

Paul's Second Missionary Journey
Message 9 in the series, "Faith under Fire"

"Paul went first to Derbe and then to Lystra, where there was a young disciple named Timothy. His mother was a Jewish believer, but his father was a Greek. Timothy was well thought of by the believers in Lystra and Iconium, so Paul wanted him to join them on their journey. In deference to the Jews of the area, he arranged for Timothy to be circumcised before they left, for everyone knew that his father was a Greek. Then they went from town to town, instructing the believers to follow the decisions made by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem. So the churches were strengthened in their faith and grew larger every day." Acts 16:1-5 (NLT)

A. Paul revisited the churches of Galatia because a dangerous idea had taken root — that salvation required faith in Christ plus the human effort of keeping the law and being circumcised.

"I am shocked that you are turning away so soon from God, who called you to himself through the loving mercy of Christ. You are following a different way that pretends to be the Good News but is not the Good News at all. You are being fooled by those who deliberately twist the truth concerning Christ. Let God's curse fall on anyone, including us or even an angel from heaven, who preaches a different kind of Good News than the one we preached to you." Galatians 1:6–8 (NLT)

"Oh, foolish Galatians! Who has cast an evil spell on you? For the meaning of Jesus Christ's death was made as clear to you as if you had seen a picture of his death on the cross. Let me ask you this one question: Did you receive the Holy Spirit by obeying the law of Moses? Of course not! You received the Spirit because you believed the message you heard about Christ. How foolish can you be? After starting your new lives in the Spirit, why are you now trying to become perfect by your own human effort? Have you experienced so much for nothing? Surely it was not in vain, was it?" Galatians 3:1–4 (NLT)

"Before you Gentiles knew God, you were slaves to so-called gods that do not even exist...why do you want to go back again and become slaves once more to the weak and useless spiritual principles of this world? You are trying to earn favor with God by observing certain days or months or seasons or years. I fear for you. Perhaps all my hard work with you was for nothing. Dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to live as I do in freedom from these things, for I have become like you Gentiles—free from those laws." Galatians 4:8–12 (NLT)

"Those false teachers are so eager to win your favor, but their intentions are not good." Galatians 4:17 (NLT)

"Watch out for those dogs, those people who do evil, those mutilators who say you must be circumcised to be saved." Philippians 3:2 (NLT)

B. Paul had Timothy circumcised not to make him more acceptable to God but to make him more effective in his mission.

Note: Timothy's mother was Jewish and his father Greek. Because his background was well known, Paul had him circumcised to remove any barrier to reaching the Jews for Christ!

"Even though I am a free man with no master, I have become a slave to all people to bring many to Christ. When I was with the Jews, I lived like a Jew to bring the Jews to Christ. When I was with those who follow the Jewish law, I too lived under that law. Even though I am not subject to the law, I did this so I could bring to Christ those who are under the law. When I am with the Gentiles who do not follow the Jewish law, I too live apart from that law so I can bring them to Christ... Yes, I try to find common ground with everyone, doing everything I can to save some. I do everything to spread the Good News and share in its blessings." 1 Corinthians 9:19–23 (NLT)

"Next Paul and Silas traveled through the area of Phrygia and Galatia, because the Holy Spirit had prevented them from preaching the word in the province of Asia at that time. Then coming to the borders of Mysia, they headed north for the province of Bithynia, but again the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them to go there. So instead, they went on through Mysia to the seaport of Troas. That night Paul had a vision: A man from Macedonia in northern Greece was standing there, pleading with him, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us!' So we decided to leave for Macedonia at once, having concluded that God was calling us to preach the Good News there. We boarded a boat at Troas and sailed straight across to the island of Samothrace, and the next day we landed at Neapolis. From there we reached Philippi, a major city of that district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. And we stayed there several days."

Acts 16:6-12 (NLT)

C. Being led by the Spirit is more important than following our own wants or plans.

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take." Proverbs 3:5-6 (NLT)

"Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives."

Galatians 5:25 (NLT)

D. God spoke to Paul through visions, through the Spirit, through closed doors, and through circumstances. He can speak and lead you in many ways.

1. Dreams and visions

"For God speaks again and again, though people do not recognize it. He speaks in dreams, in visions of the night, when deep sleep falls on people as they lie in their beds."

Job 33:14-15 (NLT)

2. His creation

"The heavens proclaim the glory of God. The skies display his craftsmanship. Day after day they continue to speak; night after night they make him known. They speak without a sound or word; their voice is never heard. Yet their message has gone throughout the earth, and their words to all the world." Psalm 19:1-4 (NLT)

3. Prophetic words from other believers

"But the one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouraging and comfort." 1 Corinthians 14:3 (NLT)

"Do not scoff at prophecies, but test everything that is said. Hold on to what is good."

1 Thessalonians 5:20-21 (NLT)

4. God whispers

"Your own ears will hear him. Right behind you a voice will say, 'This is the way you should go,' whether to the right or to the left." Isaiah 30:21 (NLT)

5. Peace

"Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus."

Philippians 4:6-7 (NLT)

"For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." Romans 14:17 (NKJV)

6. The Word

"All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work." 2 Timothy 3:16–17 (NLT)

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