

Acts 15:36 - 16:5

- **COUNSEL OF JERUSALEM...**

- Plan of God...
 - After everyone had given their OPINION [Pharisees - Paul - Peter]
 - James [brother of Jesus] stood up and went back the WORD - **Amos 9:11-12**
 - Because God does NOT give OPINIONS - He gives answers...
 - It was obvious the LAW did NOT work - it had been taught EVERYWHERE for GENERATIONS...
 - Therefore it did NOT seem the PLAN of God to put a BURDEN on the Gentiles!
- The Letter...
 - The Counsel wrote a letter to the Gentiles churches noting this DECISION...
 - But they asked them to do THREE things for the sake of UNITY...
 - Do NOT eat things offered to idols - blood - or things strangled...
 - And emphasized one for the sake of HOLINESS - avoid sexual immorality - **I Thessalonians 4:3**
 - If the Gentile churches did these FOUR things - they would do WELL!
- Brining Joy...
 - The letter was carried to the church by Paul and Barnabas...
 - The church sent Judas and Silas along with them to CONFIRM the decision...
 - When the churches heard the letter - it brought GREAT joy...
 - And Paul and Barnabas got back to doing what was MOST important - teaching the Word!

- **1ST - PARTING WAYS... vs. 36-41**

- 1st – Second journey... vs. 36
 - Got the itch...
 - Then after some days Paul said to Barnabas: Let us now go back and visit our brethren!
 - AFTER some time [τινας ἡμέρας] - perhaps SIX months to a YEAR...
 - The COUNSEL of Jerusalem took place in around 49 A.D.
 - And the SECOND missionary journey was thought to have been around 50 A.D.
 - That was about as LONG as Paul could sit still - it was time to GO again...
 - He had the DESIRE to return and [ἐπί] SEE [σκοπός] how the BROTHERS were doing!
 - I remember NOT long after turning the church over in Himamaylan [2014]
 - We were back in California - teaching and serving...
 - Pastor Clark came to me and asked - HOW long do I have you...
 - I had NEVER given a time frame - but I think he could see it...
 - Our heart was NOT to stay - we were called to go back to the PHILIPPINES!
 - One way to SPOT a calling from God - is recognizing a passion...
 - If there is something that DRIVES us - stirs our heart continuously...

- Then there is a good chance that it might be the Lord calling us!
- Every city...
 - In every city where we have preached the word of the Lord - and see how they are doing!
 - Paul wanted to go WITH Barnabas - to EVERY [πᾶς] city from the FIRST missionary trip...
 - It had been over a YEAR and he wanted to check on them...
 - See how they were [present] HOLDING up [ἔχων] - and bring the LETTER from Jerusalem!
 - It turns out it was a MUCH needed checkup - because the church were NOT doing well...
 - They had QUICKLY been deceived into going BACK to the LAW [legalism]
 - And needed to be REMINDED [or reprimanded] about the GRACE of God...
 - Because men LOVE to go back to RULES rather than a RELATIONSHIP with a living God!
 - **Galatians 1:6** - "I marvel that you are turning away so soon from... the grace of Christ."
 - When someone gives us RULES - it puts the POWER in our hands...
 - We can follow the LIST - and feel like we are RIGHTEOUS...
 - That is why people tend to fall back to LEGALISM - it puts US in control...
 - But RIGHTEOUSNESS cannot come from following RULES...
 - God is looking for a RELATIONSHIP with us - He wants us to depend on Him...
 - And only by looking to His GRACE - do we find we are living a GODLY life!
- 2nd - Two opinions... vs. 37-38
 - Bring Mark... vs. 37
 - Now Barnabas was determined to take with them John called Mark!
 - Therefore the TRIP was necessary - the churches needed to be ENCOURAGED...
 - But there was one KEY question that needed to be answered FIRST...
 - WHO would go on this SECOND missionary journey...
 - Barnabas PLANNED [βουλευώ] to bring John [Mark] with them again...
 - MARK was the cousin of Barnabas - had gone with them on the FIRST trip - **Colossians 4:10**
 - And although MARK had NOT finished the trip - he deserved a SECOND chance!
 - We do NOT know why MARK chose to leave [Perga] - **Acts 13:13**
 - But the suggestion is because of the CHANGE in leadership...
 - When SAUL was renamed PAUL - and began to LEAD the group - Mark left!
 - We ALL make mistakes - fortunately God does NOT give up on us...
 - It is through those mistakes we learn and grow in our faith...
 - And God is always willing to give us a SECOND chance to be used by the Lord!
 - NOT Mark... vs. 38
 - Paul insisted that they should not take with them the one who had departed from them.
 - In Pamphylia - and had not gone with them to the work!
 - But PAUL did NOT think that Mark was WORTHY [ἀξιώω]
 - Because he had DEPARTED [ἀφίστημι] when they were in region of Pamphylia [Perga]
 - And had NOT gone with them when the work got HARD [stoned to death]!
 - If someone only works in a field for a couple of days...
 - But leaves before most of the HARD work is done [cultivating - planting - weeding]
 - Then he does NOT have the right to come back for the HARVEST!
 - When we make a mistake - there is forgiveness when we turn to Jesus...
 - But does NOT mean there are no CONSEQUENCES for our actions...
 - When we choose to sin - there is always a price to be paid - **Galatians 6:7**
- 3rd - Two Groups... vs. 39-40

