

Acts 16, Mission to Philippi
16:6-12, Voyage to Philippi
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Overview

1. Problem: How to know the Lord's will--for us as individuals? as a church? How does the HS direct us in our day to day lives? Three levels of conduct:
 - a) Questions of morality and ethics, settled by God's law.
 - b) Questions of wisdom. General principles of Scripture, backed up by experience.
 - c) How about other daily conduct--e.g., picking a church in Paris to visit? or a bus to ride, on which we may meet someone in need of the gospel? Some say, "It doesn't matter to God." But he has numbered the hairs of our heads, and it is unwise to presume that he does not care about our daily affairs. If he "works all things together," we must believe that he works these details.

 2. We see from the sequel in Acts 16 that God wanted the team in Philippi. This is not a matter of morality or of wisdom, but of daily conduct. Trace how he guides them there in vv.6-12.
 - a) Negative direction (hindrances)

 - b) Positive direction (dream)

 - c) Common sense

 3. 13-40 (next week) describes what they did once they got there.
- A. **6-8, Hindrances**
- After revisiting their friends in Galatia, they pass by several promising districts where we might have expected them to turn. Why? How did they know they were not to go there?
1. Asia
 - a) The province: home of the "seven churches" of Rev. 1-3. Very receptive to the gospel--but not the priority for now.

 - b) The Spirit "forbad" them. Most commonly, the word refers to an explicit verbal prohibition. Perhaps a prophecy from one of the team members, or even through one of the churches in Galatia.

 2. Bithynia
 - a) The province: also receptive to the gospel. 1 Pet. 1:1 shows it as a haven for scattered believers, and it is the home of Nicaea and Chalcedon, which were the seats of major church councils in 325 and 451, respectively. But again, it is not

the Lord's place for Paul.

b) Now the Spirit "does not suffer them." Suggests a more circumstantial form of direction, through circumstances.

3. Mysia

No details about presence or absence of ministry here. By now, Paul appears to have drawn the conclusion that his destination is farther on. NB: He keeps on moving, even without specific direction. "Follow the instructions you last received, until you get new ones."

Troas is in this region. Later (ch.20), we find a church there. Most important for our purposes: here begin the "we" sections of Acts, indicating that Luke has joined the party.

4. *Application*: We are sometimes prone to think that if God is not using us, he must be displeased with us. Perhaps not--maybe he is simply telling us it's time to move on, in order to find the place where he does want us.

B. 9-10, Positive Direction

The Lord not only closes doors; sometimes he gives positive direction.

1. The evidence: a dream.

2. The conclusion: note shift from "he" to "we" in v.10.

a) Marks entrance of Luke.

b) For our theme of direction, more important to note that it shows the concurrence of several believers around the idea. The vision by itself is private to Paul, but on discussing it with the others, they conclude that it is the voice of the Lord.

3. *Application*: God can direct us through dreams, as well as through circumstance. But it is well to guard against "private interpretation" by taking counsel with other saints.

C. 11-12, Common Sense

Why start at Philippi? The dream shows that their destination is Macedonia. They took the most direct route (by sea, stopping overnight at the island of Samothrace). Neapolis is in Thrace, not Macedonia; they stopped at the first big Macedonian city they reached, the chief city of that district.

Application: This part of their journey is guided by common sense and practicality. God doesn't need to tell them to take a boat; they can figure that out. Having no specific instructions concerning a city, they pick the first center they can get to, and there wait for a while, to see what the Lord will do. (Contrast 12b "abiding certain days" with v.8 "passing by.")

Summary:

General principles of direction:

1. Circumstances. Things that don't work are as much God's direction as things that do. He can hinder as well as enable. We should thank him for both, and heed both.
2. Openness to subjective influences--the voice of the Spirit in Galatia; Paul's dream in Troas.
3. Sound Mind principle: do what makes sense.
4. Through it all, heed the "moving ship" principle: can't steer it if it isn't moving. We should be doing the best we know how, and trust God to lead us from there.

Hymn: 36, Precious Promise

Analysis

A. 6-12, Travels

1. Hindrances

- a) circumstantial p: Not in Asia.
 - 1) text: 16:6 Dih^lqon de\ th\ n Frugi/an kai\ Galatikh\ n xw/ran,
 - 2) circumstance: kwluqe/ntes u(po\ tou^ a(gi/ou pneu/matos lalh^{sai} to\ n lo/gon e)n th^|)Asi/a|:
- b) temporal-concessive p: Not in Bithynia.
 - 1) time: 7 e)lqo/ntes de\ kata\ th\ n Musi/an
 - 2) text: e)pei/razon ei)s th\ n Biquni/an poreugh^{nai},
 - 3) concession: kai\ ou)k ei)/asen au)tou\s to\ pneu^ma:
- c) temporal p: Not in Mysia (but also no specific spiritual direction here).
 - 1) time: 8 parelqo/ntes de\ th\ n Musi/an
 - 2) text: kate/bhsan ei)s Trw|a/da.

2. Positive direction: execution p

- a) text: aq p
 - 1) aq f: 9 kai\ o(/rama dia\ [th^s] nukto\s tw^| Pau/lw| w)/fqh,
 - 2) aq: quote p
 - a> quote f: a)nh\r Makedw/n tis h)^n e(stw\s kai\ parakalw^n au)to\ n kai\ le/gwn,
 - b> quote: Diaba\s ei)s Makedoni/an boh/qhson h(mi^n.
- b) interpretation
 - 1) time: 10 w(s de\ to\ o(/rama ei)^den,
 - 2) text: eu)qe/ws e)zhth/samen e)celqei^n ei)s Makedoni/an,
 - 3) reason: sumbiba/zontes o(/ti proske/klhtai h(ma^s o(qeo\s eu)aggeli/sasqai au)tou/s.

3. Voyage to Philippi

- a) 11)Anaxqe/ntes de\ a)po\ Trw|a/dos
- b) eu)qudromh/samen ei)s Samoqra/|khn,
- c) th^| de\ e)piou/sh| ei)s Ne/an Po/lin,

d) comment p

1) text: 12 ka)kei^qen ei)s Fili/ppous,

2) comment <Filippous>: h(/tis e)sti\n prw/th[s] meri/dos th^s
Makedoni/as po/lis, kolwni/a.

B. 13-40, Ministry in Philippi [next study]