

# Courage to respond to the Holy Spirit

## Acts 15:36 - 16:10

A second missionary journey Acts 15:36 – 21:16

- A sharp disagreement
- A decision to separate
- A bad situation the Holy Spirit uses
- Barnabas and John Mark to Cyprus, Paul and Silas to Syria etc.
- Barnabas – an encourager – willing to step back having mentored Saul.
- John Mark – a man willing to learn becomes increasingly useful. Past experiences should not limit future effectiveness.

The Holy Spirit and wisdom

- Timothy – A mixed race background
- Circumcision – ‘Others may, you cannot’. Ajith Fernando
- The Council decision is shared among the gentile churches.

The Holy Spirit – guiding by closing doors.

- 16:6 ‘having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia.
- 400 miles walking with only no’s from the Spirit!

The Holy Spirit – guiding through a vision.

- 16:9 ‘The vision of a man from Macedonia’
- A choice is made. They leave for Macedonia
- The gospel crosses to the West. Closer to the centre of the known world.

## Digging Deeper

1. What led to Paul and Barnabas splitting up?
2. In what ways is it helpful for us to read an account of a sharp disagreement between these two church leaders?
3. Have you ever tried to push a stationary car? Why is it so hard to get moving? In what ways can we as a church be hard to move and what can we do to make this easier? Read Hebrews 13:17 how can we each make leadership a joy not a burden?
4. How aware are we of the Holy Spirit's leading in our day to day activities? How do we develop listening skill so we hear from God and one another?
5. How responsive and submissive are we to the Holy Spirit? In what ways does this affect our outworking of mission?
6. In Galatia, Paul circumcised Timothy. How can he do this without being accused of inconsistency in his attitude to Jewish law.
7. What experiences can you share of seeking guidance from leaders and talking with them about big decisions in your life? What is the risk of only talking with those who are close friends?