

Our **GUIDE**

for little ones

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IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

Lesson 72

Paul Is Sent to Europe

Acts 15:33 - 16:15

“I will build my church.”

Jesus said that. He said it to His disciples when He yet lived among them. The church is *His*. And *He* builds it.

He was not talking about a church *building* — the kind that is made of lumber and bricks. He was talking about the church that is made up of *people*. At the time that Jesus said those words — “I will

build my church” — the church was *tiny*. A mere *handful*, we would say. But Jesus was looking ahead — looking ahead to the time when

His church would be *worldwide*. Christians in every country of the world. Millions of them.



The disciples could not even have *dreamed* that such a thing could ever happen. Who could ever build a church like *that*? Then Jesus told them that *they* must be His witnesses. They must go out and preach. And, as we have already learned, they *did* that. Peter did. Philip did. Paul and Barnabas did. And people believed their preaching. *Many* people! More and more people were becoming *Christians*. The church was being *built*.

By *whom*? Who was building the church? Surely it must be the *apostles*, the *missionaries*, the *preachers*. But that isn't what *Jesus* said. He didn't say,

Note to Parents: These papers are intended for the younger Sunday School students — grade 3 and below. Vocabulary and concepts are such that children in this age group, even the 3rd graders, will profit most if the stories are read *to* them, not *by* them. Most lessons have two stories, for two sittings if that proves to be beneficial. Our hope is that parents will find these lessons to be useful tools in the teaching of Bible stories and Bible truths to their children in the “off” season.

“You will build my church.” He said, “I will build my church.”

But how can that *be*? The church is on *earth*. Jesus is in *heaven*. How is He, still, the builder of the church? Listen to our story for today and see if you can tell how He does that.

At the end of our last lesson, Paul and Barnabas were back in Antioch of Syria. The two missionaries had plenty of work to do there. But Paul knew that he must bring the gospel of Jesus to *other* cities and to *other* lands. So one day he said to Barnabas, “Let’s go again and visit the churches we started in Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe.” Barnabas liked the idea. They began therefore to get ready to go together on a second missionary journey.

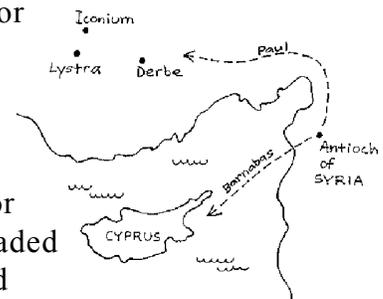
One thing that Paul and Barnabas had learned was that mission work was *hard*, and that it was good to have a *helper*. And Barnabas thought that he knew just the right person for the job — John Mark. John Mark was the young man who had started with them on their *first* journey, but then *left* them, when the work looked to be too hard. Now John Mark wants again to go with the missionaries. And Barnabas is sure he can be trusted.

But Paul said No. The work of a helper is very important, Paul said. It must not be given to someone who has already *failed a test*.

Truth is, John Mark, *later on*, became an excellent helper — to Peter, and even to Paul. And you recognize his

name, don’t you? Matthew, *Mark*, Luke.... Yes, John *Mark* would later become the writer of the second book of the New Testament Bible. But Paul and Barnabas didn’t know any of that yet. All that they knew was that John Mark had failed the first test.

And neither Paul nor Barnabas would give in. Barnabas kept saying Yes, and Paul kept saying No. They argued and argued, until finally they decided that they would have to *separate*. Barnabas took John Mark for his helper and went to do mission work on the island of Cyprus. Paul took Silas for his helper and headed back to Derbe and Lystra.



In Lystra Paul gained another helper. It was Timothy. Timothy was probably only about 20 years old at the time. He knew about Paul. He knew that, the last time Paul was in Lystra, he was *stoned*, and left for *dead*. Timothy had probably even seen the stones flying. So he knew very well that Paul was on a *dangerous* mission. But when Paul invited him to come along, it didn’t take Timothy long to decide. He said Yes. He was ready to leave home and family behind and go with Paul and Silas wherever the Lord would lead.

Paul probably hoped to bring the gospel to the cities of the province of *Asia*. But Jesus, the King of the church, had

different plans for where the gospel will go. The Holy Spirit said to Paul, “Do not preach in Asia.” So Paul turned instead to the *north*, toward the province of *Bithynia*. And then, lo and behold, the Spirit said, “Don’t preach in Bithynia either.”

