

- Last week we looked at the last two chapters of the book of James. We recalled that the book was probably written by the brother of Jesus who was killed for his beliefs shortly after the book. We also recalled that James was heavily influenced by the writings of Solomon and the preaching of Jesus, especially the Sermon on the Mount. We also talked about how James used very clear language and really challenges for us all to live what we believe.
- This week we are going to start looking at what we know to be Paul's second missionary trip. We will back up a little bit into the very end of chapter 15 to review who went with him on this trip. We will talk about some of the things that occurred in the beginning of the trip, including some time in prison, some notable conversions, and some famous preaching.
- First recall from the end of Acts 15 that Paul, Barnabas and Silas are going out to do more missionary work. Barnabas want to take John Mark, but Paul objects since John Mark had left them on the last journey they made (remember that he had left them in Perga to return to Jerusalem). The argument is so intense that they agree to go separate ways. Barnabas takes John Mark and they sail off to the island of Cyprus again (then scripture never mentions them again) and Paul takes a man names Silas and pays return visits to the churches in the area. (Acts 15:36-41)
- Remember that we don't know why John Mark left them in Perga (Acts 13:13). This has been the source of a lot of speculation, but scripture just doesn't tell us. We do know that Christ set the bar high for reasons his followers would give for discipleship, even to the point of saying that going to bury one's father is not a good excuse. He says that those who are spiritually dead can oversee that. (Matthew 8:22)
- Paul and Barnabas go to a pair of towns called Derbe and Lystra. There they convert a man named Timothy. They circumcise him and take him on missions with them. (Acts 16:1-5)
- Paul had recently insisted circumcision was not necessary and the apostles at Jerusalem had agreed with him and settled the issue – circumcision was clearly not necessary to salvation. Paul had Timothy circumcised since he would be able to teach both Gentiles and Jews, and Paul did not want to give the Jews any offense. Paul is clear that even if something is not wrong, we should not do it if it will offend people. He will use the example of meat sacrificed to idols and says "we all know that is not valid because those Gods are bogus anyway and it is fine to eat, but don't do it in the case it will cause someone else not to accept the Gospel of Christ. (I Corinthians 8:9-13)
- Paul and Barnabas try to go toward what they know as Asia, but they are stopped by God. (Acts 16:6-7)
- Paul sees a vision of a Greek man beckoning him to a region called Macedonia so when he wakes up, they go there. (Acts 16:9-10)
- We call this the "Macedonian call" and verse two of our song "Send the Light" starts off with a reference to that.
- As they are going through the region, one of the persons they convert is named Lydia and she sells purple garments (noted because purple was the color of royalty). (Acts 16:11-15)

- Paul and Silas cast out the spirit from a woman that keeps following them around for days proclaiming they are servants of God. Her owner who has been making money off her is not happy so he lodges a complaint with the local officials who beat Paul and Silas and throw them in prison. (Acts 16:16-24)
- While Paul and Silas are in prison they pray and sing. There is a big earthquake that frees all the prisoners, but they don't run off. The jailer thinks they have and is about to kill himself to prevent his own certain execution for letting the prisoners escape. Paul tells the jailer not to do it because they are all there. The jailer and his whole household is then converted. (Acts 16:25-34)
- The judges tell the jailers to release Paul and Silas. Paul and Silas are not happy because they are Roman citizens so they should not have been treated that way without a trial. The judges come personally and apologize to them and beg them to go. (Acts 16:35-40)
- Paul and Silas come a city called Thessalonica and it's the same result – some people believe and some do not. Those who do believe form a mob and go to a house owned by a man named Jason where they believe Paul and Silas are. Paul and Silas aren't there but the people who do not believe make Jason and those with him pay a fine anyway. (Acts 17:1-8).
- They eventually go to a town called Berea where the Jews search through the scriptures and really think about what they mean (it is noted that they were much more diligent in this regard than the Jews in the previous town). (Acts 17:10-13)
- Silas and Timothy stay in Berea, and Paul goes on to the Greek capital of Athens. There he sees statues to a bunch of Gods, and notes that they even have a statue to the "unknown God" in case they missed one. Paul uses their devotion and even their poets to his advantage in his preaching and many believe. (Acts 17:14-34)

Questions:

1. Why do the apostles split up? Why? How do they resolve this argument?
2. What did Christ say was not a good excuse for not following Him?
3. Who did Paul and Silas convert, circumcise, and take with them?
4. Why do Paul and Silas circumcise Timothy?
5. Who stops Paul and Silas from going toward Asia?
6. Where do Paul, Silas, and Timothy go because of Paul's vision?
7. What woman does Paul and company convert and what does she do for work?
8. Why are Paul and Silas thrown in prison?
9. What happens when Paul and Silas are thrown in prison?
10. Why do the judges apologize to Paul and Silas?
11. Who is Jason and why do the nonbelievers fine him?
12. What were the Berean Jews known for?
13. Who stays in Berea while Paul goes onto the Greek capital of Athens?
14. What does Paul do in the Greek capital of Athens?