

Acts 15:36-16:1-15 Direction from God

One of the most DISCOURAGING words in the English language is the word No!!/

A) most of the time we don't like to Hear it Kids hate it – *mommy ice cream* – NO!

B) Taking Little kids to store can be difficult/ I try to prep Josiah ahead of time

1) Not getting anything for you Mimi

C) Still they want everything! NO!!

A Young man expresses heart to young woman – asks if she feels the same way – she says NO

A) Heartbreaking {No is a Hard word to hear!

B) And it doesn't get any easier in the Christian life because – we can approach God about things –

1) A dream / a desire/ A hope / Make a request
He too will at times answer no

C) Been said *God answers our prayers in 3 ways / yes rejoice.*

D) Wait *Ok still hope* – often the waiting answer is jus met by silence

1) We want direction go? Silence.

E) He is saying wait – stand still

1) Now that is hard but I can deal with it

But The toughest ANSWER is when God says no

A) In our text this morning we are going to see where God says No to the Apostle Paul.

B) Learn from how Paul dealt with that answer.

C) In our study today we are going to see 3 ways that God can direct our lives -

1) 3 Ways that are sometimes hard to deal with

D) God can DIRECT us through

- Disagreements
- Denials
- Detours

Direction from Disagreements

A) We left off in our Study last week with the big show down at the council in Jerusalem - resolved

B) Word went out the Gentiles that they didn't need to get circumcised or worry about the law of Moses

C) Everyone is celebrating the freedom we have in Jesus

Paul and Barnabas went back to their sending church - Antioch in Syria

A) Pick up in Ch.15 v 36 - 5yrs later

³⁶ Then after some days Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us now go back and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, *and see* how they are doing." ³⁷ Now Barnabas was determined to take with them John called Mark.

³⁸ But 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.

³⁹ Then the contention became so sharp that they parted from one another. And so Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus; ⁴⁰ but Paul chose Silas and departed, being commended by the brethren to the grace of God. ⁴¹ And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

Now we looked at this passage in some detail a few weeks ago - Chapter 14 Failures... final

A) It was there that we saw - John Mark bailed on Paul and Barnabas - first chance he got

B) Now 5 years later - Paul and Barnabas are getting ready to go out on trip #2 -

1) Barnabas wants to give John Mark a 2nd chance - Paul says no way.

C) This became such a disagreement between the two of them that they end separating

1) Barnabas goes and gets John Mark - Cyprus
Paul - Silas and went to Turkey

The book of Amos asks the question - how can two walk together unless they be agreed - Amos 3:3

A) The interesting thing about this story is we are never told who was right or who was wrong.

B) Two godly men who had a strong opinion about something - couldn't see eye to eye

1) Best thing was to go our separate ways

C) Result: God ends up with two ministry teams instead of one.

1)Two teams able to go to twice as many places

D)AND We noted in our previous study - Mark does redeem himself

1)Paul ends up serving with him and saying he was useful in the ministry.

But this story illustrates for us that sometimes God leads through disagreements

A)Now the story in much of the remainder of the book of Acts is going to center on Paul - his journeys

B)Pick up his Journey into Turkey with Silas in 16

Then he came to Derbe and Lystra. And behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, *the* son of a certain Jewish woman who believed, but his father *was* Greek. ² He was well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Iconium. ³ Paul wanted to have him go on with him. And he took *him* and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in that region, for they all knew that his father was Greek. ⁴ And as they went through the cities, they delivered to them the decrees to keep, which were determined by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. ⁵ So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily.

Paul /Silas head off to visit the Churches that Paul and Barnabas planted on their 1st missionary Journey in Turkey

A)The first place he goes is to Lystra –

B)This is the place where Paul was stoned and left for dead – revived – Goes back into the city.

B)Five years have passed. Upon his return to Lystra a young man named Timothy catches his eye.

C)Timothy is called a disciple - his life has been deeply impacted by the gospel

1)Told in V. 1 he was *the* son of a certain Jewish woman who believed, but his father *was* Greek

D)He is the product of a mixed marriage - so he wasn't circumcised.

But Paul is wanting to take him on this journey/ he wanted Timothy to minister with him.

