

▼ **On the Road Again! - Part 5**

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• **Read the Passage: Acts 16**

He came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was a Jewess and a believer, but whose father was a Greek. The brothers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him. Paul wanted to take him along on the journey, so he circumcised him because of the Jews who lived in that area, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. As they traveled from town to town, they delivered the decisions reached by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for the people to obey. So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers.

Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, and the next day on to Neapolis. From there we traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days.

On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. One of those listening was a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message. When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us.

Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling. This girl followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved." She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so troubled that he turned around and said to the spirit, "In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!" At that moment the spirit left her.

When the owners of the slave girl realized that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities. They brought them before the magistrates and said, "These men are Jews, and are throwing our city into an uproar by advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice."

The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten. After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. Upon receiving such orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everybody's chains came loose. The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. But Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!"

The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved — you and your household." Then they

spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized. The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God — he and his whole family.

When it was daylight, the magistrates sent their officers to the jailer with the order: “Release those men.” The jailer told Paul, “The magistrates have ordered that you and Silas be released. Now you can leave. Go in peace.”

But Paul said to the officers: “They beat us publicly without a trial, even though we are Roman citizens, and threw us into prison. And now do they want to get rid of us quietly? No! Let them come themselves and escort us out.”

The officers reported this to the magistrates, and when they heard that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens, they were alarmed. They came to appease them and escorted them from the prison, requesting them to leave the city. After Paul and Silas came out of the prison, they went to Lydia’s house, where they met with the brothers and encouraged them. Then they left.

▼ **Sermon’s Purpose (what listeners should do)**

- Understand the issues at stake in the the conflict.
- The Language of Harvest
- Understanding Salvation

▼ **Understand the issues at stake in the conflict**

▼ Evangelism — —> Discipleship Sequence:

▼ Evangelism

- 1 Trust
- 2 Curiosity
- 3 Open to Change
- 4 Seeking
- 5 Commitment to Christ

• Discipleship

▼ Background

- Peter preaches the gospel to Cornelius’ household. - Acts 10 - 11
 - Jews scattered by persecution began sharing the gospel with gentiles. - Acts 11:19-21
 - Barnabas and Saul shepherd a mixed Jewish & Gentile church in Antioch - Acts 11:22-26
 - Barnabas and Paul (aka Saul) conduct a successful missions trip evangelizing Gentiles and Jews. - Acts 13 - 14
- ▼ There is now a substantial population of Gentile Christians with “headquarters” in Antioch.

- ▼ They have a well-established understanding of what it means to be “saved” (Acts 2:40-41).
 - Luke refers to them as “brothers”.
 - The new teaching from the Judean visitors threatens to undermine the Antioch church and all the other churches that Paul and Barnabas have established.
 - This is a major crisis in the short history of the church!
- ▼ **The Language of Harvest**
 - ▼ Bearing Fruit
 - Parable of the sower - Matthew 13:1-23
 - ▼ Ladder of Abstraction
 - concrete language
 - ▼ Physical Fitness:
 - You can’t achieve it using only words such as: fitness, health, flexibility, strength.
 - You must use words such as: reps, squats, presses, push-ups, speed, incline, etc.
 - ▼ Education
 - You can’t achieve it using only words such as: education, knowledge, learning, understanding.
 - You must use words such as: add, multiply, conjugate, microscope, experiment, essay, verb, noun, translate.
 - ▼ Farming: seed, sower, scattering, harvesting
 - What is a crop and how do I know when I’ve produced one?
 - ▼ Fishing: nets, fisherman, lake or sea, boat
 - What is a fish and how do I know when I’ve caught one?
 - How do I know when I’ve cooked one?
- ▼ **Understanding Salvation**
 - ▼ The Bible uses many terms to describe a single experience from multiple perspectives:
 - Believer, Born Again, Christian, Disciple, Follower of Jesus, Saints, Saved
 - See Following Jesus: Introduction - Lesson 2
 - Consider these terms from “Following Jesus: Introduction” Lesson 2 (<https://lifechurchboston.org/activities/classes-programs/following-jesus/introduction/>)
 - **Believer** – someone who believes in or has faith in Jesus and therefore follows him. In the Bible, the term “believer” refers to much more than simply agreeing with an

idea. It implies a level of commitment such that, when given a chance, you will act on the belief. For example, you demonstrate your belief that a chair will support your weight by sitting in it; you demonstrate your belief that an airplane will take you safely to your destination by flying in it.

John 4:39-41; Acts 2:44-47; Acts 4:31-32; Galatians 6:9-10; James 2:1

- **Born again** – those who believe in Jesus are born again from God’s Spirit. You must be born again to see or enter the Kingdom of God.
John 3:1-21; 1Peter 1:22-23
 - **Brother** – those who follow Jesus are part of a new family and become brothers and sisters to one another.
Matthew 12:46-50; Matthew 23:8; Acts 6:3; Acts 9:28-30; Acts 11:1; Acts 11:29; Acts 15
 - **Christian** – means “belonging to Christ” “The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch” – Acts 11:19-26
 - **Disciples** – those who are trained by the one they are following.
Matthew 5:1-2; Acts 6:1-7; Acts 9:1-31; Acts 11:19-26; Acts 18:23
 - **Follower of Jesus** – Someone who follows and organizes his/her life around the life of Jesus as revealed in the Bible, especially the four gospels (i.e. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) and as revealed by the Holy Spirit.
Matthew 4:19; Matthew 8:19-22; Matthew 9:9; Matthew 10:37-39; Matthew 16:24-26; Matthew 19:21-22; Matthew 19:27-30; John 1:43; John 12:26; John 21:19-22
 - **Saints** – those who are “sanctified”, or set apart for God’s use.
Romans 1:1-8; Ephesians 1:1-2; Philippians 1:1-2
 - **Saved** – those who by following Jesus have been rescued from this world and from God’s wrath.
Luke 8:12; Luke 8:4-15; John 10:1-9; Acts 2:17-21; Acts 4:8-12; Romans 10:1-13
- ▶ Confess and Believe
 - ▶ The Gospels give us a picture of what salvation looks like.
 - ▼ This is what salvation looks like.
 - ▼ People who
 - have been captivated by Jesus.
 - follow him in order to learn from him.
 - abandon their past teachers in favor of learning directly from Jesus.
 - ▼ Jesus
 - Welcomes them regardless of their past social status or degree of spiritual achievement.

