**Unstoppable - wk 27 – Unexpected Turns**

**Have you ever started out doing something and ended with something else? A project, trip, career? How do we know which path is the Lord?**

**Acts is Jesus: The Sequel. Luke Vol 2 – The “what now?”**

**Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”**

**Roughly 20yrs since Jesus. P&B have split up and Paul begins what is known as his second mission.**

**Silas Joins the Team**

**Acts 15:** **36 And after some days Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us return and visit the brothers in every city where we proclaimed the word of the Lord and see how they are.” (That was the plan - simple) 40 …Paul chose Silas and departed, having been commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord. 41 And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.**

**The purpose was to circle back, visit, and encourage the churches planted 5 yrs earlier. Easy peezy.**

**I’m fascinated w/ maps - Paul says - set the GPS, here we go!**

**Global Positioning System, get ready for God’s Positioning System**

**Timothy Joins the Team**

**(Map) Acts 16:1 Paul came to Derbe and then to Lystra, (Lystra is where he was mistaken for a god and nearly stoned to death) where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was Jewish and a believer but whose father was a Greek. 2 The believers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him.**

**Tim’s Mom became a Christian, Dad did not. He has a mixed family. Mixed church life. Maybe your family is like this.**

**Tim had a respected reputation with the believers.**

**\*\* When your name comes up, what do people say?**

**3 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.**

**Paul argued this was not necessary over and over – yet???**

**This was not for salvation. Galatians 2 (Titus) did it too.**

**1 Cor 9:19 Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. 20 To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), (holidays, customs food) so as to win those under the law. 21 To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God’s law but am under Christ’s law), so as to win those not having the law. 22 To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. 23 I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.**

**Hi, Tim would like to join the team? Sure - grab that towel / knife.**

**\*\* Following Jesus (the will of God) means pain (Tim circumcision)**

**The sacrifices we make for the sake of love for people and the Gospel. Things we do reach people for Christ.**

**Acts 16:4 As they traveled from town to town, they delivered the decisions reached by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for the people to obey. (Acts 15 – no need to be circumcised - live sexually pure lives and respect others food convictions) 5 So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers. (They experienced great success)**

**No mention of miracles or signs and wonders during this time.**

**(Map) 6 And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. (Asia Minor, Galatia. The entire plan was out the window. Okay let’s do this…) 7 And when they had come up to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them. (Again no) (Map) 8 So, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas.**

**Remember opposition is not necessarily a closed door.**

**This was not about opposition - we know that from previous trips. Opposition is not a closed door. It was something else – it is not explained. 400 mil of walking with only no’s from God**

**When Things Don’t Go As Planned**

**\*\* Sometimes God says not now**

**Acts 16:6 …having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia.**

**But it seems like a great work and opportunity. The HS said no - for now. Paul went there in the future. (Acts 19 – for 2 yrs)**

**\*\* Sometimes God says no**

**Acts 16:7 …they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them.**

**Closed doors are just as important as open doors - If we are truly following God, we should be okay with closed doors as with open doors - It is not always a yellow brick road.**

**\*\* Sometimes we just need to keep pushing through**

**Acts 16:8 So, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas.**

**No at many turns (easy to get discouraged) but Paul’s response - okay let’s go to the next. \*\* He knew what he was supposed to do (so do you) he just did not know where.**

**Pray “Your kingdom come Your will be done” - and keep moving**

**Bendable believers – flexible – it’s a major ingredient to ministry. Plans / agenda that are rigid – will cause you to break. Plan in pencil.**

**Paul did not intend to go to Troas – but it was the Lord’s plan. God guides us along the way, to just the right place.**

**Acts 16:9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing there, urging him and saying, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” 10 And when Paul had seen the vision, immediately we (Luke joins - it is now firsthand eyewitness accounts) sought to go on into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.**

**It was not super clear – Is God calling us to Europe? No specifics just a direction.**

**Detailed crystal-clear callings are an exception, not the norm.**

**God’s will is more a slow developing polaroid than 4k Digital.**

**\*\* When walking with God, expect a game plan, not a blueprint.**

**What was to be a simple checkup trip on the Galatia churches, became something completely different - a mission to a new continent.**

**“…concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.”**

**He was not going to just build a water well, latrine, plant trees, or feed them (those things can be important and needed) – but to preach the Gospel is the commission.**

**What does it profit if you gain the world and lose your soul (Mark 8:36)**

**\*\* The will of God is found on a road called obedience**

**Don’t ignore what you know. If you don’t know what he wants you to do tomorrow – simply do what you know he wants you to do today.**

