

## **“FINDING A HELPER FOR THE LORD’S WORK”**

**Acts 16:1-5**

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### INTRODUCTION

The Jerusalem Council’s decision to encourage Gentile liberty from Judaism and a requirement for males to be circumcised in order to share the benefits of salvation had brought great joy to believers in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia. Paul and Silas were the happy emissaries of this news there, and now they continued to carry the news to additional churches that were somewhat “daughter” churches of Antioch because they were planted by the Antioch missionaries—the churches of Galatia. The schism between Paul and Barnabas was not all bad; now two missionary teams carried forth the message in two directions—Barnabas and John Mark in Cyprus, and Paul and Silas in Galatia and beyond.

At least three things were accomplished by Paul’s return to the four cities of Derbe, Lystra, Iconium and Antioch:

- 1) Congregations were informed about the decisions of the Jerusalem Council.
- 2) Believers were strengthened and encouraged.
- 3) Timothy was added to the ministry team to replace Mark (as Silas had replaced Barnabas).

Rackham points out two things we learn of Paul from this passage:

- 1) Paul was no strident opponent of circumcision per se; when the “law of charity” required circumcision in order to avoid unnecessary offense, he was more than willing to oblige.
- 2) Paul was loyal to the Council—even if he may have thought the decision went a little too far. It is possible that the problems in Syria over circumcision were already beginning to affect the Galatian churches.

God wants His churches to prosper spiritually and grow numerically. However, His plan also includes using key workers in order to accomplish His purposes. In this brief passage we see how the Lord led Paul to find a good helper for the Lord’s work.

### **MAYBE YOU ARE ONE OF THOSE “GOOD HELPERS” THAT THE LORD PLANS TO USE FOR HIS WORK.**

- I. PAUL FOUND A GOOD \_\_\_\_\_ IN TIMOTHY (vv. 1-3)
  - A. Timothy was a “disciple” (v. 1).
  - B. Timothy had a good upbringing—his mother and grandmother
    - Mother Eunice & Grandmother Lois trained him in the Scriptures (II Tim. 1:5; II Tim. 3:15)
    - His father was a Greek—an unbeliever.
    - He was from the city of Lystra—the common term in “Derbe and Lystra” and “Lystra and Iconium”; also compare II Tim. 3:11.

- C. Timothy had a \_\_\_\_\_ in his church at Lystra and in the neighboring church at Iconium (2). Robertson also aptly notes: **It is a wise precaution that the approval of the local church is necessary for the licensing and the ordaining of a preacher. If God has called a man for the work signs of it will be manifest to others.**
- Evidently Timothy had been engaged in good work in his local church.
  - His work evidenced his \_\_\_\_\_ into ministry and his \_\_\_\_\_ for it.
- D. Timothy, under Paul’s leadership, was willing to make a difficult and inconvenient decision in order to help promote the cause of Christ—v. 3.
- Paul desired him to go with him in place of Mark.
  - Paul knew that his status as not fully Jewish would be a stumbling block with the Jews in their region and beyond who knew that Timothy’s father was a Greek.
  - Paul took Timothy and circumcised him. This was **not a compromise of the decision in Acts 15**; Titus was a Gentile, not Timothy.

*Serving the Lord is not easy—it has its challenges.*

*But if you have a willing heart, are ready to serve Him faithfully as He gives you opportunity, build a good reputation with God’s people, He will give you greater opportunities to accomplish significant work in His service.*

- II. PAUL, SILAS, (AND TIMOTHY) \_\_\_\_\_ THE CHURCHES IN THAT REGION (1, 4-5)
- A. They passed on the “decrees” decided upon by the apostles and elders of Jerusalem.
- Note that Paul kept a unity with the believers in the home church of Christianity.
  - Note that the believers in Galatia were intended to keep the decrees—in order to keep peace between Jewish and Gentile believers.
- B. They ministered to the Churches in Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch.
1. The churches were “ \_\_\_\_\_ ”
    - Cf. Acts 3:7, 16 of physical strengthening; for emphasis upon “strengthening”, see 15:32, 41—similar but different Greek word .
    - They were strengthened in “faith” or in “the faith” (For emphasis upon “faith” in this section, see 14:27; 15:9, 11)
  2. The Churches were \_\_\_\_\_ in number daily
    - This reminds us of the growth in the first church (4:4, 6:7)
    - This increase occurred daily.

## CONCLUSION

This paragraph concludes the section about the history beginning in 13:1. The summary in v. 5 is one of several in Acts—cf. 6:7; 9:31 for the previous ones. [I would add 12:24 at the end of the period of Peter’s ministry and persecution of Herod, and I would regard this note the fourth of 7 examples.]

**God’s work needs good helpers—will you be one of them?**

**God will grow His work—strengthening believers in faith, and strengthening the church in numbers.**