- Considers them to be disciples from the beginning.
 - Treats them with an expectation of success.
 - The disciples' attention is focused on Jesus and they are not at all anxious about whether they are "in" or "out".
- ▼ With salvation we receive a "superpower" - the ability to distinguish between Jesus and other sources and to pay attention to Jesus.
- "I tell you the truth, the man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of his sheep. The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice." - John 10:1-5 (NIV)*
- This is the flip side of the "faith" that is the evidence of salvation.
 - What we do with this "superpower" will determine the course of our spiritual life.
- ▼ Modeling Conversion
- ▼ Compare 2 paradigms:
- Salvation as a free gift.
 - Salvation as a commitment to following and obeying Jesus.
- ▼ Salvation as a free gift:
- Illustration: Free tickets to a show I can't afford.
- ▼ Salvation as a commitment to following and obeying Jesus.
- Illustration
- ▼ What is the normal path to conversion (i.e. becoming a follower)?
- Gospel proclamation (e.g. The Kingdom of God is here)
 - Saving faith (includes the "superpower" ability to pay attention to Jesus)
 - Acts of commitment (e.g. baptism, "Jesus is Lord", joining family of believers)
 - Discipleship
- ▼ Let's use Peter's Pentecost sermon as a model:
- "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."*
- When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"*
- Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off — for all whom the Lord our God will call."*
- With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.*

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. - Acts 2:36-42 (NIV)

- Peter: God has made this Jesus . . . both Lord and Christ.
- ▼ People: What shall we do?
 - This indicates that Peter's message has generated saving faith in some of his audience!
 - We need to leave space for an indication that saving faith has been generated!
- ▼ Peter: Repent and be baptized . . .
 - Peter responds to their faith by "opening the door" to the Kingdom.
- ▼ Outcome:
 - They responded and 3,000 men were added to their number.
 - They devoted themselves to the Apostles' teaching . . .
- ▼ The Real Thing - Evidence of Salvation
 - If the "superpower" (i.e. the ability to pay attention to Jesus) isn't there, salvation probably isn't there either.
 - If the person doesn't want to learn about Jesus, he/she probably isn't saved.
 - When this is missing, it's better to face the facts so that you can pray effectively for the person.
- ▶ Putting The Model To Work
- ▶ The Solution
 - The Breakup: Paul & Barnabas
- ▶ Putting The Model To Work
- ▼ Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey
 - ▼ Phase 1
 - ▼ Paul has split from Barnabas and is now traveling with Silas.
 - ▼ Paul was unwilling to make John Mark part of the team again. - Acts 15:36-41
 - Sometimes we fail to resolve a conflict with a mentor or a partner.
 - Sometimes we feel hopelessly disappointed with a team mate.
 - Sometimes we are a disappointment to our partners or leaders.
 - Paul later embraces John Mark. - 2 Timothy 4:9-13
 - ▼ Paul returns to Derbe and then Lystra - Acts 14:5-23
 - Paul came here on his 1st missionary journey after fleeing a plot to stone Barnabas and him in Iconium. – Acts 14:5-23
 - During that same trip God used Paul to heal a congenitally crippled man in Lystra. This initially resulted in the crowd thinking that they are gods.

- Paul and Barnabas speak out against this and are barely able to keep the crowd from sacrificing to them.
- Eventually however some Jews from Antioch win the crowd over and they stone Paul and drag him outside the city – seemingly dead.
- The disciples gather around him and he gets up, goes back into the city, and then he and Barnabas leave for Derbe.
- Paul and Barnabas win many disciples in Derbe and then return – strengthening the disciples along the way.
- ▼ Paul adds Timothy to the team after having him circumcised.
 - Paul has just won a battle in defense of not requiring Gentiles to be circumcised!
 - Nevertheless, Paul has Timothy circumcised.
- ▼ From town to town they deliver the decisions reached by the apostles and elders. - Acts 15: 22-29
 - ▼ Paul's church-planting pattern:
 - Preach the gospel.
 - Form those who respond into a local congregation.
 - Lay a foundation that will sustain them until he returns.
 - Return and appoint elders, then leave again.
 - Write letters to deal with new issues. Return when possible to give further instruction.
 - ▼ The Jerusalem Council Decision:
 - Abstain from food sacrificed to idols.
 - Abstain from blood.
 - Abstain from the meat of strangled animals.
 - Abstain from sexual immorality.
- ▼ Phase 2
 - ▼ Paul and his team are guided by God.
 - Map - https://www.conformingtojesus.com/images/webpages/apostle_paul_second_missionary_journey_map1.jpg
 - Paul travels throughout Phrygia and Galatia, but the Holy Spirit won't let them preach in Asia.
 - Paul is guided by God.
 - Paul travels throughout Phrygia and Galatia, but the Holy Spirit won't let them preach in Asia.
 - The Spirit of Jesus won't let them enter Bythinia either.

- In Troas Paul has a vision of a man of Macedonia calling for their help.
- They conclude that God has called them to preach the gospel to the Macedonians.
- Luke switches from 3rd person plural (“they”) to 1st person plural (“we”) indicating that he probably joined Paul’s team at this point.

▼ Phase 3

- Paul is being guided by God!
- ▼ At this point we only have a record of a single bit of guidance from God that Paul and his team have received: “Come over to Macedonia and help us.”
 - Paul received this guidance in a vision while they were in Troas.
 - Everything else in the chapter flows as a result of this singular piece of guidance.
- ▼ At each subsequent step, Paul and his team do what makes sense in light of the Gospel:

▼ They go to the leading city - Philippi.

▼ Philippi is a Roman colony.

▼ This casts Philippians 3:17-21 in a different light.

Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you. For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

- Philippi was made a Roman colony by Octavian (aka Augustus) and Mark Anthony after they defeated Brutus and Cassius – the assassins of Julius Caesar. They left some of their veteran soldiers there as colonists.
 - Colonists aren’t trying to return to the country of their citizenship. They are trying to make their colony like their parent country.
 - The Philippian colonists were expected to make their colony like Rome.
 - Through Jesus we will make our “colony” like heaven.
- ▼ Consider how Paul finally arrived in Rome:

After three months we put out to sea in a ship that had wintered in the island. It was an Alexandrian ship with the figurehead of the twin gods Castor and Pollux. We put in at Syracuse and stayed there three days. From there we set sail and arrived at

Rhegium. The next day the south wind came up, and on the following day we reached Puteoli. There we found some brothers who invited us to spend a week with them. And so we came to Rome. The brothers there had heard that we were coming, and they traveled as far as the Forum of Appius and the Three Taverns to meet us. At the sight of these men Paul thanked God and was encouraged. When we got to Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself, with a soldier to guard him. - Acts 28:11-16

- The brothers from Rome met Paul in order to escort him into Rome.
- When Jesus returns we will escort him back to earth.

Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 (NIV)

- In the end, the New Jerusalem comes down from heaven to the earth.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." - Revelation 21:1-4 (NIV)

- Paul looks for cities and chooses the leading one. This maximizes the opportunity for the gospel to circulate. What does this mean for us? What kind of networks are we trying to infiltrate?
- ▼ Paul looks for a "home base" out of which to operate. Normally this would be the synagogue but, since Philippi didn't seem to have one, on the Sabbath he finds and visits the local place of prayer where Jews and god-fearing gentiles met.
 - Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth (i.e. a wealthy woman), believed the message.
 - Lydia offers her home as base of operations for Paul.

▼ Phase 4

- Paul is being guided by God, but even at this point in the journey, the only guidance from God that Luke has recorded is: "come over to Macedonia and help us."

