

I like Church... that follows God's guidance and answers His call! Acts 16:6-15

Small Group & Personal Bible Study Lesson: Pastor Dennis Hadley



Daily Scripture Reading:

1. Acts 12
2. Acts 13
3. Acts 14
4. Acts 15
5. Acts 16:1-15

➤ What has God revealed to you from the book of Acts this week?

Prayer Request: Beginning with chapter 13, and throughout the remainder of Acts, we will see the events that begin the first missionary journeys of the church. As Paul and Barnabas are sent and later joined by others. Even today many are called but few are sent. Please take a moment this week to pray for God's missionaries to the world. Read and memorize Acts 13:47 this week. Paul and Barnabas said, "For this is what the Lord has commanded us: **'I have made you a light to the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.'**" These words are taken from the Word of God in Isaiah 49:6. Meditate on that entire verse as well and think about God's missionary message given to us through the Prophet Isaiah over 700 years before Christ.

Serve a Broken World

It is an illusion to think that nations would be better off if Christians just left them alone. That's not true in terms of this life, nor of the life to come. Paul's vision of the Macedonian man in Acts 16:9-10 was not one of someone seated comfortably, saying, "We're doing fine, but if you want to come here, feel free." This man was standing and begging Paul, "Help us!" When is the last time you heard a cry for help? Did it seem urgent? Read that same feeling into this passage. It's a way to recapture the emotions of the scene and to remind yourself that when the church functions as it should, it reaches out to the broken of the world.

Small Group Lesson:

Henry Blackaby in his study, "Experiencing God" helps us understand that we are to "watch to see where God is already working and join Him." He reminds us of truth found in Romans 3:10-11 and John 6:44. That truth is that no one seeks God on his own and no one comes to Jesus unless the Father draws him. Blackaby says, "if someone asks you spiritual questions, whatever else you have scheduled, cancel your plans. Go with that individual and look to see what God is doing in that person's life." If we understand this, then much like Paul we will look to God to direct our path as He guides and shows us how to reach the world where He is already at work around us.

Read Romans 3:10-11 and John 6:44

1. What does this help you understand about how we are to reach the world with the message of Jesus?

For me this has helped me understand that I can not go into hostile territory and argue someone into the Kingdom of God. It reminds me that it is not I who save but God. If God is at work then miracles happen but if someone is resistant I can't change that. I am still faithful to the gospel truth but I rely on God at work. It also reminds me that if someone is asking spiritual questions, no matter what they believe or know, God is at work and that is when He can do His powerful work to save.

Reflect on the message of Isaiah 49:6 then read Isaiah 58:6-11

2. List the things Isaiah instructs us to do.

We are to pray and fast and reach out to heal those who face injustice, are oppressed, hungry, homeless, naked, as well as those who are closest to us. We are to cry out to God for help.

3. Name someone or a group of people you know who are experiencing injustice or is hungry or without shelter and clothing and are in desperate need of God. How can you help meet the challenge of this passage?

Let people share and challenge them to pray and act.

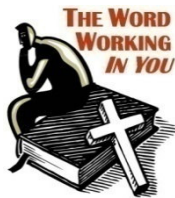
4. Often we think serving a broken world mainly benefits other people. What does this passage have to say about that notion? Can you think of a recent time when serving others had a positive outcome on you?

This verse promises that God will bring healing. He will be our guard so we should not be afraid to go to places we fear. He will answer our call and say here I am. Our light will rise in the darkness and we will shine for Him. He will guide us and satisfy our needs and we will be like a well watered garden. These are the blessings God bestows on His called people who go to serve the world (even in our backyard).

5. Has praying the Listening with Jesus Prayer helped you become more responsive to people's needs?

Let people answer and share what God is doing in their life.

Optional Lesson: Serving a Broken World by Dick Dill (Copies Available in Lobby)



Action Step #6: Care for All God's People

God likely has a call for you to touch the life so someone seeking Him. Look and listen and see where God is at work around you.

The church should be a place where the broken and needy people of the world are sought after and helped. This week, keep your eyes open for opportunities to reach out to those in need both locally and throughout the world.

If you desire to see your church serve the world around you, don't wait for others to take charge; you be the catalyst! Get a group of people together, such as members of your small group or a few friends, and organize an outreach activity. Call a local pregnancy center, homeless shelter, or community effort to see if they have volunteer opportunities. Collect items such as blankets, coats, canned goods, baby items, or clothing to donate to a local organization.

Ask one of our pastors if there are outreach ministries you can take part in. Consider helping a child through Operation Christmas child this year or adopt a family through our upcoming ministry to needy families this Christmas season. *(Family names will be available the first week of December)*

Action Step Follow-up

- I am praying about an opportunity to serve the world around me.
- I have discovered a need in the world around me and have chosen a way to respond to it.
- I am getting to know the person I selected better.
- I am listing one good thing every week about my church sharing it with someone
- I am asking the Holy Spirit to help me identify pollution in my life
- I am prepared to meet with My King in worship this week
- I am praying the looking & listening with Jesus Prayer

Reflection: How will serving the world in need satisfy your soul?