So, what to do. Paul and his two companions walked on, till they came to the city of Troas, near the beautiful Aegean Sea. On the other side of the sea was Macedonia and Greece, and then Italy (and Rome!), and farther still, Spain. To the apostle Paul, those lands must have seemed almost to be beckoning him to come. He knew that someday the gospel must be preached there. But when? And by whom? Paul knew that that wasn’t for *him* to decide. So he waited.

And then, in the night, there came to him a *vision*. He saw, in his vision, a man. And the man said, “Come over into Macedonia, and help us.”

Paul knew what that meant. The Lord Himself was directing him to cross the Aegean Sea — into Europe. So he did that. Right away. He and Silas and Timothy — and now also *Luke*. Yes, a fourth man was added to the missionary party in Troas. It was Luke the physician, the writer of this history of Paul’s

missionary journeys. These four men, then, cross the Aegean to preach the gospel in Macedonia.

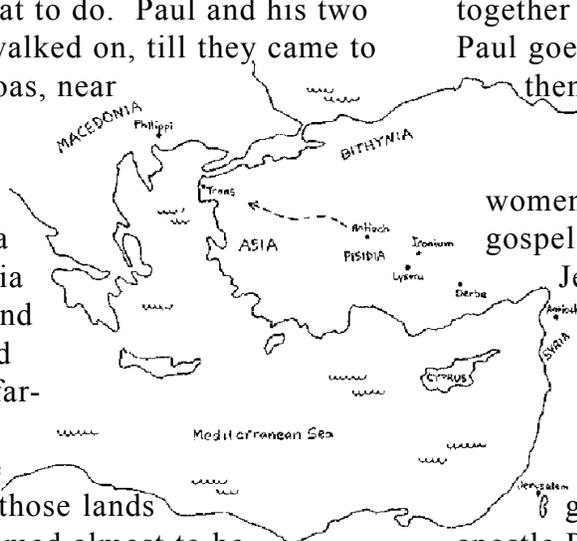
Soon they come to the great city of Philippi. No synagogue here. Just a few Jews in the whole city. They worship together by a river. And Paul goes first to them. He finds there just a little group of

women. To them he preaches the gospel, the good news of salvation in Jesus. His first sermon in Europe. And one person believed. Lydia ... a seller of purple ... of the city of Thyatira — “whose heart the Lord opened.”

This is the beginning of a great missionary work by the apostle Paul in Europe. From Macedonia, to Greece, to Italy, maybe even to Spain. Lydia, by the riverside, just outside Philippi, was the beginning. And God tells us, right at the beginning, by what power it happens.

Think hard about that. *Paul* crossed the Aegean Sea. *Paul* walked to Philippi. *Paul* preached. But *Christ* is gathering His church. Did you hear it? “Come over into Macedonia, and help us.” It was *Christ*, by His Spirit, who told Paul *where to go*. And then Lydia — “whose heart the Lord opened.” Preachers do preach. But *sermons* do not *open hearts*. *Christ* does that. By His Spirit. The Bible tells us so.

“I will build my church!”



How Well Did You Listen?

1. Why did Paul not want to take John Mark on a second journey?
2. Who went along with Paul to Derbe and Lystra?
3. God told Paul, in a vision, where to go and preach. To what country must Paul go?
4. In Troas Paul gained still another helper. Who was that?
5. What was the name of the first convert in Philippi?

Imprisoned in Philippi

Acts 16:16-25

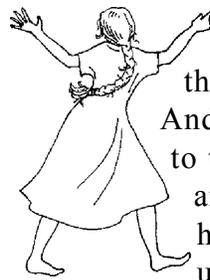
The gospel has begun to be preached in Europe. There is one convert. Lydia, and her family, are baptized. Satan noticed.

Yes, Satan noticed. He thinks that Philippi is *his* territory. The people here do not believe in *Jehovah God*. They know nothing about *Jesus*. Satan wants to *keep* it that way. And now, here comes the *gospel* to Philippi. *Paul* is in Philippi. *Jesus Christ* is being preached. And Satan *hates* it. What do you think, will he just *watch* as Jesus begins to build His church in Europe? No, he will *fight* it. He will try to *destroy* it. Listen.

In Philippi there was a slave girl who suffered from *demon-possession*. A *devil* was in her. Somehow, the devil *controlled* her, so that she did and said whatever the devil wanted her to say and do. And this devil made her a *fortune-teller*. People in Philippi *knew* that this girl had a devil in her. And they foolishly

believed that this devil really knew what was going to happen in the future and could *tell* them. They went to her, and paid her *money*, to get their fortune told. But the girl didn't keep the money. It went to her *masters*. They got lots of it. They were getting *rich* from this poor girl's fortune-telling.

