

**where prayer  
was  
wont to be  
made**

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***Acts 15:40 – 16:40***

~ Modern Christians speak incessantly of prayer in the church. Prayer occupies perhaps the highest place of prominence in a contemporary congregation. Prayer meetings abound. Prayer vigils are held for every current event. Prayer lists longer than my arm are passed around. I've seen the same people on a prayer list for over five years. With every tragedy, a prayer is called for. There is a whole lot of talk about prayer. Tragically, the most anemic and deficient area of the modern-day Christian life is – you guessed it – prayer! The deficiency is a direct result of a total and complete ignorance of the Bible. See, most so-called Christians run around promoting prayer – because it's easier than actually studying the Bible. The result is a Christian that doesn't know how to pray; because God will only teach you to pray in His Word. That makes the average prayer life almost obsolete, friends. You can argue against these statements all day long – and you'll still be wrong.

This report from our Spiritual Safari brings us to the beginning of the second missionary journey of the apostle Paul. We're going to see much prayer going on in this section of Scripture! In fact, why don't you pray for wisdom, judgment and discernment right now – and then read the text in your Bible – and then read this report? If you have a good Bible with maps it will also be most helpful. In our last report, we saw Barnabus separate from Paul because of a disagreement regarding Barnabus' nephew John Mark. Remember, John Mark had abandoned Paul and Barnabus on the first missionary journey when the going turned blatantly Satanic. John Mark literally freaked out at what he saw; and Paul wasn't inclined to subject himself to that again at this time. Barnabus was insistent on inviting John Mark, so, they parted ways....

**XV**

***40 And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God.***

***41 And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.***

~ So, Paul begins in what we know as modern-day Asia Minor; and visits the Galatian churches. Those churches had been the root of the problem that resulted in the council of Jerusalem which we studied previously and quite thoroughly in chapter fifteen. Remember, the Judaeizers wanted to turn the hearts and minds of the Gentile people back to the Mosaic Law - and away from grace. The epistle to the Galatians was written by Paul around this time as a warning about exactly that. Paul explains to them that salvation means to trust the Lord Jesus Christ – plus NOTHING. Works of the law of any kind pollutes His finished work. The only way a sinner can have a right relationship with God the Father is through Christ Jesus. The transaction that permits that relationship to happen was completed one hundred percent when Jesus was crucified on the cross. Only when you accept that work of redemption for your salvation are you truly born again....

## **XVI**

***1 Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek:***

***2 Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium.***

***3 Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek.***

~ Paul brings Silas and Timothy with him on the second missionary journey. At Jerusalem, Paul did not have Titus the Gentile circumcised; but now, Paul is trying to reach these Jewish people, so he has Timothy circumcised to remove any argument about the law. There was no merit in this

circumcision as Paul said, "... I have become all things to all men that I might win some." Paul became a Jew to the Jew and a Gentile to the Gentiles. He ate meat with those who were not offended by eating meat; but refrained from eating meat when he was with those who were offended by eating meat. This isn't about keeping a law. This isn't about you. This life is about Christ Jesus Who rose from the dead for our justification. Period. Full stop. This is the way we are to reach others with the Gospel message today, and no other way, by the way.

There are different forms of baptism, of course. Most Christians will argue fervently over the subject of baptism, demanding their mode and method is the only acceptable form. Well, as long as the baptism is performed in a good Bible believing church by a God-fearing man so they can identify with and serve God while growing in the grace and knowledge of our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ, then the mode of baptism is irrelevant. Unfortunately, many people want to divide over these types of doctrinal points. Strife becomes unreasonableness concerning theological perspectives not essential to salvation. Generally, the modern Christian cannot discern the difference. Any disagreement today becomes a self-righteous cause to condemn others. When we adopt a theological theory that constantly divides a church, can know we are wrong – every time. See, the Word of God UNITES believers – it never divides believers. Keyword: believers....

***4 And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem.***

***5 And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.***

***6 Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia,***

~ So, Paul makes a circuit through the heavily populated province of Asia Minor. This would have been the center of Greek culture; it was a tremendous commercial area and center of politics and education. Paul, having gone through the Galatian country, appears to have intended to go

south and return to Antioch to make another report. Well, the Holy Spirit had something else in mind for Paul at this time. We're told the Spirit of God forbade Paul from entering Asia and preaching. Paul desired to go - and the Lord wanted His Word to go - but this is not the right place for Paul at this time. Since Paul can't go south, he naturally plans to go another direction - north in this case. Bithynia was in the north along the Black Sea and there was a very heavy concentration of Hebrews in the area. That, of course, is modern day Turkey. Well, the Holy Spirit forbids him from going north. Paul had come from the east - so, the only thing left to do was go west. When Paul arrived at Troas, he would have had to board a ship to continue. I'm sure Paul had some questions for God about where he was going and why.

