

Hearing God's Will, Voice & Direction

I. Announce:

- A. Slide 1-7 Lar/AL: Kids. R&R. Moms. Com Groups. Men's Video. Men's Promo.
- B. Slide 8 Blood Drive Sat 9/12. 3-8pm in our Gym. Blood is needed daily to assist patients in local hospitals. Your donation could be used for cancer treatments, surgeries, organ transplants, newborns, severe burns and trauma. Every time you donate, you are saving lives.
1. If you've tested positive from Covid & haven't had symptoms for over 4 weeks, it would be great to donate they could use your antibodies.
 2. There's a great need right now since high schools & larger venues can't do blood drives right now. Sign up on our web site.
- C. Slide 9 A Rush of Hope: Greg Laurie is doing a *cinematic crusade* on Labor Day weekend. They'll be streaming a digital event that'll answer *life's biggest questions*.
1. You can watch this event on your *phone, computer, TV, and even host a watch party with your friends and family*. With special music from: For King & Country, MercyMe, and Jeremy Camp. Tune in September 4-7 on Facebook or harvest.org to be a part of "*A Rush of Hope*."
- D. Slide 10 Sun AM Service: Hey if you're watching online, we're starting our Sun morn service tomorrow 8/30...8am.
- E. Slide 11 Prayer: as Paul prayed...that we'd have *the power to understand how wide, how long, how high, how deep*, God Your love is.

II. Intro:

- A. Note honest Luke, while writing this book: *doesn't* try to whitewash the early church's problems. *Not when relationships broke up, nor when something sounded contradictory, nor even when* the apostles missed hearing God's will/voice/direction
- B. Do you desire to Hear God's Will, His Voice & His Direction for your life...me too!

1. Let's learn about it hear. (read 1st section)

III. Slide12a TORN RELATIONSHIPS (15:36-41)

A. The 1st missionary agency ever known, *suffered a mission split*.

B. A sharp disagreement - where we get our English word *paroxysm*, *a state of intense, emotional turmoil, especially expressed in words*. [msg tempers flared]

1. I think we become **most angry** when we know we're in the right. But what if they **both** were right? What if Paul looked back (concerned he'll desert again?) And maybe Barnabas talked to his cousin & felt *he grew up & learned from past?*

C. Slide12b These were not *essentials* but *non-essential* differences. They were not **doctrinal** but **personal** on how best to do ministry.

D. Another example of *blood being thicker than water*. (Barnabas & Mark = cousins)

1. The 2 apostles never work together again (P & B)...but w/no animosity, as Barnabas is mentioned in Paul's epistles (Cor, Gal, Col).

E. Slide12c F.F. Bruce sums up this situation, *The present disagreement was overruled for good: instead of one missionary & pastoral expedition, there were two*.

1. I can't think of any of our **personal missionaries** who haven't run into this very problem **at least once** in their ministry.

F. Do you think these splits **help** or **hurt** the church's missionary effort? (both)

1. **Can** sometimes stumble others. **Can** be worked together for good: *It led to calling Silas forth. Finding Timothy. Revealing to Mark his weakness & bringing a change about in him.*

G. **Good news**: Later Paul writes to the Colossian church & says, *Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, with **Mark** the cousin of Barnabas (about whom you received instructions: if he comes to you, welcome him)* Col.4:10

1. And in 2nd Timothy Paul asks Timothy **to bring Mark with him**.

H. Paul Rebuilds His Mission Team (40,41)

- I. Hello **Silas** (aka *Silvanus*) – They head north from Antioch by foot, & visited the churches of **Syria & Cilicia** along the way.
- J. Why might **Silas** be a better partner for Paul at this stage of his career, **than Barnabas**? One commentator said, *because Silas didn't have a cousin Mark whom he insisted on bringing along :)* [**Silas** was a Roman Citizen/will help later]
- K. **Slide12d** It simply shows once again what the gospel message itself demonstrates: *that God can take the greatest human folly & sin **and** bring great good from it.*
1. *Out of 1 pair, 2 were made.* Bengel [not an excuse for Christian Quarreling]