A)So Paul had him get circumcised.

B)Now I am sure some of you are scratching your heads right now - thinking

1)Didn't we just go through this big dispute in our study last week - ch.15 over this very issue

C)Paul was leading the charge against circumcision

1)Why now - why Timothy

Some have suggested this was a major compromise on the part of Paul - caving into the pressure

A)This was not the case at all.

B)The issue last week was the false teaching that gentiles had to be circumcised to be saved.

1)Paul was a hard fast in his stand against that

C)He would later make a stand for another young protégé Titus who was Greek - a gentile

1)He doesn't need to be Circumcised

But Timothy was half Greek - half Jew -

A)The issue here was not Salvation- Timothy was saved

B)The issue here was effectiveness in ministry

C)See Paul knew that the fact that Timothy being a Jew and being uncircumcised

1)would be a stumbling block to Jewish people - that they want to reach with the gospel and point to Jesus

Paul's Philosophy of ministry is stated in

1 Corinthians 9: 19-22

“For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more; 20 and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law;

21 to those who are without law, as without law(not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law; 22 to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak.

I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.”

A)So having Timothy get circumcised went along with that Philosophy – for the sake of the Kingdom.

B) Timothy agreed/- he would become a special young man in Paul's life. Six times, in six different epistles.

1) Paul referred to Timothy as **"my son** in the faith."

C) Paul was touched by Timothy's willingness to sacrifice for the sake of the Kingdom of God

D) What about you and me? – What are we willing to sacrifice for the sake of the Kingdom –

1) Good question to ponder today!

Let's pick up the story in V.6 where we will see the 2nd way God Directs us - through Denials

6 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.

A) When Paul finished his ministry in Galatia, he decided to go south and minister in Asia minor

B) Heart was to get to where Ephesus was located

C) Ephesus was the chief city of the province of Asia minor

D) If he could Reach Ephesus major impact on the region - It was a smart plan - a great desire

E) We are told that Paul was forbidden by the Holy TO PREACH THE WORD down in Asia.

That is really an Interesting statement isn't it? –

A) Lord you told us to take the gospel all over the world - I want to take it to Ephesus - Asia Minor

B) The Lord says NO!!!

C) He is trying to go to this city that needs Jesus

1) But he was forbidden by the HS to do what He was called to do! – Seems Weird.

D) But the HS knew that Ephesus wasn't ready to hear that message Yet.

1) See when we get to Ch.19 God did some things to prepare them.

Question how did the Holy Spirit restrain Paul?

A) Not told – but here are some ideas – what God does with us.

B) Loss of peace? I have experienced this many times

1) He couldn't move forward because no peace – He knew – he would be fighting God if he went.

C) Maybe it was a lack of provision. –

1) He couldn't move forward in that direction because of Cost. God guides - He provides

D) Again we as a church have dealt with this more times that I care to count

1) Provision isn't there: Desire is right but God is not providing

I think it also Possible that it was illness,

A) The reason that I think that is because Luke, who was a physician, joined them at this time,

B) Notice that Luke who is writing the book of Acts changes the narrative in v.10 from they to we

C) At this point The story is no longer told in the third person but in the first person.

1) That tells us that Luke was there, an eye-witness and a companion of Paul.

D) In 17:1 it changes from *we back to they*

suggesting that Luke may have stayed in Philippi 1) to minister at the new fellowship.

E) Then in Ch 20:5 it reverts back to we – and that happens again in Ch.27:1 & 28:16

1) Three different occasions where Luke all of a sudden joins the team.

QUESTION: Why would Luke emerge so suddenly on the scene? Luke was a doctor.

A) It seems very likely that he joined the team because Paul needed his professional services,

B) Paul got sick- **thorn in the flesh - That could have been the means by which the HS forbade Paul**

1) to move forward because he was ill.

C) Whatever the case – we see God saying No to the great Apostle Paul

1) forbidding him to go in the direction that was really on his heart. What did Paul do? Quit? Sulk? – angry?

D) What do you do when God says no? –

1) Note this - how you react when God says no - will have a major effect on your walk with God.

