

Series: Turning the World Upside Down # 5

The Commission of the Church

Acts 16: 6-12

Today we have come to an informative passage concerning the success of Paul's ministry and the recognition it received. As we have discovered, many believed in the Lord through the preaching of the Gospel, others rejected it, but all admitted that Paul and the others were making an impact on the communities and towns they encountered.

This is Paul's second missionary journey. He was saved and commissioned to be a witness for the Lord. [Acts 9:15 – But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:](#) Paul was not alone in the missionary efforts. There was Luke, Barnabas, Silas, Timothy, John Mark, and others who surrendered to the call to share Jesus with the world.

These were simply following the commission of our Lord. As Jesus was preparing to ascend back to the Father, He left specific instructions for the church. [Mat.28:19-20 – Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.](#) [Acts 1:8 – But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.](#) Jesus came to redeem the church. As He ascended the Holy Spirit descended and filled believers. We are left to carry out the work of Christ. We are His hands, His feet, and His voice.

This passage is likely familiar to many of you. It is here that Paul heard the Macedonian call and took the Gospel to the Europeans. (Thank God that he did or we may have never heard.) We have been blessed to hear the good news of the glorious Gospel, but all have not heard. If we are to turn the world upside down for Jesus, we must fulfill the Commission we've received. I want to consider the [expectations](#) revealed in the text as we think on: [The Commission of the Church](#).

I. The Call of the Commission (6-7) – The text reveals some things about the call that each of us here need to understand.

A. A Call of Service (6) – [Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia,](#) I want us to keep in mind that this was not just a vacation trip for Paul and the others. These men were not simply traveling the world to

see the sights. They had given their lives to serve the Lord. Their days were consumed with ministry and sharing the Gospel. They had a heart and a desire to serve the Lord.

- The lives we live should not be lived as if we only desire to please ourselves. We too have been called to serve the Lord. Each day there are countless opportunities to be used for the Lord. Spend each moment wisely with a genuine desire to serve the Lord. Look at each day and every circumstance as an opportunity to serve the Lord.
- Many Christians are saved and yet never find the time or the desire to serve the Lord. I know that there are things we must do in this life, but serving the Lord is the most important. It is the only thing that will matter in eternity!

B. A Call of Sacrifice (6-12) - We find in the context of these verses that a great sacrifice had been made. These men had left their homes and their families to serve the Lord. They were not always welcomed or accepted. Often they found themselves beaten, ridiculed, and even had their lives threatened. Serving the Lord came at a price. There had to be a sacrifice.

- Are we willing to sacrifice in order to serve the Lord? It will not always be easy. There will be times of rejection and frustration. There will be times when we must be patient and wait upon the Lord. We have been called to give sacrificially of ourselves for the needs of others. Just remember all that Jesus gave for us. He became our sacrifice, standing in our stead!
- Church, serving the Lord is not a matter of convenience. If you are waiting for a convenient time to serve Christ, you will likely never accomplish much. Serving the Lord requires that we die to self in order to serve Him in whatever capacity He chooses. We will never be what the Lord desires of us if we are not willing to pay the price!

C. A Call of Submission (6-7) – Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, ^[7] After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not. Paul and the others were not just wandering aimlessly through foreign lands. Their every move was directed of the Lord. Everywhere that Paul looked, he saw a need and had a desire to serve, but he had to follow the will of God. Clearly, all men needed to hear the Gospel, but they needed to hear in God's time and in His way.

- Serving the Lord requires that we submit to His will and work according to the parameters that He has given. There is nothing wrong in doing good things, but we need to desire the best things. You may not always understand what God is doing, why He is doing it, or where it may lead, but we must trust the sovereign will of God. We must get to the place that we want what God wants more than what we want.

- Serving the Lord at times may not make sense to us, but God is never wrong. Why does God ask specific things of us? We may not know, but we must submit and serve Him!
- Things may not always go as planned, but that is no reason to abandon our work or question the Lord. A delay or change of plans may be within God's will. I can assure you, if we will live a submitted life, God will use that life for His honor and glory. Look at every situation as an opportunity rather than an obstacle. (The widow's meager supply didn't look very promising to Elijah; leaving a revival and heading into the desert didn't make sense to Phillip; going away from Asia Minor didn't fit Paul's plan.)