IV. **Slide13a TAKING TIMOTHY (16:1-5)** [read]

- A. Possible Paul led Tim to faith on 1st trip through. (many times refers to him as *my son*)
- B. **Timothy** is the only one in the NT to whom is given the old prophetic title *Man of God*. (1 Tim.6:11)
- C. **Circumcising Timothy**... **Why?** - after *Paul was **fulminating** against circumcision* (**Fulminate** = lit. *struck by lightning*. to express strong protest)
1. **Slide13b Not** because it would have been necessary for his salvation (saved 2 yrs). Reason was not theological but *missiological*.
 2. Paul would **flex** in whatever way was necessary to *avoid offending* the Jews.
- D. **Yes to circumcision** in **Timothy's** case...but not **Titus** (Gal.2:3-5) **Why?**
1. **Timothy's AncestryDNA** came back ½ Jew, so Paul had him circumcised *to reach Jews for Christ*.
 2. **Titus' came back**, Gentile, so he wasn't circumcised because those insisting on it for **non-Jews** were *believers* who should have known better.
 3. **Slide13c Salvation** is an issue of *Christian truth*. **Fellowship** is an issue of *Christian Love*. [Luther, Paul was *strong* in truth, & *soft* in love]

4. **A double victory for the Jer Council:** *victory of truth* in confessing the gospel of grace. *Victory of love* and preserving the fellowship of the church.

E. *Become all things to all men to win some, but never* to appease legalistic believers.

V. Slide14a **GO WEST YOUNG MAN (16:6-10)** [read]

A. *Hearing God's will, His voice & His direction.*

B. Paul went through one of those experiences of *missing* what God was trying to say to him...not just once, but twice. [Strike 1 & 2] **Double Prohibition.**

1. **Story** - A bishop of a century ago pronounced from his pulpit and in the periodical he edited that heavier-than-air flight was both impossible and contrary to the will of God. Oh, the irony that **Bishop Wright** had 2 sons, **Orville and Wilbur.** [See, Wright was wrong. *Sure of himself, but wrong!*]

C. I am an advocate of **hearing** from God & **acting** on what we hear, **but** I also recognize that this procedure is **misused** & can become *presumption* rather than **providence.**

1. It is always better to say, "*we sense that this is the direction God wants us to go.*" **Then** if we miss it, we simply have to humble ourselves & admit that we happened to **sense** God's leading inaccurately.
2. **I think the key here is** that Paul heard *he wasn't going the right way.*
 - a) **Let's give him credit for that!** (How many times have you & I **kept on** right toward the proverbial cliff?)

D. Slide14b **Understand**, sometimes our well-laid human plans are sometimes changed by **the Holy Spirit** & **other times** they can be *equally obstructed* by the devil.

1. 1 Thes.2:18 *Therefore we wanted to come to you - even I, Paul, time and again - but **Satan hindered us.*** [here in Acts, **God** hindered them]

2. So the importance of a *daily intimate relationship* with our **Father** in prayer. **And** being filled with **the HS** continually. **So we will** be able to discern to **go back** by God's guidance **or to courageously push on** through the obstacles the enemy puts in our way.
3. Paul took steps. God closed doors. Paul waited. **And then** God showed him the way. **How?**
 - a) **Slide14c** The Holy Spirit gives *double guidance*: he prohibits & restrains **and** he grants permission & constraints. He will tell us *don't go* & other times *come*
 - (1) **David Livingstone** tried to go to China, **but** God sent him to Africa instead. Before him, **William Carey** planned to go to Polynesia in the South Seas, **but** God guided him to India. **Adoniram Judson** went to India first, **but** was driven on to Burma.
 - b) **We too in our day**, need to trust **the Holy Spirit** for **guidance** **and also rejoice** **equally** in his **restraints** **and constraints** (restrictions).

E. **Slide15** God's guidance is...

1. **Not only negative** **but also positive** (some doors close, others open).
2. **Not only circumstantial**, **but also rational** (vs.10 *concluding*, thinking about the situation).
3. **Not only personal**, **but also corporate** (a sharing of the data with others, **so that** we can mull over them together and reach a common mind).

F. To **know** the will of God is the greatest knowledge.

To **do** the will of God is the greatest achievement.

G. **Hey wait a minute, doesn't God care about Asia & Bithynia? I thought He *so loved the world?*** See 1 Pet.1:2

1. **Not** South to **Asia** (Southern Turkey), **nor** North to **Bithynia** (Northern Turkey)
2. **Yet later Paul** did go to Asia (Acts 19:22). **And Peter** writes an epistle to the Bithynians (1st Pet.)