**Luke Joins the Team**

**(Map) 11 So, setting sail from Troas, we made a direct voyage to Samothrace, and the following day to Neapolis, (across Aegean Sea, 156 miles 2 days) 12 and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. (Location of a major Roman victory 60 yrs earlier, popular place for Romans soldiers to retire. Military town) We remained in this city some days.**

**13 And on the Sabbath day we (Paul, Timothy, Luke, Silas) went outside the gate to the riverside, where we supposed there was a place of prayer, and we sat down and spoke to the women who had come together. (No synagogue – not a lot of Jews there. 10 men required – and no men were there on the sabbath)**

**14 One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. (Jewish but not Christian)**

**Mentions her work. Purple is a luxury item. 12,000 shellfish to make 2 grams of dye. Worn among the rich and affluent only. It was very expensive to make. She moved to Philippi to start a business. Considered a woman of status.**

**14b The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul. 15 And after she was baptized, and her household as well, (confession in Jesus)**

**1st person saved in Europe was a woman. Her hometown later has a Christian church (Rev 16) perhaps because of her influence.**

**Says she was a worshiper of God. She was religious, prayed, worshiped God – but was not saved.**

**Some of you believe in God and worship God, but you still need Jesus. You must believe Jesus Christ.**

**Lord opened her heart to pay attention… (v14) Not everyone there was open.**

**\*\*\*\*\* Unless the Lord works on the heart – people will not respond**

**John 6:44 …no one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him.**

**No amount of reason, sermon, miracle, circumstance, or trial – only the Spirit of God working in a heart. Good news for us - we give it and trust the HS to work.**

**(She became a follower of Jesus) Acts 16:15b…she urged us, saying, “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.” And she prevailed upon us. (She would not take no for an answer)**

**We soon find that Lydia has an amazing gift of hospitality. They end up staying at her house the entire time in Philippi.**

**Great picture of God’s provision in ministry.**

**That change in plans led to several important lifelong friendships.**

**God will often set you in a direction to get you to place where you will meet important relationships. For Paul… God’s Positioning System**

**1st - Silas – Paul chose Silas when Barnabas split up (serves beside)**

**2nd - Timothy – becomes a major co-worker of Paul, spiritual son, and early church leader, pastor and co-author of some the NT.**

**3rd - Dr. Luke joins the team - Because God redirected Paul to Troas, we have Luke (writing more NT than anyone) Gospel of Luke / Acts.**

**4th - Lydia become a patron – After her salvation, Lydia becomes a funding source for Paul's ministry - God knew what he was doing.**

**You never know when you might meet your Lydia**

**She was a single adult successful businesswoman. The primary patron supporter of the house church at Philippi - met in her house. She was a dynamic leader without a title.**

**Paul’s plans were modest and doable – But God sovereign plans were bigger than expected.**

**This section brings up an important question. (I want to end on this)**

**How to know God’s will: FOUR VOICES OF GOD**

**We see all four in this passage.**

**1. The Word of God (the Bible)**

**Paul is obeying the already establish words of Jesus – GO!**

**The Bible gives God’s point of view on everything. You get God’s character, commands, promises, and principles.**

**2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (That’s its purpose)**

**Knowing God’s will starts on the road called obedience.**

**Ordinary obedience to God’s word is the best place to walk – I’ll keep getting up and doing what I know I am supposed to do.**

**2. The Holy Spirit**

**The Holy Spirit was guiding and leading Paul in Acts 16**

**The Holy Spirit gives guidance and insight – we are to use the Bible as our discernment of God’s voice. (1 Cor 2:10-16)**

**The more you are in scripture the more you understand the Holy Spirit’s voice – More of the Word – more discernment.**

**\*\* BTW- The Holy Spirit still calls people to distant lands.**

**God speaks clearest through scripture / powerfully though the HS – but also, He speaks uniquely through…**

**3. The Unexpected**

**We have an example with Paul here in Acts 16 – his vision**

**Creation, nature, peace, pain, trials, circumstances – thru miracles, dreams, angels, visions, supernatural direction…**

**These are rare – but possible and always discern thru the bible**

**Unfortunately, most people seek signs and mysterious direction and neglect His established Word. BUT - God can and does still work in unexpected and miraculous ways.**

**4. The Wise**

**Acts 16:10 …concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.**

**Godly Counsel as a team – concluding God has called us**

**I thought I was going to be a teacher and then a rock star.**

**I thought I was going to be a youth pastor for life.**

**God’s direction brought me here today – to you – at this moment; lifelong friendships and ministry that is unexpected.**

**Is your life taking unexpected turns – do you need to know God’s will?**

**Maybe like Lydia you heart id open to the gospel today.**