- Do you want God to guide you?
- What are some of the ways that you wanted God to guide you in the past?
- ▼ What are some of the ways that you want God to guide you now?
 - I need the Lord's guidance around business and entrepreneurial passions of mine. I am all for taking risks but really want it to be one that God is directing me to take. Starting a business is hard, scary and expensive.
 - I always want God to guide me in the decisions, big and small, that I have to make everyday. Particularly around decisions on and for my job. Also decisions about ministry, how long to continue speaking and meeting with people...am I planting seeds or am I supposed to stick around to see the full bloom.
- Feel free to enter these in the chat and we'll try to address some of them next week.
- Paul continues to follow his "Standard Operating Procedure" (SOP), in light of the Gospel, without any further recorded guidance from God!
- ▼ Paul nurtures his relationship with local Jews and God-fearers.
 - On missions trips Paul normally keeps meeting with the local synagogue until he has won everyone who is open to the gospel message.
 - Now that he has a "home base", Paul and his team continue visiting the place of prayer where they initially met Lydia.
 - Your SOP should be to stick with the networks you find yourself in until you've exhausted the opportunities for advancing the Kingdom.
- ▼ Paul safeguards his "narrative".
 - Paul normally maintains control of his own narrative and doesn't allow others to co-opt his story.
 - A slave girl follows them shouting "These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved.". This puts her into a position to frame Paul's message from her perspective and world view - especially after Paul and his team leave town.
 - Paul eventually rebukes the spirit driving it out of the girl.
- ▼ Your SOP should be to control your narrative and to recognize and overcome any demonic activity that intrudes on your ministry.
 - ▼ Warning signs of an inadequate narrative:
 - people of faith
 - Christian values
 - family values
 - Judea-Christian values
 - spiritual people

- “Believe in Jesus so that you’ll go to heaven.”
- ▼ Dealing with demonic opposition:
 - If you’re a follower of Jesus, you have been given power through his name - use it!

After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road.

“When you enter a house, first say, ‘Peace to this house.’ If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; if not, it will return to you. Stay in that house, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house.

“When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is set before you. Heal the sick who are there and tell them, ‘The kingdom of God is near you.’ But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, ‘Even the dust of your town that sticks to our feet we wipe off against you. Yet be sure of this: The kingdom of God is near.’ I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town.

“Woe to you, Korazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths.

“He who listens to you listens to me; he who rejects you rejects me; but he who rejects me rejects him who sent me.”

The seventy-two returned with joy and said, “Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.”

He replied, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.” - Luke 10:1-20 (NIV)
 - Take authority every day over every demonic spirit that would try to harm or hinder you, your family, your household, your ministry partners, etc.
 - It’s your job to defend your territory as you advance God’s Kingdom.

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should. - Ephesians 6:10-20 (NIV)

- Don't give the devil a foothold!

So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.

You, however, did not come to know Christ that way. Surely you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body. "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold. He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. - Ephesians 4:17-32 (NIV)

- If you need deliverance - speak up and get help!

▼ Paul knows what to do when he's in trouble.

- Paul's SOP when in trouble was to worship and pray.
- The owners, recognizing their financial loss, have Paul and Silas forcibly brought before the authorities who have them beaten and thrown into jail. Paul and Silas cope with their situation by praying and singing hymns.
- What do you do when you're in trouble? Your SOP should be to worship and pray!
- Does it matter if you brought the trouble on yourself?

▼ Paul knows what to do when opportunity presents itself.

- Paul's SOP when there's a chance to present the gospel is to go for it.
- At midnight, Paul and Silas and the rest of the prisoners are miraculously set free. The jailer reacts by preparing to kill himself but Paul stops him.
- The jailer asks: "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?". Really, given the multiple meanings of the greek word *sodzo* ("to save" or "to rescue"), he was really asking: "How do I get out of this mess?" Paul responds by sharing the good news in very compressed form.

- What do you do with the opportunities to advance the Kingdom that come your way?
- ▼ Paul and Silas spoke the Word of the Lord to the jailer and his household.
 - Spoke: The message must be communicated explicitly.
- ▼ Word of the Lord
 - ▼ What does this mean?
 - The New Testament as we know it does not yet exist. The circumstances leading to Paul writing Galatians, the earliest of the New Testament letters have not yet happened.
 - “Word” = “λογος” Gk. (pronounced “logos) or “message.
 - “Lord” = “κύριος” Gk. (pronounced kurios) or the traditional way of referring to Jesus.
 - Consider examples from earlier in Acts (e.g. Acts 2:14-41; Acts 3:11-26; Acts 8:9-13; Acts 8:26-40; Acts 9:19-22; Acts 10:34-48; Acts 13:15-52
 - Can you do it?
- ▼ Paul is mindful of the future of the churches he establishes.
 - Paul’s SOP is to ensure that the churches he plants have the best possible chance to thrive.
 - The jailer and his household are baptized. Later Paul and Silas are released, but they insist that, since they are Roman citizens, the officials need to personally escort them out of the jail. This would have the effect of vindicating them and protecting the reputation of the Christian community that they would be leaving behind in Philippi.
 - What are you doing to secure the future well-being of the disciples you make?
- ▼ Skill Building
 - If you’re not prepared to recognize, protect, and nurture the believers in your sphere of influence, then you’re not loving them the way Christ has loved you - John 13:34-35.

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”
- ▼ Questions for those who may be struggling

These are questions you can use to help those who are struggling in their understanding of and/or relationship with Christ. Practice these on one another.

 - What do you want God to do for you? What role does Jesus play in this?
 - Are you confident that you are saved? If not, was there ever a time when you were confident?
- ▼ What were you told about salvation and how it happens?

- Probe for understanding of who Jesus is and what role he plays.
- Probe for understanding of the Kingdom of God.
- What did you do that caused you to be confident that you were saved?
- ▼ In order to defend the salvation of the believers around you, you must understand and be able to share the gospel message.
 - In order to understand and share the gospel message you must be able to find it in the Bible (not Google).
 - Let's develop our skill at finding the gospel message in the Bible.
- ▼ Messages, Content, and Method
 - Message Content: What the message says.
 - Message Method: How the message is delivered.
 - News - The same story can be delivered via physical newspaper, web page, or broadcast.
 - Bible - Can be delivered via printed book, audio recordings, or electronically.
- ▼ Some messages strongly imply a method:
 - "Play ball!"
 - Wedding vows
 - "Amazing Grace"
 - "Taps"
 - "National Anthem"
 - "We interrupt this program . . ."
 - In the 1st Century, Gospel (i.e. "good news) strongly implies a method - it was announced verbally to a public audience of many people. It could then be repeated more quietly among smaller groups, but it was initially encountered via public announcement.
- We are looking to find that initial public announcement of the good news!
- We will also be on the lookout for variants of the gospel message!
- ▼ Building the House
 - Excerpt from "The Math Gene" pp. 125-127
 - It's not just about math!
- ▼ You build houses too:
 - Lawyers
 - Healthcare professionals
 - Recovery counselors
 - Hair stylists

- Police
- Asset managers
- Teachers
- ▼ We are building a "house" of biblical understanding
 - It is grounded in Israel's history.
 - It connects that history to the Kingdom of God.
 - The Kingdom of God is expressed through many perspectives in the same way that a house is experienced through its various rooms.
- ▼ Think about the home you live in.
 - ▼ It has a bathroom.
 - The bathroom has the same address as the house.
 - ▼ It has a kitchen.
 - The kitchen has the same address as the house.
 - ▼ It has other rooms.
 - Each room has the same address as the house.
- ▼ New Testament
 - A House named "Kingdom of God".
 - What names do the rooms have?
- ▼ The Kingdom of God
 - ▼ The Kingdom has 3 Phases:
 - Phase 1: Israel's Purpose
 - Phase 2: Israel's Failure
 - Phase 3: Israel's Rescue
 - ▼ The Kingdom - Phase 1: Israel's Purpose
 - ▼ God wanted Israel to be a holy kingdom of priests who represent God to the world and through whom the entire world will be blessed:
 - Genesis 12:1-3

The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." - Genesis 12:1-3 (NIV)
 - Exodus 19:1-6

In the third month after the Israelites left Egypt — on the very day — they came to the Desert of Sinai. After they set out from Rephidim, they entered the Desert of Sinai, and Israel camped there in the desert in front of the mountain. Then Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain and said, "This is what you are to say to

the house of Jacob and what you are to tell the people of Israel: 'You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites."