- Parting ways... vs. 39
 - Then the contention became so sharp that they parted from one another!
 - Therefore [οὖν] - the ARGUMENT became so HEATED between them over MARK...
 - That it led to them PARTING from one another...
 - PARTING - from the root word [χωρίζω] which can be translated as DIVORCE - **Matthew 19:6**
 - This argument ended a friendship that had DEFINED the early church...
 - It was BARNABAS who had first been willing to receive SAUL - **Acts 9:27**
 - It was their DUO that had birthed the REVIVAL in Antioch - **Acts 11:25**
 - It was the TWO of them the Holy Spirit CALLED out - **Acts 13:2**
 - And side by side they had DEFENDED the Gospel of Grace - **Acts 15:2**
- Right or wrong...
 - Who was RIGHT – was Mark supposed to GO or STAY...
 - It turns out NEITHER Paul or Barnabas was right or wrong...
 - They just had different ideas of what the SECOND missionary journey should be about...
 - Barnabas wanted to use the trip as an opportunity to build up MARK...
 - Paul wanted to use the trip as an opportunity to build up the CHURCHES!
 - Sometimes God will allow Godly men to disagree – and that is OK...
 - The problem starts when we think we are RIGHT and the other person is WRONG...
 - Rather than get upset – argumentative – about what other people are doing...
 - Instead we just need be faithful to follow through with what God has told us to do!
- Plan of God... vs. 40
 - So Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus. Paul chose Silas and departed!
 - Barnabas took Mark and went to Cyprus - his home town – **Acts 4:36**
 - This is the LAST time we read about Barnabas in the book of Acts...
 - Paul chose Silas as a replacement for Barnabas and they went to Galatia!
 - Was it the WILL of God for Paul and Barnabas to divide and go their separate ways...
 - Maybe – but it is just as likely it was their PRIDE...
 - But either way God USED it - rather than ONE missions trip now there was TWO!
 - **Romans 8:28** – “We know that all things work together for good to those who love God - to those who are the called according to His purpose.”
 - We try to label things in life – we call them either GOOD or BAD...
 - We will NOT always understand why God allows the things He does...
 - Yet there are NO coincidences with God – He uses ALL thing in our lives...
 - In the end – EVERYTHING He allows is meant to draw us closer and closer to Jesus!
- Restoration...
 - **II Timothy 4:11** - “Get Mark and bring him with you for he is useful to me for ministry.”
 - When Paul wrote his final epistle - just before his death...
 - In his closing remarks he tells Timothy to get MARK - because he is USEFUL...
 - Mark had matured – and it gave Paul a change of heart...
 - This is the same Mark who wrote the Gospel according to Mark!
- 4th - Not taking sides... vs. 40-41
 - Grace of God... vs. 40
 - Being commended by the brethren to the grace of God!
 - The church did NOT choose sides – they were NOT team Paul or Barnabas...

