22, one of the "chief men" at Jerusalem.
 - 2) 15:32, recognized as a prophet.
 - 3) 16:37f, like Paul, a Roman citizen.
- b) At first, no new "Mark," but by Lystra, Paul sees that he needs one, and takes Timothy.
- c) *Application*: The recurrence of the three person structure suggests a pattern for us: two mature workers (to avoid a one-man show), and a younger worker to learn from them (an apprentice).
2. The church's actions in establishing the team.
- While churches are sometimes said to send people out for specific tasks (15:22 *pempw*), for general missionary work the church's role is more passive, and it is the Spirit who sends (13:4 *ekpempw*). The church does do three things:
- a) *Recognition* of the Lord's call, indicated by laying on of hands: 13:3; cf. 1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6 for the same process followed with Timothy.
 - b) *Release* (*apoluw*) from the responsibilities of local ministry, 13:4.
 - c) *Reliance* on God's care, now that they are beyond the immediate reach of the church. This is the force of "recommended to the grace of God," v.40, which had also happened to Paul and Barnabas (cf. 14:26).
- The verb (*paradidwmi*) is much more commonly translated "deliver" (as of Christ to sinful men, Luke 9:44) or "betray," and has the sense of surrendering someone to the control of another. Thus here the notion is that the church "entrusts" them to God's grace, since they are beyond its immediate help and support.
- d) *Application*: We need to be careful that the church not do either too little or too much.
- 1) The church does too little if workers set off without the recognition and endorsement of the local assembly. It is in the assembly, not by the individual alone, that gifts and ministries are recognized.
 - 2) The church does too much if it assumes the control and full financial sustenance of the one sent forth. It is not the church who sends, but the HS of God. The church simply releases the workers and delivers them to God's grace.
3. The work of the team.
- a) 15:41, confirming (*episthrizw*) the churches. Emphasizes strength through foundation. Note singular pronoun: Paul, who

provides the word of knowledge, gives a solid basis to the believers.

b) 16:5, establishing (*stereow*) the churches in the faith. "Strengthen," elsewhere in Acts used only of the ankle bones of the lame man in Acts 3. Thus internal strength. The pronoun here is plural. Silas and Timothy add the word of wisdom, which leads to internal strength for God's people through faith.

c) *Application*: We need both founding and strengthening; both the firm external support provided by accurate exposition of the Scriptures, and internal spiritual strength.

F. Summary

1. The Lord's superintendence even through divisions in the church.
2. God's ability to change people over time.
3. The need to work in teams to advance the kingdom of God.

Hymn: Christian, Dost Thou See Them?

Analysis

Establishing the Team

A. Break-up of the Old Team. Interchange p

1. iu: Paul, quote p

a) quote f: 15:36 Meta\ de/ tinas h(me/ras ei)^pen pro\s Barnaba^n Pau^los,

b) quote: AQ p

- 1) aq f:)Epistre/yantes dh\ e)piskeyw/meqa tou\s a)delfou\s kata\ po/lin pa^san e)n ai(^s kathggei/lamen to\n lo/gon tou^ kuri/ou,
- 2) aq: pw^s e)/xousin.

2. cu, Barnabas

37 Barnaba^s de\ e)bou/leto sumparalabei^n kai\ to\n)Iwa/nnhn to\n kalou/menon Ma^rkon:

3. cu, Paul

38 Pau^los de\ h)ci/ou to\n a)posta/nta a)p' au)tw^ n a)po\ Pamfuli/as kai\ mh\ sunelqo/nta au)toi^s ei)s to\ e)/rgon mh\ sumparalamba/nein tou^ton.

More on Mark: Col. 4:10; Phil. 23; 2 Tim. 4:11.

4. ru, result p

a) text: 39 e)ge/neto de\ parocusmo\s

b) result: w(/ste

- 1) a)poxwrisqh^nai au)to\s a)p' a)llh/lwn,
1 Cor. 9:6 on Paul's view of Barnabas later.
- 2) to/n te Barnaba^n ... e)kpleu^sai ei)s Ku/pron.
a> paralabo/nta to\n Ma^rkon

B. Establishing the new team.

40 Pau^los de\ <two companions>

Semantically, a contrast with Barnabas in 39. Grammatically, a new start. Transitional feature.

1. Silas:

- a) Person: e)pileca/menos Sila^n e)ch^lqen paradoqei\s th^|
xa/riti tou^ kuri/ou u(po\ tw^n a)delfw^n,
- b) Churches: 41 dih/rxeto de\ th\n Suri/an kai\ [th\n] Kiliki/an
e)pisthri/zwn ta\s e)kklhsi/as.

2. Timothy:

- a) Person:
 - 1) 16:1 Kath/nthsen de\ [kai\] ei)s De/rbhn kai\ ei)s
Lu/stran.
 - 2) kai\ i)dou\ maqhth/s tis h)^n e)kei^ o)no/mati Timo/qeos,
ui(o\s gunaiko\s)Ioudai/as pisth^s patro\s de\ (/Ellhnos,
a> 2 o(\s e)marturei^to u(po\ tw^n e)n Lu/strois kai\
)Ikoni/w| a)delfw^n.
 - 3) 3 tou^ton h)qe/lhsen o(Pau^los su\n au)tw^| e)celqei^n,
 - 4) reason p
a> text: kai\ labw\n perie/temen au)to\n dia\ tou\s
)Ioudai/ous tou\s o)/ntas e)n toi^s to/pois e)kei/nois,
b> reason: h)/|deisan ga\r a(/pantes o(/ti (/Ellhn o(
path\r au)tou^ u(ph^rxen.
- b) Churches:
 - 1) circumstantial p
a> circumstance: 4 w(s de\ dieporeu/onto ta\s po/leis,
b> text: paredi/dosan au)toi^s fula/ssein ta\ do/gmata ta\
kekrime/na u(po\ tw^n a)posto/lwn kai\ presbute/rwn tw^n
e)n (Ierosolu/mois.
 - 2) 5 ai(me\n ou)^n e)kklhsi/ai e)stereou^nto th^| pi/stei
 - 3) kai\ e)peri/sseuon tw^| a)riqmw^| kaq' h(me/ran.