- ▼ What is Israel's purpose in Exodus, Judges, 2 Samuel, Isaiah, Malachi?
 - The same!
- ▼ God gave Israel a clear choice before they entered Canaan:
 - Blessings for obedience. – Deuteronomy 28:1-14
 - Curses for disobedience, - Deuteronomy 28:15-68
 - God made it clear to Israel that they were renewing a covenant relationship with him. – Deuteronomy 29
- ▼ The Kingdom - Phase 2: Israel's Failure
 - God predicted both Israel's failure and Israel's rescue/restoration:
 - ▼ What would an Old Testament Israelite say was the solution to Israel's performance?
 - Deuteronomy 30:1-10 - Returning to obedience to God.

When all these blessings and curses I have set before you come upon you and you take them to heart wherever the LORD your God disperses you among the nations, and when you and your children return to the LORD your God and obey him with all your heart and with all your soul according to everything I command you today, then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you and gather you again from all the nations where he scattered you. Even if you have been banished to the most distant land under the heavens, from there the LORD your God will gather you and bring you back. He will bring you to the land that belonged to your fathers, and you will take possession of it. He will make you more prosperous and numerous than your fathers. The LORD your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live. The LORD your God will put all these curses on your enemies who hate and persecute you. You will again obey the LORD and follow all his commands I am giving you today. Then the LORD your God will make you most prosperous in all the work of your hands and in the fruit of your womb, the young of your livestock and the crops of your land. The LORD will again delight in you and make you prosperous, just as he delighted in your fathers, if you obey the LORD your God and keep his commands and decrees that are written in this Book of the Law and turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.
 - Putting God back in charge.
 - God becomes King.
 - Kingdom of God!
- ▼ Throughout the Old Testament Israel failed repeatedly:

- Israel was ultimately exiled to Assyria and Babylon.
- God brought them back, but they never fully returned to national sovereignty.
- Israel is like a car whose tires have a slow leak. No matter how much air you pump in, the tires will eventually go flat.
- ▼ The Kingdom - Phase 3: Israel's Rescue
 - ▼ God always intended to rescue Israel!
 - The same passage that predicted Israel's failure also predicted Israel's rescue. – Deuteronomy 30:1-10
 - ▼ Many other passages from the Prophets also acknowledge Israel's failure and predict God's rescue:
 - Isaiah 50 - 56
 - Isaiah 61 (quoted by Jesus in Luke 4:14-21).
 - ▼ Many of the Jews of Jesus' day were longing for Israel's rescue as predicted in the scriptures:
 - This predicted rescue was what they understood by the expression "The Kingdom of God"!
 - ▼ We're talking about a well understood solution to a well-known problem!
 - The Kingdom of God is not a new philosophical idea!
 - The Kingdom of God is a solution to a nationally understood problem.
 - ▼ Here are some examples of modern solutions to recognized problems:
 - The American Revolution
 - The Civil Rights Movement
 - Zionism
 - "The Revolution"
 - Reparations
 - Black Lives Matter
 - The Kingdom of God redeems Israel and redefines it as all those who follow Jesus.
 - The Church is the visible expression of God's Kingdom. When it functions properly it is like a car with an automatic air supply and self-healing tires.
 - ▼ What were John the Baptist and then Jesus announcing?
 - The Kingdom of God!
 - The Kingdom of God redeems Israel and redefines it as all those who follow Jesus.

- The Church is the visible expression of God's Kingdom. When it functions properly it is like a car with an automatic air supply and self-healing tires.
- ▼ Exercise: For each Gospel in the New Testament (i.e. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John) find the 1st proclamation of the gospel message. This can be found within the 1st 4 chapters of any of the 4 Gospels. Hint look for the word "gospel" or the phrase "good news".
- ▼ What is the proclamation of the gospel that we found in Mark?

After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!" - Mark 1:14-15 (NIV)
- ▼ Does this passage have a key word?
 - "Kingdom"
- ▼ What other words in the Bible are related to that key word? Is one of them a title?
 - "King"
- ▼ Is one of them a title? How did Jews express that title in Hebrew and in Greek?
 - "Messiah"
 - "Christ"
 - "Son of God" (see Psalm 2)
- ▼ What is the proclamation of the gospel that we found in Matthew?
 - Matthew 4:17 (NIV)

From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near."
 - Matthew 4:23 (NIV)

Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people.
- ▼ These passages have the same keyword:
 - "Kingdom"
- ▼ As we learned from the Mark 1:14-15 passage, this keyword is related to others:
 - "Messiah"
 - "Christ"
 - "Son of God" (see Psalm 2)
- ▼ What was the proclamation of the gospel that we found in Luke?
 - Luke 4:14-21 (NIV)

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. He taught in their synagogues, and everyone praised him.

He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into

the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read. The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, and he began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

- Luke 4:42-44 (NIV)

At daybreak Jesus went out to a solitary place. The people were looking for him and when they came to where he was, they tried to keep him from leaving them. But he said, "I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent." And he kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea.

- ▼ What was the proclamation of the gospel that we found in John?

- John 1:17
- John 1:34
- John 1:40-42
- John 1:47-51
- John 3:1-21
- John 3:25-30
- John 4:25-30

- ▼ The house of biblical understanding we're building is "The kingdom of God".

- ▼ When we read the word "kingdom" we've entered one of the rooms.

- We're in the "kingdom" room but we're in the same house.

- ▼ When we read the word "king" we've entered one of the rooms.

- We're in the "king" room but we're in the same house.

- ▼ When we read the word "Messiah" we've entered one of the rooms.

- We're in the "Messiah" room but we're in the same house.

- ▼ When we read the word "Christ" we've entered one of the rooms.

- We're in the "Christ" room but we're in the same house.

- ▼ When we read the phrase "Son of God" we've entered one of the rooms.

- We're in the "Son of God" room but we're in the same house.

- ▼ The Gospel Message (part of "the Word of the Lord")

- ▼ The Gospel Message is the good news that Israel's rescue is immanent and, once Israel has been rescued / redeemed, God's plan to use Israel to reclaim our broken world can move forward.