- Instead they gave [παράδιδωμι] BOTH parties over to the GRACE [χάρις] of God...
- They pointed both Paul and Barnabas back to Jesus!
- There are a LOT of churches that end up splitting because of silly disagreements...
- Should we sing praise or hymns - what COLOR should the paint be – silly!
- People tend to take SIDES when there is a disagreement...
- But the only thing that happens when we take sides – is we cause more DIVISION...
- Rather than taking SIDES - or getting upset over SILLY arguments...
- When there is a disagreement in the church - we need to point people to Jesus!

▪ Strong churches... vs. 41

- [Paul] went through Syria and Cilicia - strengthening the churches!
- And going through [imperfect] the churches of Syria and Cilicia...
- But because they had been given over to the GRACE of God...
- The result was NOT division - instead the churches were STRENGTHENED [ἐπιστηρίζω]
- The moment we stop looking to Jesus – it is catastrophic for the church...
- But when we point others to – keep our own eyes on the Lord...
- The church is strengthened – even in the midst of division!

● 2ND - YOUNG LEADER... vs. 1-5

○ 1st - Timothy... vs. 1-2

▪ Good Family... vs. 1

- [Paul] came to Derbe and Lystra. Behold a certain disciple was there named Timothy.
- The son of a certain Jewish woman who believed - but his father was Greek!
- When Paul got back to the cities of Derbe and Lystra...
- Lystra was the city where Paul had been STONED to death - **Acts 14:19**
- He found a DISCIPLES [μαθητής] there named TIMOTHY [Τιμόθεος]
- His mother was JEWISH woman who was a believer [πιστός]
- But his father was a GREEK - whom we assume did NOT believe [no mention of faith]!
- It can be hard when either a Dad or Mom is NOT a believer...
- It can mean that there are MIXED morals that are taught to the kids!
- But that does NOT mean the kids cannot be taught to follow Jesus...
- The believing husband or wife can still have a HUGE impact on their kids...
- And even if the parents are NOT walking with Jesus – the grandparents can step in...
- It only takes ONE person willing to invest in someone – to make all the difference!
- **II Timothy 1:5** – “When I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you - which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice!”

▪ Good reputation... vs. 2

- [Timothy] was well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Iconium!
- Timothy had [imperfect] a good WITNESS [μαρτυρέω] among the believers...
- Meaning although he had a GOOD example [mother - grandmother]
- He had chosen to follow God - and make Jesus his Lord!
- **II Timothy 3:14-15** – “You must continue in the things which you have learned... that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”
- Just because a child has a Godly parents – does NOT mean they will be godly...
- Parents have the responsibly to teach their children about the Lord...
- But God has NO grandchildren – we must make our own decision to follow Jesus!

- Young man...
 - **I Timothy 4:12** – “Do not let anyone think less of you because you are young.”
 - Timothy was a young man – maybe 18 years old when Paul met him!
 - When I was ordained as a Pastor I was only 28 years old...
 - Many times I struggled because I was teaching - leading people OLDER than I was...
 - In fact I refused to tell people my age – because it caused so many problems!
 - Just because someone is OLD – does not mean they are more MATURE in Christ...
 - The question is how long have they been walking with Jesus...
 - More than that – how much have we grown in Jesus over those years...
 - And just because a person is YOUNG – does NOT mean they do NOT have wisdom...
 - We do NOT share our wisdom with others – we share the TRUTH of the Word...
 - And the Word of God is a LOT older and wiser than anyone we are teaching...
 - We must NEVER think we are too OLD or YOUNG for the Lord to use us...
 - God is not limited to using a certain age – He is just looking for those who are AVAILABLE!
- 2nd - Circumcision... vs. 3
 - Missionary...
 - Paul wanted to have him go on with him!
 - Paul WANTED [θέλω] Timothy to join him on the SECOND missionary journey...
 - He would stay with Paul all the way through the THIRD missionary journey...
 - And ends up being mentioned in ELEVEN of the epistles of Paul [more than anyone else]
 - Paul wrote TWO letters to Timothy – **I and II Timothy**
 - Because he would become like a son to Paul – serving with him in the Gospel...
 - Paul LOST a friend in Barnabas – but GAINED a son in Timothy!
 - **I Corinthians 4:17** – “I sent Timothy... my beloved and faithful son in the Lord.”
 - If God left the same people in our lives - we would begin to depend on them...
 - So God moves people around [seasons of life] to keep us trusting in Him!
 - Following Customs...
 - [Paul] took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in that region!
 - Paul took Timothy and CIRCUMCISED him...
 - Both his mother [Eunice] and grandmothers [Lois] names are GREEK...
 - Suggesting they were HELLENIZED Jews [living like Gentiles]
 - So Timothy had NOT been CIRCUMCISED on the eighth day [Jewish law] - **Leviticus 12:3**
 - This is SURPRISING - because of the Counsel of Jerusalem...
 - Paul had just argued that people did NOT need to be CIRCUMCISED - **Acts 15:1-2**
 - But EVERYONE [πάντες] knew [εἶδον] that Timothy had [imperfect] a GENTILE father...
 - Therefore because of [διὰ] the Jews in the region - he CIRCUMCISED him...
 - Not to be SAVED - but so as NOT to offend the Jews!
 - **I Corinthians 9:22** – “I have become all things to all men - that I might save some.”
 - Rejecting legalism...
 - **Galatians 2:3** - “Not even Titus... being a Greek - was compelled to be circumcised.”
 - Therefore Paul was willing to follow CUSTOMS...
 - Because he wanted to tear down BARRIERS to the Gospel...
 - Better to CIRCUMCISED Timothy [who was a Jew] - than to upset the Jews...
 - But Titus [who was NOT a Jew] was NOT to be CIRCUMCISED...
 - Because that would NOT be culture - it would be LEGALISM [following rules]!

