

## STUDY GUIDE FOR SMALL GROUPS

### The Journeys of Paul

Week 3: Week of February 9, 2020

Sermon Title: *Friends Along the Journey*

Text: Acts 16:1-5; 2 Timothy 1:1-10

#### **(For Facilitators mainly - optional for the group)**

Reminder from last week:

It is clear that the Aegean mission was at the heart of Paul's missionary work for Paul himself. Apart from Galatians and Romans, all the letters written by Paul were to churches he founded. Timothy is introduced as a disciple. Timothy's mother (Eunice II Tim. 1:5) had married a Greek. Such intermarriage was discouraged in most Jewish communities. The fact that Timothy had not been circumcised may also indicate that his mother had ceased to practice as a Jew. On the other hand, II Tim. 3:15 speaks of Timothy as having been taught the scriptures so it may be that it was Timothy's Greek father who refused to allow him to be circumcised. Paul circumcised Tim is regarded as inconsistent with Paul's opposition to circumcision elsewhere. But Luke explains it. Jewish identity was regarded as coming through the mother. Timothy was a Jew. As a Jew, Timothy's lack of circumcision would have been an affront to most Jews. Paul regarded the circumcised status as quite acceptable for Jews is confirmed by Gal 5:6; 6:15; and I Cor. 7:18, 9:20; it was the insistence that Gentile believers had to be circumcised to which he objected. Having Timothy circumcised was a means to open more doors and to prevent anything from blocking their true mission.

#### **2 Timothy Notes (adapted from William Barclay)**

Paul wrote this at the end of his life while in prison in Rome waiting for execution. Paul's object in writing is to inspire and strengthen Timothy for his task in Ephesus. Timothy was young and he had a hard task in battling against the heresies and the infections that were bound to threaten the Church. So, then, in order to keep his courage high and his effort strenuous, Paul reminds Timothy of certain things.

(i) He reminds him of his own confidence in him. There is no greater inspiration than to feel that someone believes in us.

(ii) He reminds him of his family tradition. A fine parentage is one of the greatest gifts a person can have. Paul sees himself as someone who is continuing the ongoing spiritual growth of Timothy and not someone who supersedes or is "over and above" his own family's input.

(iii) He reminds him of his setting apart to office and of the gift which was conferred upon him.

Once a person enters upon the service of any association with a tradition, anything that he does affects not only himself nor has it to be done only in his own strength. There is the strength of a

tradition to draw upon and the honor of a tradition to preserve. That is specially true of the Church. Whomever serves it is strengthened by the consciousness of the communion of all the saints.

(iv) He reminds him of the qualities which should characterize the Christian teacher. These, as Paul at that moment saw them, were four.

(a) There was courage. It was not craven fear but courage that Christian service should bring to a person. It always takes courage to be a Christian, and that courage comes from the continual consciousness of the presence of Christ.

(b) There was power. In the true Christian there is the power to cope, the power to shoulder the back-breaking task, the power to stand erect in face of the shattering situation, the power to retain faith in face of the soul-searing sorrow and the wounding disappointment. The Christian is characteristically the man who could pass the breaking-point and not break.

(c) There was love. In Timothy's case this was love for the congregation of the people of Christ over whom he was set. It is precisely that love which gives the Christian pastor their other qualities.

(d) There was self-discipline. It is Christ alone who can give us that self-mastery which will keep us alike from being swept away and from running away.

## Discussion Questions

### Opening Questions (optional – pick only the ones you want to choose).

- Who has had a significant impact on your spirituality and in what way did they influence you?
- In your mind, who has left a significant legacy (i.e. spiritual, political, sports, business, education)? Why are they important to remember? What about them do you admire?
- What influence can godly parents and grandparents have on a person?

### For reflection

1. Based on the text, describe Paul and Timothy's relationship? What can be assumed here?
2. Why was it important here for Paul to emphasize his apostleship sent by God?
3. What is Paul telling Timothy to do and why? What are the main points for Paul's writing to Timothy?
4. What can you assume about the pressures or the circumstances that Timothy is facing?
5. What characteristics of the Holy Spirit does Paul remind Timothy of? Why would that be important? Which characteristics mentioned do you most resonate with?
6. Describe a time when you have felt encouragement by another Christian. What did they do and how did they encourage you?
7. What are some pressures that you face that can rattle you and your faith in God?
8. Look at vs. 7 and how is the power of God is described?
9. Of what significance is the death and resurrection of Jesus to Paul? What foundations does he derive from it? And what foundations do we derive from it?
10. What can we learn from Paul's encouragement for our own faith?
11. How does this help us understand what a "disciple" is and what "making disciples" mean?
12. Have you ever been intentionally discipled in the faith? Why or why not?
13. Have you ever discipled someone else in the faith? If so, what was it like? If not, why not?
14. What do you think would help to take you deeper in your walk with Christ?
15. What is one or more gift the group may do to help you "fan into flame"?