

Walking By Faith

Ponder: Trusting God when you don't understand

Scripture: "Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia" (Acts 16:6).

How can it be that the Holy Spirit would forbid the apostle Paul and his evangelistic team to preach the word in Asia? (Asia = the Roman province, not the continent.) Hadn't Jesus commissioned His disciples to "go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mk. 16:15)? And it wasn't only Asia that was off limits! "After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them" (Acts 16:7). What was going on here?

God doesn't always do things the way we might do them. He called Philip away from a highly successful Gospel Meeting in Samaria to go present the gospel to the Ethiopian queen's treasurer (Acts 8). We hear no objections from Philip. And now we see Him directing Paul in what seems to be the opposite direction Paul wanted to go!

At Troas, Paul saw a vision of a man from Macedonia who "stood and pleaded with him, saying, 'Come over into Macedonia and help us'" (Acts 16:9). Given that the Lord blocked them from heading eastward, Paul and his team concluded that God, via this vision, was calling them westward to Macedonia.

Upon arrival in Philippi, the foremost city of Macedonia, they encountered Lydia, "a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira" (16:14). Upon hearing the gospel, this remarkable woman and her household were baptized into Christ (v. 15). When they returned to Thyatira, they would take the gospel with them. And where was the city of Thyatira? In Asia!

Paul may not have understood why the Spirit forbade him to preach in Asia, but the Lord had something else in mind. To his credit, Paul didn't argue or disobey. Sometimes we may not understand why God allows difficulties to come our way, or why our best-laid plans don't work out. Let us trust Him especially when we don't understand the whys and wherefores. Our God is infinitely wise, infinitely powerful, and infinitely good. As the saying goes, "God's got this!"

Song: "I Know Whom I Have Believed"

Prayer: Faithful Father, we marvel at Your wisdom, Your power, and Your goodness. Help us to trust you completely, for You have never let us down, and we know You never will. Strengthen our faith we pray, in Jesus name, Amen.