

May 5: Prayerfully Study Acts 16:6-10

"They went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. When they had come opposite Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them; so, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas. During the night Paul had a vision: there stood a man of Macedonia pleading with him and saying, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us.' When he had seen the vision, we immediately tried to cross over to Macedonia, being convinced that God had called us to proclaim the good news to them."

Being Stretched | Across the Water

May 5

1 | Being led by the Holy Spirit, the apostle Paul shifts directions/plans (vv. 6-7). When have you needed to be more flexible? How persistent are you in getting your own way? What is your typical reaction to unexpected change?

2 | When did Paul experience his vision and what did he see in it (v. 9)? What did the missionaries do after they understood what God was calling them to do (v. 10)? How do you think we should react to what our church leaders feel that God is calling us to do? How do you think Paul, Silas, and Timothy recognized the Holy Spirit's directions as they worked for God? How can we be receptive to the Spirit's guidance?

3 | Jesus modeled the shattering of hurdles and walls. In Acts 16:6-10, we see how the Holy Spirit overcomes hurdles, too. After Paul shifted plans several times, he concluded that the Spirit helped him to do something new. On this Commitment Sunday, what are the hurdles facing SHPC? How much do you believe we can overcome them? Looking back over the phases/seasons of your own spiritual growth, how were you stretched? Did you overcome them on your own?

4 | In our study of Acts, we see two leaders disagree over the ministry: how it should be done and who should do it. However, the leadership disagreement didn't destroy the work of the Church. Because of the work of the Holy Spirit, two mission thrusts emerge instead of one. Teacher William Willimon says, "Even dissension among the church's leaders only serves to double the church's mission work. Almost anything, even squabbles within the church can be transformed by the Spirit into a means whereby 'the churches are strengthened.' Nothing, including seemingly impossible hurdles and the need for future leaders can impede the movement of the Spirit." What seems impossible for you? Our congregation?

5 | How can you listen more closely to the Holy Spirit? Who might help you in that spiritual attentiveness? Do you know anyone who is currently being stretched? How might you support them?

¹ William H Willimon, *Interpretation A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching, Acts*. John Knox Press, 1998. P. 135.