- ▼ The message can be expressed in various related ways:

- The Kingdom of God is near (i.e. “at hand”).
- Jesus is the “Christ” / “Messiah” (i.e. “Anointed One”)
- Jesus is the King of Israel
- Jesus is the “Son of God”
- In the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5 – 7) Jesus explains what life in the Kingdom looks like (i.e. what it looks like when God becomes King). He then goes on to demonstrate the power of the Kingdom (Matthew 8 – 9).
- ▼ The Kingdom of God is near (i.e. “at hand”):
 - Mark 1:14-15
After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!” - Mark 1:14-15 (NIV)
 - Matthew 4:17
From that time on Jesus began to preach, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.” - Matthew 4:17 (NIV)
 - Matthew 4:23
Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. - Matthew 4:23 (NIV)
- ▼ Jesus is the inaugurator of God’s Kingdom
 - Luke 4:14-21 (NIV)
Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. He taught in their synagogues, and everyone praised him.

He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read. The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, and he began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”
 - Luke 4:42-44 (NIV)
At daybreak Jesus went out to a solitary place. The people were looking for him and when they came to where he was, they tried to keep him from leaving them. But he said, “I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent.” And he kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea.
- ▼ Jesus is the “Christ” / “Messiah” (i.e. “Anointed One”) / “Son of God” / “King of Israel”
All of these terms refer to the same role.

- **John 1:17**
For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. - John 1:17 (NIV)
- **John 1:34**
I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God.” - John 1:34 (NIV)
- **John 1:40-42**
Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, “We have found the Messiah” (that is, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas” (which, when translated, is Peter). - John 1:40-42 (NIV)
- **John 1:47-51**
When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, “Here is a true Israelite, in whom there is nothing false.”
“How do you know me?” Nathanael asked. Jesus answered, “I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you.”
Then Nathanael declared, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel.”
Jesus said, “You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You shall see greater things than that.” He then added, “I tell you the truth, you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.” - John 1:47-51 (NIV)
- **John 3:1-21**
- **John 3:25-30**
- **John 4:25-30**
The woman said, “I know that Messiah” (called Christ) “is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.”
Then Jesus declared, “I who speak to you am he.”
Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, “What do you want?” or “Why are you talking with her?”
Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?” They came out of the town and made their way toward him. - John 4:25-30 (NIV)

▼ **Seeking God’s Kingdom First**

▼ **Reflect on Jesus’ instruction to his disciples:**

So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. - Matthew 6:31-33 (NIV)

- God’s Kingdom means God being in charge. We know what that looks like based on what Jesus taught in the Gospels.
 - God’s righteousness means faithfulness to our covenant relationship with God and others. We also know what that looks like based on what Jesus taught in the Gospels.
- ▼ **What does it mean to seek first God’s Kingdom?**

- ▼ Reflect on what that Matthew has recorded so far: Matthew 4 – 6.
 - Jesus proclaimed the Kingdom. – Matthew 4:12-17
 - Large crowds followed him. – Matthew 4:23-25
 - Jesus taught what the Kingdom lifestyle looked like. - Matthew 5 – 7
 - Jesus demonstrated the power of the Kingdom. – Matthew 8 – 9
 - Jesus sent out laborers. – Matthew 10
- ▼ What does it mean to follow Jesus?
 - Start with Jesus' career through when he first sent out his disciples. - Matthew 4 - 10

▼ **Followup**

▼ **Discussion Questions**

- How does your hope / expectation of God's guidance compare with the way God guided Paul in Acts 16?
- Did Paul have a clear understanding of what it meant to seek God's Kingdom first? What did it mean to him?
- Is your understanding of seeking God's Kingdom first clear or vague? How do the passages we've explored help your understanding in this area?
- What are your roles and responsibilities (think in broad categories)? What do God's Kingdom and righteousness look like in connection with each of your roles and responsibilities? What gifts are you using towards this end?



On the Road Again!

Part 5 – Sunday May 30, 2021



Understanding the Issues

Some Definitions:

Evangelism → Discipleship Sequence

1. Trust
2. Curiosity
3. Open to Change
4. Seeking
5. Commitment to Christ

Discipleship



Terminology

Consider these terms from “[Following Jesus: Introduction](https://lfechurchboston.org/activities/classes-programs/following-jesus/introduction/)” Lesson 2
(<https://lfechurchboston.org/activities/classes-programs/following-jesus/introduction/>)

Believer – someone who believes in or has faith in Jesus and therefore follows him. In the Bible, the term “believer” refers to much more than simply agreeing with an idea. It implies a level of commitment such that, when given a chance, you will act on the belief. For example, you demonstrate your belief that a chair will support your weight by sitting in it; you demonstrate your belief that an airplane will take you safely to your destination by flying in it.

[John 4:39-41; Acts 2:44-47; Acts 4:31-32; Galatians 6:9-10; James 2:1](#)

Born again – those who believe in Jesus are born again from God’s Spirit. You must be born again to see or enter the Kingdom of God.

[John 3:1-21; 1Peter 1:22-23](#)

Brother – those who follow Jesus are part of a new family and become brothers and sisters to one another.

Matthew 12:46-50; Matthew 23:8; Acts 6:3; Acts 9:28-30; Acts 11:1; Acts 11:29; Acts 15

Christian – means “belonging to Christ” “The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch” – [Acts 11:19-26](#)



Terminology

- **Disciples** – those who are trained by the one they are following.
[Matthew 5:1-2; Acts 6:1-7; Acts 9:1-31; Acts 11:19-26; Acts 18:23](#)
- **Follower of Jesus** – Someone who follows and organizes his/her life around the life of Jesus as revealed in the Bible, especially the four gospels (i.e. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) and as revealed by the Holy Spirit.
[Matthew 4:19; Matthew 8:19-22; Matthew 9:9; Matthew 10:37-39; Matthew 16:24-26; Matthew 19:21-22; Matthew 19:27-30; John 1:43; John 12:26; John 21:19-22](#)
- **Saints** – those who are “sanctified”, or set apart for God’s use.
[Romans 1:1-8; Ephesians 1:1-2; Philippians 1:1-2](#)
- **Saved** – those who by following Jesus have been rescued from this world and from God’s wrath.
[Luke 8:12; Luke 8:4-15; John 10:1-9; Acts 2:17-21; Acts 4:8-12; Romans 10:1-13](#)



Picturing Salvation

This is what salvation looks like.

- People who
 - have been captivated by Jesus.
 - follow him in order to learn from him.
 - abandon their past teachers in favor of learning directly from Jesus.
- Jesus
 - Welcomes them regardless of their past social status or degree of spiritual achievement.
 - Considers them to be disciples from the beginning.
 - Treats them with an expectation of success.
- Their attention is focused on Jesus and they are not at all anxious about whether they are “in” or “out”.



Picturing Salvation

With salvation we receive a “superpower” - the ability to distinguish between Jesus and other sources and to pay attention to Jesus.

“I tell you the truth, the man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of his sheep. The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger’s voice.” - John 10:1-5 (NIV)

- This is the flip side of the “faith” that is the evidence of salvation.
- What we do with this “superpower” will determine the course of our spiritual life.



Modeling Conversion

What is the normal path to conversion (i.e. becoming a follower)?

- Gospel proclamation (e.g. The Kingdom of God is here)
- Saving faith (includes the “superpower” ability to pay attention to Jesus)
- Acts of commitment (e.g. baptism, “Jesus is Lord”, joining family of believers)
- Discipleship



Modeling Conversion

Let's use Peter's Pentecost sermon as a model:

"Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"

Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off — for all whom the Lord our God will call."

