

How about a Greek Vacation - Acts 16:1-15 **Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading**

Notes from the Sermon

The church where I grew up had a fun program for boys called R.A.'s, short for Royal Ambassadors. It was kind of like a Christian boy scouts, so we did projects, went camping, learned how to use a few tools and knives, and worked to get certain badges that we could put on our fashionable flannel vest. The other thing we did every week was to learn about missionaries all over the world. We heard stories of people who had submitted their lives to a crazy call to go to hard places in foreign cultures to tell people about Jesus. Not gonna lie, at the time all we wanted to do was get through the story so we could get back to the horse play, yet week by week something was being built into those Great Commission Baptist boys. To begin with, a study revealed that kids who grew up in those churches consistently scored higher than their peers in one educational subject. Any guesses? Kids from that faith tribe blew past their peers in geography. Of course, we were looking at world maps every week as we heard these stories. But more important, at least for this guy, the rhythmic remembering our missionaries was an important component driving the priority of the Great Commission into my discipleship. It was in R.A.'s that I first heard about the Macedonian Call from Acts 16. Paul and his entourage planned to travel to Asia (which was south on their route) or Bithynia (to the north). In both cases the Spirit did not allow them to do this. We are not sure how the Holy Spirit, also named as the Spirit of Jesus in the text did this, but they knew they were not allowed to go in these directions. It was out of frustration, then, that Paul had this vision of a man from Macedonia crying out, "Come over to Macedonia and help us."

To go to Macedonia was not in Paul's plans at the time. This would require getting his crew on a boat and traveling to a new region, a place where for the most part, no one had even heard the name of Jesus, and in the first city they visited there were not even enough Jews to form a Synagogue. Macedonia is the northern part of what we know as Greece. It was the home region of King Philip and his famous son Alexander the Great, both of whom would rule the Greek empire. The region was steeped in Hellenistic thought, national pride, and the spirituality shaped by the pantheon of Greek gods. This vision of a Macedonian man compelled Paul and his team (which now includes Luke, the author of Acts) to hop on a boat and make this trip to Macedonia making their way to Philippi (a city named after Alexander the Great's dad). This missionary band of brothers are the first believers to come to Europe. Lydia, a fashion designer of her day who is also a worshiper of God is the first convert to Christianity in Europe, and it lights a fire that would change all of Western Culture.

But we must not miss the central point in this week's story, a cry from a man from an unreached people asking someone to hear the missionary call to come and help them. Paul understood the grand story. Christianity was not to be a regional religion with a neighborhood deity. Jesus Christ is Lord of heaven and earth and worthy of the praise of all nations. The joy and salvation of the nations is the goal and aim of the Gospel, resulting in a people from every tribe, every nation, every people who have found the fulfillment of their hopes and dreams in Jesus, trusting in Him and praising His name for all eternity. Yet, if someone doesn't go to Macedonia with the Gospel how will they know?

Around the globe there are close to 17,000 people groups, united by language, culture, spirituality, geography, and world view. When the Bible speaks of "the nations" it uses the word "ethne" which is a reference to people groups, and the promise from Matthew 24 is that Christ will return when the Gospel reaches all the ethne. While technology and the missionary movement is moving us closer to this Biblically mandated goal and pre-determined outcome, there are still a many as 7,000 people groups around the world that are unreached, with very few believers and virtually zero churches. In fact, close to half of the world's population will be born, live their lives, have families, work jobs, grow old, and then die without ever meeting a believer or hearing the name of Jesus. For the Gospel to penetrate these peoples someone has to go to them. Someone needs to hear a new Macedonian call to come here and help us.

The nations matter to God and they should matter to us! Not all of us will be like Paul, or Timothy from the story, going to the nations. Although, some of us might consider going at some point. Yet, all of us have a part on this task. We can pray for missionaries and for these nations, crying out to God to send harvesters into His harvest. We can be generous, giving through partnerships to mission organizations who are serious about this task. We can develop a discipleship culture in our church that has a sending culture, raising up people who hear this call and sending them out (like Nick & Lorraine Mosca). And we can go! Yes, we can go. In some cases, it might be a short term trip to work with missionaries who are boots on the ground. What if we chose to spend a vacation here and there in a foreign context. Or teens, what if you used the time right before or right after college to explore this call by going to work in an international context. Or what if some of us chose to use our retirement for the nations rather than playing golf and visiting the beach. Pray, give, send, partner, go! This is how we join the task here at Genesis.

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Micah 5	Micah 6	Micah 7	Nahum 1	Nahum 2	Nahum 3	Galatians 1

Reading from this past week: Acts 6:1-15

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: Acts 16:16-40

Family Worship

Song - *Christ our Hope in Life and Death*

<https://youtu.be/Oibli1rz7mw>

Gospel Project

Unit: The People Disobey

Story: Elijah served as a prophet

Big Picture Question: What is idolatry?

Answer: Idolatry is a sin of the heart in which we love and value something else above God.

Scripture: 1 Kings 16-18

New City Catechism

Question #37: How does the Holy Spirit help us?

Answer: The Holy Spirit convicts us of our sin, and he enables us to pray and to understand God's Word.

Verse: Ephesians 6:17-18

Scripture

Acts 16:1-15

- What happened in the vision Paul had? Why is this request by the Macedonian man made important for us to hear today?
- Did you get an unreached people card at church? If so, share your unreached people with your family. If not, visit the Joshua Project website to find people groups you can study and pray over.
- What happens to unreached people if someone does not go to them with the Gospel?
- What are some ways you and your family can be involved in reaching the unreached peoples of the world with the Gospel?

Prayer

*Pray that we would have a passion to take the Gospel to the nations.

*Pray for our Community Groups as they launch this week.