Well, Satan decided to use this poor girl too. The devil inside her was, of course, one of Satan's demons, so we can imagine that Satan simply told the demon what to do. Very quickly therefore we find this slave girl tagging along after Paul and his three companions. She followed them. Wherever they went. And she shouted. She pointed to them and cried, "These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation."



That was true, wasn't it? Paul had probably used those very same words in talking to the people of Philippi. "We come to you," he would say, "as servants of the Most High God. We are here to show you the way of salvation." Some of the people would think that that sounded pretty good, and they would be willing to listen more to what these men had to say — until this girl came along. Everybody knew that she was out of her mind. And here she is, hollering the same things that the missionaries are saying. Day after day she did that. Harder and harder it became for Paul to do any preaching in Philippi. Just what Satan wanted!

But there was, in Philippi, a power stronger than that of Satan and his demons. You know whose power that is, don't you? Paul did too. At last he turned to the girl and said to the demon, "I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And the devil obeyed. That very instant. Not because he *wanted* to. But, yes, because he *had* to.

What do you think — is Satan *strong*? Surely, surely, he *is*. Jesus Himself called Satan the *prince*, or ruler, of this world. Not only can Satan tell his *demons* what to do, but he also has power over *men* — *wicked* men. They are his *servants*. How he works, we do not know. But we know that he's busy, and that he hates us, and that he goes about like a *roaring lion*. And that's *strong*.

So strong it is, that Satan may *think* that Philippi, with all the wicked world, is his territory. But it isn't. There's a *higher* power. It's the man who was spit upon and whipped and nailed to a cross and who died and was buried. He arose. And ascended. And sits now at the right hand of God. And He has the last word. Just: "Go." That's all it takes. The demon in the slave girl ... *goes*.

Satan, however, was not finished. He is filled with rage. He can't get at Jesus. But he will *fix Paul*. What does he do? Listen.

The slave girl was quiet. No more hollering or pointing at the missionaries. And no more *fortune-telling*. Which meant no more *money*. You can be sure

that her masters figured *that* out in a hurry. And they were furious. Furious at *Paul* — who had robbed them of their way to get easy money.

So they grabbed Paul and Silas and dragged them to the rulers, and then to the magistrates.

There's a lot of angry shouting and hollering, and crowds of people begin to gather around, wondering what's going on.



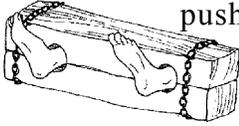
And the masters of the slave girl get the people all riled up. "These two men are *Jews*," they say. "And they exceedingly *trouble our city*. They are *Jews*, and they teach things that are not right for us *Romans*."

Nobody asks *what* Paul and Silas have taught. Nobody asks *how* they have "troubled" the city. It's enough to know that they're *Jews*, and we are *Romans*. How dare these Jews tell *us* what *we* ought to do? The hollering gets louder. The multitude gets more and more excited. They all demand that the magistrates *do something* to teach these Jews a *lesson*. And Satan smiles.

Magistrates are supposed to do what's *right* — not what a mob of people is clamoring for. These magistrates didn't do what was right. They didn't ask for *information*. They didn't ask for *proof*. They just listened to the crowd. They ordered that Paul and Silas be beaten and then put in jail.

The beating was terrible. The backs of Paul and Silas were bloodied

and bruised. They would be scarred for life. And after the beating, they were pushed into the inner prison, the dungeon, and their feet were locked in the stocks.



Is Jesus, really, building His church? Or did the devil *win* this one? It would seem so. For the voices of the missionaries are silenced. How can Christ be preached in the darkness of that dungeon in Philippi's jail?

But what is this that we hear? Singing. Songs of praise to God. At midnight. From the dungeon. And the other prisoners heard it.

3. How did Paul know that he should not go to preach in the province of Asia? How did Paul learn where he *must* go?

4. How did the owners of the slave girl in Philippi get a multitude of people all riled up about Paul?

5. Why was it wrong for the magistrates quickly to order that Paul and Silas be whipped?

Memory Verse

Acts 16:25a "And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises to God."

How Well Did You Listen?

1. Why did some people in Philippi get angry when Paul cast a devil out of a girl?
2. What did the magistrates decide to do with Paul and Silas?
3. What did Paul and Silas do in the prison?

How Well Do You Understand?

1. Who is the builder of the church?
2. When Paul and Barnabas could not agree on a helper, what did they finally decide to do?

Color the Picture