With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. - Acts 2:36-42 (NIV)

- Peter: "God has made this Jesus . . . both Lord and Christ."
- People: "What shall we do?"
- Peter: "Repent and be baptized . . ."
- Outcome: Those who accepted the message responded (were baptized) and 3,000 were added to their number.
- Outcome: They devoted themselves to the Apostles' teaching . . .



The Real Thing

Evidence of Salvation:

- If the “superpower” (i.e. the ability to pay attention to Jesus) isn’t there, salvation probably isn’t there either.
- If the person doesn’t want to learn about Jesus, he/she probably isn’t saved.
- When this is missing, it’s better to face the facts so that you can pray effectively for the person.



Our Passage – Acts 16 (1 of 7)

Acts 16:1-5 (NIV)

He came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was a Jewess and a believer, but whose father was a Greek. The brothers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him. Paul wanted to take him along on the journey, so he circumcised him because of the Jews who lived in that area, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. As they traveled from town to town, they delivered the decisions reached by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for the people to obey. So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers.



Our Passage – Acts 16 (2 of 7)

Paul's vision of the Man of Macedonia - Acts 16:6-10 (NIV)

Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.



Our Passage – Acts 16 (3 of 7)

Lydia's Conversion in Philippi - Acts 16:11-15 (NIV)

From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, and the next day on to Neapolis. From there we traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days.

On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. One of those listening was a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message. When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us.



Our Passage – Acts 16 (4 of 7)

Paul and Silas in Prison - Acts 16:16-21 (NIV)

Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling. This girl followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, “These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved.” She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so troubled that he turned around and said to the spirit, “In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!” At that moment the spirit left her.

When the owners of the slave girl realized that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities. They brought them before the magistrates and said, “These men are Jews, and are throwing our city into an uproar by advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice.”



Our Passage – Acts 16 (5 of 7)

Paul and Silas in Prison (continued) - Acts 16:22-28 (NIV)

The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten. After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. Upon receiving such orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everybody's chains came loose. The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. But Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!"



Our Passage – Acts 16 (6 of 7)

Paul and Silas in Prison (continued) - Acts 16:29-34 (NIV)

The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. He then brought them out and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”

They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved — you and your household.” Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized. The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God — he and his whole family.



Our Passage – Acts 16 (7 of 7)

Paul and Silas in Prison (continued) - Acts 16:35-40 (NIV)

When it was daylight, the magistrates sent their officers to the jailer with the order: “Release those men.” The jailer told Paul, “The magistrates have ordered that you and Silas be released. Now you can leave. Go in peace.”

But Paul said to the officers: “They beat us publicly without a trial, even though we are Roman citizens, and threw us into prison. And now do they want to get rid of us quietly? No! Let them come themselves and escort us out.”

The officers reported this to the magistrates, and when they heard that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens, they were alarmed. They came to appease them and escorted them from the prison, requesting them to leave the city. After Paul and Silas came out of the prison, they went to Lydia’s house, where they met with the brothers and encouraged them. Then they left.



Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey – Phase 1

Paul didn't want to make John Mark part of the team again, so he split with Barnabas:

Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us go back and visit the brothers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing." Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord. He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches. – Acts 15:36-41 (NIV)

- Sometimes we fail to resolve a conflict with a mentor or a partner.
- Sometimes we feel hopelessly disappointed with a teammate.
- Sometimes we are a disappointment to our partners or leaders.

Paul later embraces John Mark:

Do your best to come to me quickly, for Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry. I sent Tychicus to Ephesus. When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, and my scrolls, especially the parchments. - 2 Timothy 4:9-13



Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey – Phase 1

Paul returns to Derbe and then Lystra

- Paul came here on his 1st missionary journey after fleeing a plot to stone Barnabas and him in Iconium. – Acts 14:5-23
- During that same trip God used Paul to heal a congenitally crippled man in Lystra. This initially resulted in the crowd thinking that they are gods.
- Paul and Barnabas speak out against this and are barely able to keep the crowd from sacrificing to them.
- Eventually however some Jews from Antioch win the crowd over and they stone Paul and drag him outside the city – seemingly dead.
- The disciples gather around him and he gets up, goes back into the city, and then he and Barnabas leave for Derbe.
- Paul and Barnabas win many disciples in Derbe and then return – strengthening the disciples along the way.



Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey – Phase 1

In Lystra Paul adds Timothy to the team after having him circumcised.

- Paul has just won a battle in defense of not requiring Gentiles to be circumcised!
- Nevertheless, Paul has Timothy circumcised.

From town to town they deliver the decisions reached by the apostles and elders. - Acts 15: 22-29

- Paul's church-planting pattern:
 - Preach the gospel.
 - Form those who respond into a local congregation.
 - Lay a foundation that will sustain them until he returns.
 - Return and appoint elders, then leave again.
 - Write letters to deal with new issues. Return when possible to give further instruction.



Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey – Phase 1

From town to town they deliver the decisions reached by the apostles and elders. - Acts 15: 22-29

- The Jerusalem Council Decision:
 - Abstain from food sacrificed to idols.
 - Abstain from blood.
 - Abstain from the meat of strangled animals.
 - Abstain from sexual immorality.
- The churches are strengthened in the faith and grow in numbers!



Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey – Phase 2

Paul is guided by God.

- Paul travels throughout Phrygia and Galatia, but the Holy Spirit won't let them preach in Asia.
- The Spirit of Jesus won't let them enter Bythinia either.
- In Troas Paul has a vision of a man of Macedonia calling for their help.
- They conclude that God has called them to preach the gospel to the Macedonians.
- Luke switches from 3rd person plural ("they") to 1st person plural ("we") indicating that he probably joined Paul's team at this point.



Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey – Phase 2

[Map of Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey](https://www.conformingtojesus.com/images/webpages/apostle_paul_second_missionary_journey_map1.jpg)

https://www.conformingtojesus.com/images/webpages/apostle_paul_second_missionary_journey_map1.jpg



Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey – Phase 2





Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey – Phase 3

At this point we only have a record of a single bit of guidance from God that Paul and his team have received:

“Come over to Macedonia and help us.”

- Paul received this guidance in a vision while they were in Troas.
- Everything else in the chapter flows as a result of this singular piece of guidance.
- At each subsequent step, Paul and his team do what makes sense in light of the Gospel:
- They go to the leading city - Philippi.



Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey – Phase 3

At this point Paul's only guidance from God has been to come to Macedonia.

- Paul and his team go to the leading city – Philippi (a Roman colony).
- This casts Philippians 3:17-21 in a different light.

*Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you. For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things. **But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ,** who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body. – Philippians 3:17-21 (NIV)*

- Philippi was made a Roman colony by Octavian (aka Augustus) and Mark Anthony after they defeated Brutus and Cassius – the assassins of Julius Caesar. They left some of their veteran soldiers there as colonists.
- Colonists aren't trying to return to the country of their citizenship. They are trying to make their colony like their parent country.



Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey – Phase 3

At this point Paul's only guidance from God has been to come to Macedonia.