I. The Call of the Commission (6-7)

II. The Compliance to the Commission (9-10) – We have looked at the call, but what is it that drove Paul? What compelled him to submit to the call?

A. The Basis (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.* There can be no doubt that Paul had a passion for reaching others. Everywhere he looked he saw those whom needed the Lord. He never got over what the Lord did for him and he wanted to reach the world for Christ. The Macedonian call involved a vision of one in desperate need of help.

- The Lord doesn't give visions in our day, but there are millions who stand in need of help. Our world seems consumed with the humanitarian needs of today, and these certainly need attention, but the spiritual needs are the most pressing and crucial.
- Our world is filled with people who were not raised in Baptist churches. We are surrounded by those who have never heard the Gospel message. They may not know or understand their need, but they are crying out for someone to help them.
- We need to see and understand the needs around us. We are in the midst of tough economic times. Folks are desperately seeking something to provide hope. More than a handout, they need hope. They need to be pointed to Jesus! Souls in despair need someone to care.

B. The Burden (10a) – *And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.* Endeavored has the idea of "seeking in order to find; to crave or to demand for someone." After the vision, Paul and the others would not be deterred. Their faces were set toward Macedonia and

they would not be denied. Keep in mind that Paul had other plans, but when God placed the burden for Macedonia upon him, there was only one place he could go.

- Isn't it amazing how God works? Often He places a desire in our hearts long before the door is opened to fulfill that desire. We need to seek God for a particular burden. I pray continually that God will give us a burden like we've never known, a craving for Him.

I. The Call of the Commission (6-7)

II. The Compliance to the Commission (9-10)

III. The Charge in the Commission (10b-12) – These remaining verses set the stage for the Macedonian visit. They reveal some truths that each of us need to grasp and seek to fulfill. What is it that we need to accomplish? We are to:

A. Share the Gospel (10b) – assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them. Luke says that they were assuredly called to go unto Macedonia and preach the Gospel. They would do other works of kindness, but their primary goal and mission was to preach the Word.

- All believers have been called to be a witness unto the Lord. Our world is filled with those who need Jesus. Church that is our primary goal. We exist to be salt and light. We are here to share the Gospel and point others to Christ. There is much that we can accomplish through various ministries, but sharing the Gospel is our main objective!

B. Stay the Course (11-12a) – 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: It took a while for Paul and the others to get to Macedonia. They had to be patient and stay the course to get where God wanted them to serve. They were not dismayed or sidetracked.

- As we serve the Lord, we face moments that test our faith and resolve. There are times when we are tempted to give up and quit. There is no place to sit down or give in. There is too much at stake. The eternal destiny of souls hangs in the balance. We must stay the course for the glory of God and the good of others. Don't allow frustration or rejection to sidetrack you. Keep your focus and press on without fail. We must press on as long as we live, continuing for the Lord.

C. Secure the Task (12b) – [and we were in that city abiding certain days](#). They abode in Philippi certain days. They were not looking to move on before it was time.

- We may feel as if we have a good idea where our lives will lead, but I am certain God will present opportunities we hadn't planned on. We must possess a determined commitment to secure the task. We need to give God our all each day we live. I want to leave this life having emptied myself in service to the King. I don't want to leave anything on the table.
- Church we too need to commit to securing the task we have received. We may not be called to a foreign land, but the Lord has a work for each of us to do. I can't do your work and you can't do mine. We know that God gives every Christian a personal ministry. He has a purpose for each of us who belong to Him. [Ephes.4:7, 11-12 – But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:](#)
- Don't you want to leave this world, standing before the Lord, with the assurance that Paul had? [2 Tim.4:6-8 – For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. ^{\[7\]} I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: ^{\[8\]} Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.](#)

Conclusion: When our Lord calls, we must go. Where He leads we must follow. What He commands, we must do. There is no greater joy than to be fully dedicated to the Lord and His service during our fleeting days of life. May each of us say, as the prophet of old, [Lord, Here am I; send me](#). Are you willing to embrace the Commission we've been given? Are you prepared to step out by faith and surrender your all to Jesus?

Many have no joy in the Lord because they do not know Him as Lord and Savior. Do you know for certain you have been saved? Are you prepared to meet the Lord if He were to call for you today? If not, I urge you to be obedient to His voice.