E) Before we see how Paul dealt with this let's consider another great leader who heard God say no!

David who was King in Israel - David who was given by God - the unique title

A) David is a man after my own heart

B) David had been the King for about 10 years - he was around 40 years of age.

C) One day sitting in the Palace reflecting on God's goodness and blessing to him

1) David gets an idea 1 Chronicles 17 - read later

Here I am sitting in this beautiful Palace and yet the dwelling place for God - Ark - is a Tent - Tabernacle

A) David says to himself - I want to build God a house

A Great temple to the God of Israel

B) He calls his friend Nathan the prophet and says - Nathan I want to build God a House / temple

C) Nathan says - Great idea - Do all that is in your heart! God is with you.

D) But later that night the Lord tells Nathan - Go and tell David - he can't build me a house.

1) He has shed too much blood

But tell him this: He can't build me a house - but I am going to build him a house

A) From his seed will come a forever Kingdom in Israel - Messiah

B) And tell him you will have a son and your son shall build me a house

C) What did David do when he got this news that he could NOT do what was on his heart?

➤ He **sat before the Lord and worshipped**
1 Chronicles 17:16-27

➤ He gathered all the materials to build the temple 1 Chronicles 29:1-20

He worshipped God as being Sovereign - being on the throne

A) David sat before the Lord and rather than focusing on what he couldn't do

B) He thought about his life - and all that God had done and came to the conclusion

1) Lord I am blessed far beyond what I deserve

"Who am I, O LORD God? And what is my house, that You have brought me this far?"

²⁰ O LORD, there is none like You, nor is there any God besides you.

When we get a DENIAL from God - we need to remember that Jesus is King - He is on the throne

A) Father knows best

B) We need to worship him

Perhaps YOU are confused as to why the Lord is saying "NO" to you.

A) You offered yourself to serve the Lord - but the Door is closed right now?

B) You are wondering - Lord Why have you closed the door? or why can't I serve in that area?

C) "Lord, I wanted to adopt that child. Why have you closed the door?"

D) "Lord, I wanted to start that business so that I could give money to Your work."

1) Why did you not allow it to come together?

You wanted to get married - thought you found the right person - things seemed to be going well.

A) God closed the door - left you confused - what are you going to do.?

B) You thought a Job was opening - seemed perfect for you - the door closed

1) How are you going to respond? When God ...NO?

C) Listen when God says no - or when God shuts a door -

1) we have to be very careful that we don't get bitter and discontent with God

So The first thing we need to do is what David did - sit before the Lord consider his faithfulness

A) We need to sit down before the Lord and think about all the ways he has already blessed us

B)We need to sit down and think about his faithfulness -

1)Song we sing - Evidence - need to consider the evidence of his grace and mercy.

C)Starting with the fact – You are Saved – not going to hell! -

1)A relationship – INHERITANCE – destiny

D)Start counting your blessings - instead of focusing on what you don't have

1)Or what God is saying no to-

E)Think about what you do have and the things that God has said yes to.

So David sat before the Lord and worshipped him

A)And he did what he could do.

B)Rather than complaining about what he couldn't do he did what he could do.

C)David *could not* build the Temple.

1)But he saw what he *could do*.

D)1 Chronicles 29 -He gathered financial resources – he gathered timber – He gathered gold and silver –

1)he met with architects and had plans drawn up.

APPLICATION: Perhaps you CAN'T go to the mission field. *Do what you can do..... Pray, give, send.*

A)What Can you do?

B)Maybe because of age or disability - you can't do what you used to be able to do

1)DO WHAT YOU CAN DO!

C)What has God given you? - What abilities?

Resources? – Time?- Do what you can do.

That is the same thing we see in the Apostle Paul – do here in Acts 16 –

A)God says - sorry Paul you can go to Asia minor - Paul says ok - I will keep moving forward.

7 After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them.

ANOTHER NO!