- Paul and his team go to the leading city – Philippi (a Roman colony).
- The Philippian colonists were expected to make their colony like Rome.
- Through Jesus we will make our “colony” like heaven.
- Consider how Paul finally arrived in Rome:

*After three months we put out to sea in a ship that had wintered in the island. It was an Alexandrian ship with the figurehead of the twin gods Castor and Pollux. We put in at Syracuse and stayed there three days. From there we set sail and arrived at Rhegium. The next day the south wind came up, and on the following day we reached Puteoli. There we found some brothers who invited us to spend a week with them. **And so we came to Rome. The brothers there had heard that we were coming, and they traveled as far as the Forum of Appius and the Three Taverns to meet us.** At the sight of these men Paul thanked God and was encouraged. When we got to Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself, with a soldier to guard him. Acts 28:11-16 (NIV)*

- The brothers from Rome met Paul in order to escort him into Rome.
- When Jesus returns we will escort him back to earth.



Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey – Phase 3

At this point Paul's only guidance from God has been to come to Macedonia.

- They go to the leading city – Philippi (a Roman colony).
- The Philippian colonists were expected to make the colony like Rome.
- Through Jesus we will make our “colony” like heaven.
- When Jesus returns we will escort him back to earth the way the Roman brothers escorted Paul into Rome (Acts 28:11-16):

*Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. **For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.** Therefore encourage each other with these words. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 (NIV)*

- In the end, the New Jerusalem comes down from heaven to the earth.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” - Revelation 21:1-4 (NIV)



Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey – Phase 3

At this point Paul's only guidance from God has been to come to Macedonia.

- Afterwards, in Macedonia, he does whatever logically comes next.
- Paul looks for cities and chooses the leading one – Philippi.
 - This maximizes the opportunity for the gospel to circulate.
 - What does this mean for us?
 - What kind of networks are we trying to infiltrate?



Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey – Phase 3

At this point Paul's only guidance from God has been to come to Macedonia.

- Afterwards, in Macedonia, he does whatever logically comes next.
- Paul looks for cities and chooses the leading one – Philippi.
- In Philippi Paul looks for a “home base” out of which to operate.
 - Normally this would be the synagogue.
 - Apparently, Philippi didn't have a synagogue, so . . .
 - On the Sabbath Paul finds and visits the local place of prayer where Jews and god-fearing gentiles met.
 - Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth (i.e. a wealthy woman), believed the message.
 - Lydia offers her home as base of operations for Paul.



Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey – Phase 4

Paul is being guided by God, but even at this point in the journey, the only guidance from God that Luke has recorded is: “come over to Macedonia and help us.”

Paul continues to follow his “Standard Operating Procedure” (SOP), in light of the Gospel, without any further recorded guidance from God!

- Paul nurtures his relationship with local Jews and God-fearers.
- On missions trips Paul normally keeps meeting with the local synagogue until he has won everyone who is open to the gospel message.
- Now that he has a “home base”, Paul and his team continue visiting the place of prayer where they initially met Lydia.
- Your SOP should be to stick with the networks you find yourself in until you’ve exhausted the opportunities for advancing the Kingdom.



Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey – Phase 4

Paul safeguards his “narrative”.

- Paul normally maintains control of his own narrative and doesn't allow others to co-opt his story.
- A slave girl follows them shouting “These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved.”. This puts her into a position to frame Paul's message from her perspective and world view - especially after Paul and his team leave town.
- Paul eventually rebukes the spirit driving it out of the girl.
- Your SOP should be to control your narrative and to recognize and overcome any demonic activity that intrudes on your ministry.
- Warning signs of an inadequate narrative:
 - “people of faith”, “Christian values”, “family values”, “Judea-Christian values”, “spiritual people”
 - “Believe in Jesus so that you'll go to heaven.”



Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey – Phase 4

Dealing with demonic opposition:

- If you're a follower of Jesus, you have been given power through his name - use it! - *Luke 10:1-20 (NIV) (1 of 3)*

After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road.

"When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.' If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; if not, it will return to you. Stay in that house, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house.



Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey – Phase 4

Dealing with demonic opposition:

- If you're a follower of Jesus, you have been given power through his name - use it! - *Luke 10:1-20 (NIV) (2 of 3)*

“When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is set before you. Heal the sick who are there and tell them, ‘The kingdom of God is near you.’ But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, ‘Even the dust of your town that sticks to our feet we wipe off against you. Yet be sure of this: The kingdom of God is near.’ I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town.

“Woe to you, Korazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths.



Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey – Phase 4

Dealing with demonic opposition:

- If you're a follower of Jesus, you have been given power through his name - use it! - *Luke 10:1-20 (NIV) (3 of 3)*

"He who listens to you listens to me; he who rejects you rejects me; but he who rejects me rejects him who sent me."

The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name."

He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven." - Luke 10:1-20 (NIV)



Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey – Phase 4

Dealing with demonic opposition:

- If you're a follower of Jesus, you have been given power through his name - use it!
- Take authority every day over every demonic spirit that would try to harm or hinder you, your family, your household, your ministry partners, etc.
- It's your job to defend your territory as you advance God's Kingdom.



Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey – Phase 4

Dealing with demonic opposition:

- It's your job to defend your territory as you advance God's Kingdom.

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should. - Ephesians 6:10-20 (NIV)



Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey – Phase 4

Dealing with demonic opposition:

- If you're a follower of Jesus, you have been given power through his name - use it!
- Take authority every day over every demonic spirit that would try to harm or hinder you, your family, your household, your ministry partners, etc.
- It's your job to defend your territory as you advance God's Kingdom.
- Don't give the devil a foothold!



Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey – Phase 4

Dealing with demonic opposition:

- Don't give the devil a foothold!

So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.

You, however, did not come to know Christ that way. Surely you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body. "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold. He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. - Ephesians 4:17-32 (NIV)



Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey – Phase 4

Dealing with demonic opposition:

- If you're a follower of Jesus, you have been given power through his name - use it!
- Take authority every day over every demonic spirit that would try to harm or hinder you, your family, your household, your ministry partners, etc.
- It's your job to defend your territory as you advance God's Kingdom.
- Don't give the devil a foothold!
- If you need deliverance - speak up and get help!



Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey – Phase 4

Paul knows what to do when he's in trouble.

- Paul's SOP when in trouble was to worship and pray.
- The owners, recognizing their financial loss, have Paul and Silas forcibly brought before the authorities who have them beaten and thrown into jail. Paul and Silas cope with their situation by praying and singing hymns.
- What do you do when you're in trouble? Your SOP should be to worship and pray!
- Does it matter if you brought the trouble on yourself?



Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey – Phase 4

Paul knows what to do when opportunity presents itself.

- Paul's SOP when there's a chance to present the gospel is to go for it.
- At midnight, Paul and Silas and the rest of the prisoners are miraculously set free. The jailer reacts by preparing to kill himself but Paul stops him.
- The jailer asks: "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?". Really, given the multiple meanings of the greek word *sodzo* ("to save" or "to rescue"), he was really asking: "How do I get out of this mess?" Paul responds by sharing the good news in very compressed form.
- What do you do with the opportunities to advance the Kingdom that come your way?



Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey – Phase 4

Paul and Silas spoke the Word of the Lord to the jailer and his household.