I think if you had met Paul at this particular time and asked him where he was going, Paul would have told you he had no idea. You and I, as good little fundamentalists, would have questioned Paul about his leading from the Holy Spirit. How could this great apostle to the Gentiles not know where he was to go next? I'm sure most of us would have given Paul a little talk about how he could know the will of God for his life. There must be five thousand books in print today about how we can know the will of God for our lives; it's too bad Paul didn't have a copy of one. Candidly, I can sum it up in one word: obedience. Obedience is how we know God's will for our lives; and obedience begins with Bible study. Sometimes, our course is to study to be quiet. Pray about that, too.

Well, Paul would have told you he was following the leading of the Lord by the word of the Lord - Old Testament Scriptures - in this connection; and most of us would have thought he had lost his mind. See, sometimes, waiting is the plan of God for His will in our lives, and sometimes that waiting is at a dead end for extended periods of time. I'm sure most of you readers disagree with that; and that's okay - you can choose not to believe the truth of the Word of God if you want to; however, don't tell me what the Bible teaches, because you would be the one who is wrong. I teach from experience, my beloved. You can write that down. It's going to take a mighty act of God to get Paul out of Asia and into Europe at this time; but that's exactly what He is going to do....

**7 After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.**

**8 And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas.**

**9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.**

~ This is the record of the leading of the Lord Paul waited so patiently for. I believe the time period between verse seven and nine was likely an extended and arduous time. Macedonia is across the Aegean Sea in Europe. At the time in which we are studying, Paul is still in Asia. So, this is the crossing of the Gospel from Asia into Europe. The Spirit of God is moving Paul along now after waiting and trusting in His leading. I have no idea why God moved Paul this way; but I know it's how He does it. I believe being sent to Europe was a complete surprise to Paul, too.

We should all thank God for Paul actually believing, trusting and obeying Him. My ancestors were in the forests of Germany at this time; and they were as much of a low-life pagan and heathen people as they possibly could be! They worshipped all types of idolatry and were totally given over to that. We're talking about the dirtiest, filthiest savages that have ever left prints in the surface soil of this planet. I can only thank God the Gospel crossed over at this time. You may laugh but, if you believe your ancestors were any different from mine, you're woefully mistaken....

**10 And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavored to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.**

~ This is where Luke joins Paul, Silas and Timothy on the second missionary journey. This is quite a Gospel quartet. They are traveling along the coast. If you have a good Bible with a map, it will be very helpful. Paul is heading to a strategic center, Philippi, to continue his ministry in Europe. The church at Philippi was an extremely important church in the establishment of the way. This is the church Paul was closest to; and it is the church that was

closest to him. The church at Philippi genuinely loved Paul; and we will learn all about that in the epistle to the Philippians. This was another Roman colony of particular strategic importance; the government center was located there. They had Roman customs, they spoke Latin, and THIS place was just like Rome....

***11 Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis;***

***12 And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days.***

***13 And on the Sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither.***

~ I believe this seemingly chance meeting was God's purpose for Paul being in this place at this time. Lydia was leading prayer in Thyatira, in Asia Minor. That is one of the churches the Lord will write to through John in the second and third chapters of Revelation. Lydia worshipped the True and Living God, but she knew very little about Him. As we read on, we learn she was dominant in the church, remarkable and faithful. She appears to have made the first convert in Europe. Thank God for Lydia because her entire household turned to God. It also appears she was a person of means and provided for the work of the Lord....

***14 And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.***

***15 And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.***

***16 And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying:***

***17 The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.***

***18 And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.***

***19 And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the marketplace unto the rulers,***

***20 And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city,***

***21 And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans.***

***22 And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them.***

***23 And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely:***

***24 Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.***

***25 And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.***

***26 And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed.***

***27 And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled.***

**28 But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here.**

**29 Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas,**

**30 And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?**

**31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.**

~ When the jailer sees the door open, the assumption was the prisoners were not still hanging around. He knows he will be required to forfeit his own life for losing them, so he is preparing to commit suicide; and, when a man is in that position, he starts to think about eternity. This is how God got this jailer's attention, friends. This man stared into the darkness of the hereafter, and he recognized he was a lost man. That's when he starts to think about his life and needs to know how to be saved. Now, the jailer's house was not saved by his believing – they each believed individually. I think we should note that Paul said "believe" and ye shall be saved – nothing added to that! That goes for anyone in your house. If you believe, you'll be saved. If they believe, they'll be saved, also. Anyone that believes shall be saved. That's what this means....

**32 And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.**

**33 And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.**

**34 And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.**

**35 And when it was day, the magistrates sent the sergeants, saying, Let those men go.**



***36 And the keeper of the prison told this saying to Paul; The magistrates have sent to let you go: now therefore depart, and go in peace.***

***37 But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out.***

***38 And the sergeants told these words unto the magistrates: and they feared, when they heard that they were Romans.***

***39 And they came and besought them, and brought them out, and desired them to depart out of the city.***

***40 And they went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed ~***

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