B)Saying: Easier to steer a moving car

C)Paul is not sulking - I am going to just keep knocking on doors - keep moving forward

8 So passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas.

Interesting that when the Bible talks about waiting on God - it is never passive -

A)The word for wait is active - not passive - meaning I am going to do what I can do what I am supposed to do

B)While I am waiting for further direction

C)So Paul kept knocking on doors kept moving – kept going with the mission

D)Notice v.9 Direction came! **9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." 10 Now after he had seen the vision, *immediately* we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them.**

So God gives Paul a vision of a man in Macedonia calling for help - please come

A)Paul wakes up from his dream and is like - I know where God wants us to go

B)They immediately make plans to Head towards Macedonia -

C)No Procrastination – no debating – no discussion.

God said Go and they went!

D)God loves that kind of response –

1)That is the Kind of person He can lead – do amazing things with and through

“To know the will of God is the greatest knowledge!

To do the will of God is the greatest achievement!”
[George W. Truett](#)

Paul wanted to know the will of God, because that is the greatest knowledge.

A)God what do you have for me - Phil 3 his life was about discovering why Jesus apprehended him

B)Every new city - every new town that he went to was an answer to that question

1)Every new person that he encountered was a revelation of the WILL OF GOD FOR HIS LIFE.

C)And once Paul understood what the will of God was for his life

1)Paul understood that doing the will of God was the greatest achievement you could ever have in your life.

D)That is what he lived for - to KNOW the will of God and to DO the will of God.

E)For me to live is Christ!
1)Responded immediately!

How would you finish that statement: For me to live is _____?

A)What is God's will for you right now in this season of your life?

B)What and who has God given you to take care of ?

C)Where has he called you to serve?

1)Where has he called you to give your time, attention, your resources.

I received a call from God my freshmen year of College - Baseball Scholarship - Vanguard

A)The call was to consider giving up pursuing a career in Baseball - calling me to the ministry.

B)It wasn't a demand - it was a call - I was torn - about when to quit

1)My dad - You will never be happy.... To do!

The same thing is true in your life - you will never been happy or fulfilled until doing what God ... to do

A)Paul understood that - God gives him a vision

B)He immediately responds in obedience.

¹¹Therefore, sailing from Troas, we ran a straight course to Samothrace, and the next *day* came to Neapolis, ¹²and from there to Philippi, which is the foremost city of that part of Macedonia, a colony. And we were staying in that city for some days.

A)So Paul arrives in Macedonia - the city of Philippi and he is looking for this man in the vision

B)The 3rd way that God is going to direct Paul is going to be through a Detour

C)Paul arrives looking for a man and what he encounters is a women's meeting.

13 And on the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made; and we sat down and spoke to the women who met there.

A)Sabbath day – it took 10 Jewish men to form a No Synagogue in a city.

B)If there was no Synagogue -Meetings were held outside by the sea or a river

1)Paul and his companions head down to the river and they find a group meeting.

C)He Finds Women's Prayer group!!

D)I don't know about you but I probably would have been prone to say **this isn't it – looking for a man.**

1)In the vision I saw a man

But This was a Divine Appointment

A)HOW many of us would HAVE MISSED IT!

B)Paul's flexibility here challenges me -

Here is what we learn from Paul - when God puts a detour in your path

A)Don't get distracted by the detour but instead pay attention to WHO God puts in front of you.

B)THE WHO that God puts in front of you will very well be the divine appointment God is leading you to

C)That is what Paul and his companions do here / - I know we are looking for a DUDE

1)But I think God is doing something here

14 Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God.

Purple dye had to be gathered drop by drop from a certain shell fish

A)It was so costly that to dye a pound of wool with it would take the equivalent of about \$300.00

**B) So Lydia was a wealthy lady {Business woman
The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul. 15 And when she and her household were baptized, she begged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." So she persuaded us.**

C)So God uses Lydia to get Paul and the gang to stop and seize this moment as a moment from God!

D)Lydia becomes the first Gentile convert in Europe

E)History seems to indicate that her house ends of being a place where ministry happened for quite some time.

So God sometimes directs through

A)Disagreements - a relationship has issues

B)He directs us through Denials - When he says no -

1)Do what you can

C)God Directs us through Detours - Pay attention to what is in Front of you.

Your life today? Denial? A no

A)Encourage you to sit before the Lord and worship him - for what he has done already

B)Think about what you can do!! = Amen

C)Detour? What is in front of you?