

Acts of the Apostles

34 – The Church vs. Our Humanity

Acts 15.36-16.5

Why Mark bailed: (Acts 15.36-38)

1. He didn't have the fortitude
2. He didn't have the maturity to handle the calling
3. He didn't like Paul taking preeminence over cousin Barnabas
4. He didn't lean in but stepped back when it got crazy

Lesson: you never know what consequences your actions will have (so be obedient and trust God with the outcome)

Why Paul and Barnabas split: (Acts 15.39-41)

- Personnel differences
 - Barnabas inclined toward second chances – Paul less inclined
- Personality differences
 - Barnabas the encourager – Paul the hard-charger
 - Human traits – nothing inherently wrong in their personalities, wiring, and effects of pasts
- Spiritual division
 - Two people unwilling to compromise on what they believed was right and best
 - After this major point of unity and clarity in the church, the two people at the center went different ways

Lesson: when there's no sin to confront, commit it to God and trust Him

- “God, here's what has happened. We're not smart enough to know what to do. We see and sense no sin, so we commit this to you and ask (in weakness of understanding and hurt of soul) that you do what's best here.”
- What ended up happening? TWO missionary teams instead of one

How Timothy got ready: (Acts 16.1-5)

- He was trained in the Scriptures (2 Tim. 3.14-15)
- He had faith-filled models (2 Tim. 1.5)
- He lived a godly life (Acts 16.2)

Lesson: sometimes the mission of the Gospel requires our sacrifice at a new level

- Our humanity fights against it – protesting that comfort and control are our rights

- But we follow the One who gave up comfort and control and called us to do the same, sacrificing Himself for the sake of the mission of the Gospel

Question for us: what will it take for us to be ready?

- What step do you need to take now to say yes when the call comes?
- Passport? Body in shape? Finances okay? Relationships solid?

Questions for Discussion

1. What do you think is the hardest thing God ever asked you to do? What did it require of you? What was the result? What (if anything) did it do in you?
2. What is an example from your life of the truth of the statement: "You never know what consequences your actions will have?" It can be for good or not-so-good, having done it yourself or you reaped the consequences of someone else's actions.
3. Paul and Barnabas parted ways because they both thought they were right and were unwilling to compromise. The church "commended them to the grace of God" (Acts 15.39-41) because there didn't seem to be sin. How can you personally handle yourself in these situations? Read Colossians 3.8-14. What would be most difficult from that list to apply if you were in a situation like Paul and Barnabas?
4. Timothy was prepared by having spent time in the Bible and having godly examples to follow. Reread 2 Timothy 3.14-17 and 2 Timothy 1.5. How would you gauge your level of readiness for whatever God next asks of you in light of those two paths? What needs to change to help you get ready?
5. For Timothy to say yes to the call of God, it required circumcision. Where is God calling you to sacrifice right now? What is one practical step you need to identify and say out loud in order to make this sacrifice a reality?