- Spoke: There is a finite message that must be communicated.
- What does this mean?
 - The New Testament as we know it does not yet exist. The circumstances leading to Paul writing Galatians, the earliest of the New Testament letters have not yet happened.
 - “Word” = “λογος” Gk. (pronounced “logos) or “message.
 - “Lord” = “κύριος” Gk. (pronounced kurios) or the traditional way of referring to Jesus.
 - Consider examples from earlier in Acts (e.g. Acts 2:14-41; Acts 3:11-26; Acts 8:9-13; Acts 8:26-40; Acts 9:19-22; Acts 10:34-48; Acts 13:15-52).
- Can you do it?



Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey – Phase 4

Paul is mindful of the future of the churches he establishes.

- Paul's SOP is to ensure that the churches he plants have the best possible chance to thrive.
- The jailer and his household are baptized. Later Paul and Silas are released, but they insist that, since they are Roman citizens, the officials need to personally escort them out of the jail. This would have the effect of vindicating them and protecting the reputation of the Christian community that they would be leaving behind in Philippi.
- What are you doing to secure the future wellbeing of the disciples you make?



The Kingdom of God: 3 Phases

Phase 1: Israel's Purpose

Phase 2: Israel's Failure

Phase 3: Israel's Rescue



The Kingdom – Phase 1: Israel’s Purpose

God wanted Israel to be a holy kingdom of priests who represent God to the world and through whom the entire world will be blessed (Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:1-6)

God gave Israel a clear choice before they entered Canaan:

- Blessings for obedience. – Deuteronomy 28:1-14
- Curses for disobedience, - Deuteronomy 28:15-68

God made it clear to Israel that they were renewing a covenant relationship with him. – Deuteronomy 29



The Kingdom – Phase 2: Israel's Failure

God predicted both Israel's failure and Israel's rescue/restoration:

When all these blessings and curses I have set before you come upon you and you take them to heart wherever the LORD your God disperses you among the nations, and when you and your children return to the LORD your God and obey him with all your heart and with all your soul according to everything I command you today, then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you and gather you again from all the nations where he scattered you. Even if you have been banished to the most distant land under the heavens, from there the LORD your God will gather you and bring you back. He will bring you to the land that belonged to your fathers, and you will take possession of it. He will make you more prosperous and numerous than your fathers. The LORD your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live. The LORD your God will put all these curses on your enemies who hate and persecute you. You will again obey the LORD and follow all his commands I am giving you today. Then the LORD your God will make you most prosperous in all the work of your hands and in the fruit of your womb, the young of your livestock and the crops of your land. The LORD will again delight in you and make you prosperous, just as he delighted in your fathers, if you obey the LORD your God and keep his commands and decrees that are written in this Book of the Law and turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. - Deuteronomy 30:1-10 (NIV)

Throughout the Old Testament Israel failed repeatedly:

- Israel was ultimately exiled to Assyria and Babylon.
- God brought them back, but they never fully regained their national sovereignty.



The Kingdom – Phase 3: Israel’s Rescue

God always intended to rescue Israel!

- The same passage that predicted Israel’s failure also predicted Israel’s rescue. – Deuteronomy 30:1-10
- Many other passages from the Prophets also acknowledge Israel’s failure and predict God’s rescue:
 - Isaiah 50 - 56
 - Isaiah 61 (quoted by Jesus in Luke 4:14-21).

Many of the Jews of Jesus’ day were longing for Israel’s rescue as predicted in the scriptures:

- This predicted rescue was what they understood by the expression “The Kingdom of God”!



The Gospel Message

The Gospel Message is the good news that Israel's rescue is immanent and, once Israel has been rescued / redeemed, God's plan to use Israel to reclaim our broken world can move forward.

The message can be expressed in various related ways:

- The Kingdom of God is near (i.e. "at hand").
- Jesus is the "Christ" / "Messiah" (i.e. "Anointed One")
- Jesus is the King of Israel
- Jesus is the "Son of God"

In the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5 – 7) Jesus explains what life in the Kingdom looks like (i.e. what it looks like when God becomes King). He then goes on to demonstrate the power of the Kingdom (Matthew 8 – 9).



The Gospel Message

The Kingdom of God is near (i.e. “at hand”):

After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!” - Mark 1:14-15 (NIV)

From that time on Jesus began to preach, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.” - Matthew 4:17 (NIV)

Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. - Matthew 4:23 (NIV)



The Gospel Message

Jesus is the inaugurator of God's Kingdom

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. He taught in their synagogues, and everyone praised him.

He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read. The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, and he began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." - Luke 4:14-21 (NIV)

At daybreak Jesus went out to a solitary place. The people were looking for him and when they came to where he was, they tried to keep him from leaving them. But he said, "I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent." And he kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea. - Luke 4:42-44 (NIV)



The Gospel Message

Jesus is the “Christ” / “Messiah” (i.e. “Anointed One”) / “Son of God” / “King of Israel”

All of these terms refer to the same role.

For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. – John 1:17 (NIV)

I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God.” – John 1:34 (NIV)

Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, “We have found the Messiah” (that is, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas” (which, when translated, is Peter). – John 1:40-42 (NIV)



The Gospel Message

Jesus is the “Christ” / “Messiah” (i.e. “Anointed One”) / “Son of God” / “King of Israel”

When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, “Here is a true Israelite, in whom there is nothing false.”

“How do you know me?” Nathanael asked. Jesus answered, “I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you.”

Then Nathanael declared, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel.”

Jesus said, “You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You shall see greater things than that.” He then added, “I tell you the truth, you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.” - John 1:47-51 (NIV)



The Gospel Message

Jesus is the “Christ” / “Messiah” (i.e. “Anointed One”) / “Son of God” / “King of Israel”

The woman said, “I know that Messiah” (called Christ) “is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.”

Then Jesus declared, “I who speak to you am he.”

Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, “What do you want?” or “Why are you talking with her?”

Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?” They came out of the town and made their way toward him. - John 4:25-30 (NIV)



Seeking God's Kingdom First

Reflect on Jesus' instruction to his disciples:

So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. - Matthew 6:31-33 (NIV)

What does it mean to seek first God's Kingdom?

- *Reflect on what that Matthew has recorded so far: Matthew 4 – 6.*
 - *Jesus proclaimed the Kingdom. – Matthew 4:12-17*
 - *Large crowds followed him. – Matthew 4:23-25*
 - *Jesus taught what the Kingdom lifestyle looked like. - Matthew 5 – 7*
 - *Jesus demonstrated the power of the Kingdom. – Matthew 8 – 9*
 - *Jesus sent out laborers. – Matthew 10*

What does it mean to follow Jesus?

- *Start with Jesus' career through when he first sent out his disciples. - Matthew 4 - 10*



Discussion Questions

1. How does your hope / expectation of God's guidance compare with the way God guided Paul in Acts 16?
2. Did Paul have a clear understanding of what it meant to seek God's Kingdom first? What did it mean to him?
3. Is your understanding of seeking God's Kingdom first clear or vague? How do the passages we've explored help your understanding in this area?
4. What are your roles and responsibilities (think in broad categories)? What do God's Kingdom and righteousness look like in connection with each of your roles and responsibilities? What gifts are you using towards this end?