

Acts Study Questions: Week 6 **Paul Preaches to Many Cities**

Monday, June 21—Acts 16:1-15

1. One of the significant characteristics of Acts is the guidance of the Holy Spirit. How do you recognize the guidance of the Spirit in your own life? In this case, Paul and the others' own plans to spread the gospel in certain regions were blocked. It is extremely difficult when we want to travel down paths in our own lives—especially when we think those paths would be pleasing to God—and the way becomes blocked. Can you think of an example from your own life? Does it make it easier or more difficult to know that some of these “blocks” are the work of the Holy Spirit?
2. Paul's calling to go to Macedonia came in a dream. Why do you think so many of us today are uncomfortable considering the significance of dreams? Are there any other ways the Holy Spirit might be guiding us that we are uncomfortable with? Pray that you might recognize the Holy Spirit in your life this week. Then, keep watch for the work of the Spirit and expect to be surprised!

Tuesday, June 22—Acts 16:16-40

1. In verse 25, Paul and Silas are described as praying and singing hymns to God. Why is it significant that they are doing this BEFORE they are freed and even without knowing that they would be freed so soon? How have you experienced the difficulty of continuing to pray and sing to God during times of trial? Does praying and singing to God mean that we must pretend that everything is fine, or is there a way to pray and sing in honesty? How can we stand alongside our brothers and sisters in Christ as they pray and sing without making them feel like they have to pretend they are not in pain?
2. What do you think caused the jailer to be so eager to be saved: the miraculous earthquake, Paul and Silas' concern for his life, something else? I think this is a real-life example of Jesus' words in Luke 6:27-37, which explain how and why we should love our enemies. Why is it so difficult to show mercy to our enemies, those who have hurt us, or even those who annoy us? Who are you being called to show mercy to in your life right now, and how will show it: forgiveness, kindness, gratitude, a smile, an offer of help, or something else?

Wednesday, June 23—Acts 17:1-15

1. In verse 3, “Christ” or “Messiah” (depending on your translation) means “anointed one.” It refers to the person the Jews expected would deliver them and restore Israel to its former glory. Why do you think some of the Jews had such difficulty with the suffering and resurrection of their supposed Messiah? What is so counter-cultural for us about the fact that the deliverer, Jesus Christ, suffered? Did He deliver us from suffering or for suffering? Don't be afraid to think outside the box and ask yourself: what does all of this mean for ministry, and your role in it, at First Baptist Church?

2. What was the mob's accusation when they dragged Jason and the other believers before the city authorities? What does it mean to say that Christ, not any political or other authority, is king of your life? How can you choose the authority of Christ in your life today?

Thursday, June 24—Acts 17:16-34

1. In 17:2-3 Paul argues with the Jews from their own Scriptures (the Hebrew Bible, our Old Testament), while in today's reading Paul speaks to the Gentile Athenians using their own Greek philosophies as reference points. What difference do you think it made that Paul began with his audience's own beliefs as his starting point? What difference would it make if you could recognize any points of connection with another person's non-Christian beliefs before telling them about Christ? Is there anyone God is calling you to get to know before you tell him/her the gospel?
2. Look again at verse 18. What was Paul's good news about? Who has been resurrected and who will be resurrected? Imagine what a modern-day billboard telling this good news might look like. If the image that comes to mind might be something that would cause some raised eyebrows (even your own!), maybe you can sympathize with the scoffers in verse 32. How do you think the message of resurrection could bring comfort to scoffers today?

Friday, June 25—Acts 18:1-23

1. In contrast to Monday's reading in which the Holy Spirit blocks Paul's way, in this section Paul is led to stay for a long time in Corinth, despite the opposition of many Jews, even to the point of bringing Paul before the law. Do you ever wish that guidance from the Lord would be a lot simpler and more clear-cut, as it seems to be for Paul here? What do you do when you are trying to discern if trying circumstances are the Holy Spirit's guidance to leave a certain path, or if you are called to continue where you are at regardless of difficulty? Does this process ever make you feel like pulling your hair out in frustration!? (It does for me!) How can we help one another in times of discernment?
2. Reflect on Paul's words to the Jews in Ephesus in verse 21. How can you re-orient your life to reflect his attitude: I will do only what God wills? Is it difficult to imagine letting go of your own personal agenda? What might be different about your day today if you were to start right now?

This week's questions were written by April Alkema. April is working on Master's in Theology at Fuller Seminary and also has a B.A. in Biblical Studies. She is also an artist who loves making and looking at all kinds of art. Her free time is often spent showing Christ's love to First Baptist's beautiful and rascally youth group girls, and hanging out with her friends and boyfriend (known to the First Baptist community as "Male Anchor"). April looks forward to using her degrees to help her in one or all of the following capacities in the near future: teaching, mentoring, sharing Christ's love with those who know Him and those who do not, and finding (some kind of) a job.