

**TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
IHOP BIBLE STUDY**

13 – Acts 15: 36 to 17: 15, “Disagreement between Paul and Barnabas” – with commentary.

Acts 15: 36 – 41, “Disagreement Between Paul and Barnabas;” Acts. 16: 1 - 10, “Paul’s Vision of the Man of Macedonia;” Acts 16: 1 – 15, “Lydia’s Conversion in Philippi;” Acts 16: 16 – 40, “Paul and Silas in Prison;” Acts 17: 1 – 15, “In Thessalonica and Berea.”

The purpose of the Book of Acts is to record the activity of the Holy Spirit in the Vision and Ministry of Peter and Paul. **Today’s study is the 13th of 20 lessons.**

A contextual statement:

Interestingly, *The Interpreter’s Bible* makes the following observation. In the book of Acts, “The Lord is not returned, but in the meantime the word of God is being carried on by the church. The Gentile mission is itself the eschatological action of God.” (*The Interpreter’s One-Volume Commentary on the Bible*. Nashville: Abingdon Press. 1971. p. 730.)

This I want to affirm as our perspective. **We will study this book from the perspective of the in-breaking of the Holy Spirit.** This puts us on the cusp of a deep and foreboding spiritual hole that is eternally deep. The Holy Spirit is that intuited presence within us that urges us to “Jump.” “Jump!” To take this leap of faith means to surrender ourselves to the eternal deeps. The discovery, to which I can personally testify, is that this deep, dark, mysterious hole is the place where God lives within us. As we lose control of everything— our-selves, our relationships to neighbor and to God— then we can discover that God really does sustain us. But the experience is like falling, and it is not entirely comfortable. But it works.

According to our Study Chart today we begin studying “Paul’s 2nd Missionary Journey to the Greek Lands,” (15:36 to 18:21). We’ll review this section during three individual studies. In general this section covers Paul’s vision from Macedonia, his sermon on an Un-known God, and the early preaching of Silas and Timothy.

Read the assignment is one reading.

I. Acts 15: 36 – 41, “Disagreement Between Paul and Barnabas;” Acts. 16: 1 - 10, “Paul’s Vision of the Man of Macedonia”

A. Vs. 16: 4b, What is the experience of obedience to which Paul implies? (Why must we obey?)

WS: The problematic word here is obedience. The IHOP Bible Study struggled with this word because of its connotations of doing something blindly. However, the word “obedience” has other connotations of “profound engagement.” Paul and Silas were asking the new disciples to become deeply engaged in the task. I experienced this radical kind of obedience as an intern in an international organization. I wanted to take “time off” for a family anniversary only to be reminded that the day off was during a period when the organization required my attendance. I had a choice to make, to either do my own thing or to do the thing of this international organization. This is the kind of obedience Paul and Silas were asking.

B. Vs. 7: What is the experience of the Holy Spirit preventing Paul and his companions to enter Bithynia? (Or, if you had such a preventing spirit, what would you have?)

WS: One IHOPer suggested that we already have such a "preventing spirit" in WWJD.

II. Acts 16: 11 – 22, "Lydia's Conversion in Philippi"

A. Vs. 14b: What is the experience of having "the Lord open" your heart? (Or, if the Lord opened your heart in a similar fashion, what you have?)

WS: When our hearts are open it indicates that we are spiritually awakened.

III. Acts 16: 16 – 40, "Paul and Silas in Prison"

A. Vs. 16: What is the experience of the slave girl who has a spirit? (Or, if you had such a spirit, what would you have?)

WS: It is suggested that Paul's sense of irritation is the indication that something is amiss.

B. Read Vss. 31 to 34 very carefully. Luke outlines the process of proclaiming salvation and the care and activities surrounding a conversion. List these activities.

WS: The IHOPers listed the following:

1. Fulfills prophecy;
2. Reveals Jesus to us;
3. Carries forward the message;
4. Jesus intentionally surrendered his life.

Add to this the following:

1. vs. 31: Surrender your life to Christ (Believe);
2. vs. 32: They spoke the word to them;
3. vs. 33: Provided acts of service to them (washed wounds and set a meal for them);
4. vs. 34. The whole household came to believe.
One IHOPer suggested this implied the entire synagogue.

IV. Acts 17: 1 – 15, "In Thessalonica and Berea."

A. Vs. 3: Why is it necessary that "Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead?"

WS: vs. 17:3, The IHOPers struggled with this theme for a few minutes. The underlying question is, "Why would a loving God ask this of his own son?" Our conclusion was that Jesus intentionally chose the cross and crucifixion to demonstrate for us the choice we can make concerning a life lived on behalf of worldly things, or a life lived on behalf of God.

We reminded ourselves that our purpose as human beings is to praise God. The more we are able to give ourselves to this task, the more we are able to experience the peace and abundance of God which is a type or resurrection.

Alright folks, talk to me!