

The Adventure of Kingdom Advance

Acts 16:1-40

Helen Keller, who was blind, deaf, and mute, said, "Life is either an adventure or it is nothing." Acts 16 describes Paul's adventure with God. We only advance God's kingdom when we step out of our comfort zones and embrace the adventure He has planned.

1. The Adventure of Strategic Apprenticeship (Acts 16:1-5)

- "Paul wanted to have him go on with him" (v.3) - Paul recognized potential and took the initiative.
- "He took him and circumcised him" (v.3) - This wasn't about salvation (see Acts 15) but about strategy. Paul was willing to remove unnecessary barriers to ministry effectiveness.
- "Because of the Jews who were in that region" (v.3) – Paul's conviction was to become "all things to all men" (1 Corinthians 9:22). Not changing the gospel message but being sensitive culturally.

2. The Adventure of a Specific Assignment (Acts 16:6-10)

- "Forbidden by the Holy Spirit" (v.6) - The Holy Spirit says "no" even to good things because He wants to say "yes" to the right thing. A church, family, or individual can't do everything. We need God-things, not just good things.
- "Come over to Macedonia and help us" (v.9) - This was Paul's "Macedonian call" - a clear directive from God. Have you asked the Lord what your specific assignment is? Where is it? Who is it?
- "Immediately we sought to go" (v.10) - Obedience should be immediate when God speaks clearly. Notice the shift to "we" - Luke joined the team. God orchestrates divine connections for His purposes.
- See Ecclesiastes 9:10-11 (especially the New Living Translation) – With the eyes of faith, watch for opportunities and timing! Don't miss your opportunities.

3. The Adventure of **Sovereign Adversity** (Acts 16:16-34)

"A calm sea does not produce a skilled sailor."

- Adversity might put us right where God wants us. See also **Philippians 1:12-14**
- **"What must I do to be saved?" (v.30)** - The prison guard had heard them singing at midnight, witnessed the earthquake, and seen their character. Our response to adversity can become a great testimony.

4. The Adventure of **Spiritual Accomplishments** (Acts 16:35-40)

- Paul didn't leave quietly. He demanded his rights as a Roman citizen, not for personal revenge but to protect future believers. Sometimes standing up for yourself protects others.
- **"Entered the house of Lydia" (v.40)** - Lydia's home became the meeting place for the new church. Her business success gave her a larger house that could accommodate the growing congregation.
- **"When they had seen the brethren" (v.40)** - A church had been born! From a businesswoman by a river, a delivered slave girl, and a converted jailer came a thriving congregation. God builds His church through unlikely people.
- **"They encouraged them and departed" (v.40)** - Paul's goal wasn't to create dependency but to establish self-sustaining churches. True spiritual accomplishment multiplies beyond our presence.

Applications For Today:

1. **Kingdom advance comes through risk** - Hudson Taylor once said, "Nothing significant is accomplished without risk because it's only when you risk that you walk by faith."
2. **Listen for God's specific assignment** – **James 4:13-15** reminds us to say, **"If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that."** (See also **Proverbs 16:9**) Have you asked God where He wants you to serve?
3. **Expect adversity in God's will** – **1 Corinthians 16:9** says, **"A great and effective door has opened to me, and there are many adversaries."** Adversity and God's blessing may go together.
4. **Focus on spiritual accomplishments** – Buildings, programs, and methods are tools, not goals. The goal is always souls - expanding the family of God through the gospel.

Conclusion: There is no progress without risk (therein lies the adventure)! Remember, even the turtle only makes progress when he sticks his neck out! Satan wants us to stay cautious, comfortable and complacent which will only make us more callous to what He wants us to do and the needs of humanity who are lost without God. So, **who is on the other side of your obedience?** – Someone's eternal destiny may depend on your willingness to say "yes" to God's adventurous assignment, even when it requires sacrifice and risk.