

ALLOWING GOD TO CHOOSE

Acts 16:1-10

INTRODUCTION:

- A. How many times in your life have you realized your first choices life? (Examples: picking a college after graduation, a vocation, a place to live.) Sometimes we have to settle for second or even third or fourth choice. Paul wanted Bithynia, but got Troas.
- B. Discuss Paul's first choice: (see map)
 - 1. To go to Bithynia (to preach). (Coastal mountainous area, well - watered and with a fertile plain sloping toward the Black Sea.)
 - 2. Troas had nothing quite so romantic or attractive.
 - 3. Yet Troas was God's choice for Paul and turned out to be the right thing to do (Text: vss 6-8).
 - 4. Later significance: was the first step in taking the word into Europe (Text: vss 9-12).
- C. There will always be more second choices realized in life than first choices. It is very important for each of us to know how to deal with them. Here are a few suggestions.
- D. To allow God to choose our course in life we must:

DISCUSSION:

I. HAVE A FULL FAITH IN GOD Heb 10:22.

- A. Full conviction is a strength to continue on.
 - 1. Abraham Rom 4:19-20
 - 2. Job Job 13:15
- B. Deep faith accepts what happens to us in life as God's choice for us Rom 8:28; Psa 16:8.
- C. Paul's experience in prison: "I know this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ" Phil 1:19. Illus: Sir Walter Scott, great English novelist, first wanted to be a poet, but Lord Byron's fame dimmed his hopes so much he turned to writing novels. His fame is a matter of record. He wanted one thing but attained something different

II. HAVE A DEEP COMMITMENT TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT

- A. Paul again: 2Tim 1:11-12.
- B. The courage of an Esther: Esth 4:16.
- C. A commitment to do right is a strong ally when tempted to go astray.
 - 1. Why some leave the church Eph 4:14; Lk 8;13.
 - 2. Deep roots required to weather heavy winds.

III. HAVE GREAT CONCERN FOR PEOPLE

- A. We live in a self-centered world.
 - 1. Few think of "What can I do" -- More of "what I can get" from any adventure in life.

- 2. Divine principles: "Greatest commandment" Matt 19:18-19; based on Lev 19:34
- 3. Look on things of others ... Phil 2:4.
- 4. Such a disposition generates strength for any task. (A mother who is completely exhausted, when her child is sick and cries out in pain, finds a deeper source of strength to care for the child.)
- B. Paul's desire to go to Bithynia rather than Troas turned out best for others.
 - 1. Paul hadn't considered Troas. (God's choice: 2Cor 2:12 - "an open door.")
 - 2. A congregation of Christ started Acts 20:7
 - 3. Result: Some saved who would never have heard gospel.
 - 4. A place where Paul did much work 2Tim 4:13 (Left some of his work tools there.)

IV. PRAY WITHOUT CEASING 1Thess 5:17; Lk 18:1

- A. Prayer is an integral part of our life as a Christian
- B. Prayer is a very powerful weapon
 - 1. Avails much Jas 5:16
 - 2. Note Elijah's example Jas 5:17,18
 - 3. Pray for one another 1Thess 5:25
- C. Jesus prayed much Matt 14:23; Lk 9:28-30; Matt 26:36
- D. Jesus Taught his disciples to pray Matt 6:9
- E. Pray for Wisdom to make the right choices Jas 1:5,6
 - 1. This wisdom we seek comes from God's word 1Cor 2:1-12
 - 2. To obtain this wisdom we must learn God's word 1Tim 4:13-15

CONCLUSION:

- A. There are many times when we must take second choice
- B. But there is one place where only our first choice is possible -- salvation from sin, membership in the church.
- C. Any other choice is fatal. Second choice (and there are only two choices) at the end of life is a choice that results in eternal loss and ruin.
- D. You can have one first choice which no one can take from you.
- E. Come today and accept it in obedience to Christ Jesus.