

TIMOTHY JOINED PAUL

BIBLE STORY USING INTERLOCKING FACTS FOUND IN CROSS-REFERENCES

Timothy Joined Paul – Acts 16:1-5
(Cross-References – 2 Timothy 1:5; 3:15)

STRUCTURE

Key-persons: Paul and Timothy

Key-locations: Lystra and Troas

Key-repetitions:

- Generational faithfulness: Timothy's grandmother Eunice had a sincere faith (2 Tim 1:5); also his mother Lois had a sincere faith (2 Tim 1:5); Timothy was taught the Scriptures from the time he was an infant (2 Tim 3:15).
- Positive facts about Timothy: his grandmother and mother had faith in God (2 Tim 1:5); he had been taught the Scriptures (2 Tim 3:15); fellow believers praised him (Ac 16:2).

Key-attitudes:

- Enthusiasm of the churches of Syria and of Cilicia when Paul visited them.
- Respect for Timothy.

Initial-situation:

Acts, chapter thirteen, begins the history of the Holy Spirit using Barnabas, Saul (Paul) and their companions to take the Good News of Jesus to distant countries outside of Israel. The church in Antioch sent out the missionaries to the non-Jews. Barnabas was the leader when they left Antioch of Syria on the first missionary journey. During the journey, Saul began to use his Roman name of Paul, and he became the primary spokesperson. When Paul became the leader, John Mark left them. Each time they arrived in a new city, they began announcing the gospel in the Jewish synagogue. When opposition developed from the Jews, they went to evangelize the non-Jews.

Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch of Syria. Some Jewish Christians argued that non-Jews needed to be circumcised and obey all of the Mosaic Law in order to be saved. Paul, Barnabas, and others went to Jerusalem to discuss the subject with the apostles. The Church Council at Jerusalem determined that Christian non-Jews did not need to be circumcised nor required to obey the Law of Moses.

Paul and Barnabas had a disagreement over John Mark and separated from one another. Paul chose Silas to accompany him on his second missionary journey. Two things concerned Paul on his second missionary journey: to strengthen established churches in Galatia, and to evangelize people without the gospel living in more distant places.

Initial-problem:

Paul and Silas arrived in Lystra, the town where Paul had been stoned on his first missionary trip.

Final-situation:

The churches became stronger in the faith and grew daily in numbers.

BIBLE STORY

Paul and Silas started the second missionary journey by traveling through Syria and Cilicia. They visited and strengthened the churches planted during Paul and Barnabas's first missionary trip (Ac 15:40-41).

Paul and Silas came to Lystra, the town where Paul had been stoned on his first missionary trip. A disciple named Timothy lived in Lystra. Timothy's mother was a Jewish believer, but Timothy's father was a Greek (Ac 16:1). Both Timothy's mother Lois, and his grandmother Eunice had a sincere faith in God (2 Tim 1:5). Timothy had been taught the Holy Scriptures from the time he was an infant (2 Tim 3:15).

Believers in Lystra praised Timothy. Paul wanted Timothy to travel with him. Paul circumcised Timothy because all the Jews who lived in that area knew that Timothy's father was a Greek (Ac 16:2-3).

Paul, Silas, and Timothy traveled from town to town. They told believers about the decisions reached by the apostles and spiritual leaders in Jerusalem, and instructed the people to obey them. The churches became stronger in the faith and grew daily in numbers (Ac 16:4-5).

GENERIC DIALOGUE QUESTIONS

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| 1. What catches your attention in the story? | 5. How did the characters face their problems? |
| 2. Is there anything in the story that is hard to understand? | 6. How have you faced similar problems? |
| 3. Who are the main characters in the story? | 7. Is there someone in the story who is similar to you or who is different from you? |
| 4. What problems did the characters face? | 8. What does the story tell about God? |

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How did Timothy's family influence his faith?
2. How has your family heritage affected your faith?
3. What kind of reputation did Timothy have?
4. How can the church influence the Christian faith to continue from generation to generation?
5. In Acts 15:1, Paul rejected the teachings of the Judaizers that non-Jews must be circumcised to be saved. Why did Paul circumcise Timothy?
6. How does 2 Corinthians 9:19-23 explain Paul's decision to circumcise Timothy?
7. When do Christians today need to give up personal rights in order to better represent Christ to others?

LIFE-LESSONS

1. **An apparent failure may in reality produce a success.** On Paul's first missionary trip, the crowd in Lystra rejected Paul's message and stoned him, leaving him for dead (Ac 14:19). Paul returned to Lystra and discovered Timothy (Ac 16:1-3), who joined him and became one of Paul's most faithful disciples.
2. **Through faith in God and teaching the Bible, parents can influence their children to become godly.** Timothy had the benefit of having a godly mother and grandmother who taught him the Scripture (Ac 16:1; 2 Tim 1:5, 3:14-15). In 2 Timothy, Paul reminds us that even one parent or grandparent can have great influence on a family. The early study of the Scripture helped prepare young Timothy to become a believer in Jesus, Paul's co-worker, and a pastor. The whole church owes those two women an immense and unpayable debt of gratitude.
3. **Bible study teaches history, but it also creates history.** Influenced by the instructions of Eunice and Lois (2 Tim 3:15), Timothy took his place in the continuance of biblical history as Paul's co-worker (Ac 16:3-4). After all, the Bible not only records history; it also creates history.
4. **Christians should aim for generational faithfulness.** Generational faithfulness is a theme in 2 Timothy. Paul reminded Timothy of the faith that lived in his grandmother, his mother, and then in Timothy himself (2 Tim 1:5). This suggests that the witness and example of Timothy's grandmother and his mother were used by God to bring Timothy to faith. Paul also encouraged Timothy to continue in what he had learned from early childhood (2 Tim 3:14-15). Paul, a member of an older generation, became a model for Timothy to follow (2 Tim 1:8, 13; 3:10-11). Timothy received teaching from previous generations and Paul intended for Timothy to pass on what he had learned to succeeding generations.
5. **Christians should avoid unnecessary conflict.** Timothy had a Jewish mother; therefore, he was considered a Jew. Since he was not circumcised, he was living like a non-Jew. That was a scandal for the Jews. Timothy's circumcision (Ac 16:3) took place after the Church Council at Jerusalem gave its decision. Timothy's circumcision followed the principle of the Jerusalem Council to avoid unnecessary conflict between Jewish and non-Jewish believers (Ac 15:20-21). Timothy's circumcision would enable Jewish Christians to accept him as a brother. When Paul was with the Romans, he avoided using the title "king" when referring to Jesus. That title belonged to the Roman emperor. With the Romans, Paul used the titles "Christ" and "Lord" when referring to Jesus.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Twitter Prayers (short, concise prayers):

Invite listeners to pray about the story in “twitter” length prayers (*one or two sentence prayers*). Tell God:

- How they feel about the story.
- How they have experienced something like Paul in Lystra, where an apparent failure became a great blessing.
- Just as Timothy’s grandmother, his mother Lois, and Timothy were faithful Christians, pray for generational faithful Christians today.
- Decisions they need to make as a result of hearing the story.