- The first Bible study I taught in the Philippines was to teachers at a school...
 - It was informal - and we just met in one of the classrooms...
 - Being as it was HOT - I did not even think about wearing shorts...
 - But is upset some of the teachers - so from that moment - I chose to SWEAT in pants!
 - There is a fine line between NOT stumbling others - and endorsing LEGALISM...
 - We want to be sensitive to the CONVICTIONS of others...
 - But if we are NOT careful our actions can be misinterpreted...
 - Wearing pants to a Bible study does NOT mean I think what we wear makes us RIGHTEOUS...
 - We do NOT have a dress code for church - God does NOT care about the outside...
 - I just do NOT want people to miss what the Word is saying because of what I wear!
- 3rd - The Letter... vs. 4-5
- Strengthened... vs. 4-5
 - As they went through the cities they delivered to them the decrees to keep.
 - Which were determined by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem.
 - So the churches were strengthened in the faith!
 - As they were going [imperfect] through the cities of the FIRST missionary journey...
 - They DELIVERED to them the DOGMA [δόγμα] of the APOSTLES and ELDERS...
 - The FOUR commands that they JUDGED [κρίνω] were to be given to the Gentiles - **Acts 15:29**
 - But most importantly - that we are saved by GRACE alone [not the Law]
 - The result was it STRENGTHENED [imperfect] the FAITH [πίστις] of the churches...
 - STRENGTHENED [στερεόω] - only used here and in healing of the lame man - **Acts 3:7**
 - The letter strengthened [feet and bones] of the FAITH of the churches so they could STAND...
 - It placed their hope in the Gospel of GRACE and NOT in works!
 - Many times when I have been struggling - did NOT read my Bible...
 - And have thought there is NO way God will be able to use me today...
 - That God pours out His spirit and does some of the most amazing things!
 - We often get the impression God blesses us because of something we have done...
 - If we read four chapters of the Bible - God will BLESS us today...
 - Yet that does NOT strengthen our faith in the Lord - it puts our faith in our works...
 - But it is NOT about EARNING the blessings of God - it is about His GRACE...
 - And when we realize it is all about GRACE - it strengthens our FAITH in Jesus!
 - Growing church... vs. 5
 - [The churches] increased in number daily!
 - Because it was no longer a work of men - it was a work of the Grace of God!
 - We would NOT go to a cemetery to hire people to work [they are dead]
 - If we are dead - then there is NO point in trusting in our abilities...
 - We have to depend completely and entirely on Jesus Christ!
 - If we depend on ourselves - then there is VERY little Jesus can do with us...
 - When we are emptied [not depending on ourselves] but full of the GRACE of God...
 - Now it is NOT our ability - but the power of God that is working in our lives...
 - And a church that is powered by the GRACE of God - is an unstoppable church!