

PARTICIPANT GUIDE
PAUL – SESSION 3 (Called to Suffer)

Remember that you may attend any group at any time:

Mon @ 3 pm – Sandy Stein; Thurs @ noon – Jeff Vamos; Thurs @ 7:30 pm – Sandra Dennis

Opening Prayer: Gracious God, we have been promised that where two or three are gathered together, there your Spirit will be also. Through that same Spirit, speak to us today, both through your Word in Scripture and through our interactions together. For we ask it in the name of Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

Last session summary: The second session video focused on Paul's first missionary journey. He made these trips to various cities in the Gentile (non-Jewish) territories over a 15-20 year period. Last week's video took us from Cyprus, to Perga (Turkey), then to Pisidian Antioch (different Antioch from Paul's birthplace), then on to Iconium, Lystra and Derbe. In each town, Paul preached in the local synagogue with mixed results. In Pisidian Antioch, reaction was so negative that he and Barnabas got run out of town.

Intro

In today's video, Adam Hamilton will talk about Paul's second missionary journey. For this journey, Paul partnered with Silas, and together they took the gospel to Philippi, where they met Lydia, whom they baptized along with her household. They also drove evil spirits from a slave girl, and were thrown into prison. An earthquake freed them, but not before converting their jailer and his household before leaving Philippi.

View video (12:38) – you may do this ahead of time

Questions for the group

1. The book of Acts, chapter 16, is the backdrop for this video. In chapter 15 of Acts, we learn that Paul and Barnabas had a falling out – so much so, that Barnabas partners up with Mark and goes his own way. Paul then partners with Silas in order to embark on his second missionary journey. What do you make of this parting of the ways between two devout men of faith? How can Christians manage conflict in ways that honor Christ? If you have seen conflict managed in a good way, how did that happen?
2. The first convert in Europe was a woman, Lydia. Here is her story (Acts 16:13-15):

On the sabbath day we went outside the gate by the river, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down and spoke to the women who had gathered there.

¹⁴A certain woman named Lydia, a worshiper of God, was listening to us; she was from the city of Thyatira and a dealer in purple cloth. The Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul. ¹⁵When she and her household were baptized, she

urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come and stay at my home." And she prevailed upon us.

Some Christians view Paul as a misogynist; others view him as treating women with respect. What do you make of the fact that the first convert in this region was a woman? She was wealthy (purple dye was costly) and had her own home. What things did she do to make it clear that her conversion was authentic? What can we learn from her example?

3. Adam Hamilton remembers his own baptism by immersing himself in the same waters in which Lydia was baptized. Do you remember your own baptism? If so, what stands out? What are ways that a person might adopt to remember his/her/their own baptism – meaning to remember to whom (God in Christ) we belong?
4. Next, we hear the story of the slave girl: *...we met a slave-girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners a great deal of money by fortune-telling. While she followed Paul and us, she would cry out, "These men are slaves of the Most High God, who proclaim to you a way of salvation."* Why might that have been objectionable to Paul and Silas? When they cast out the girl's "spirit of divination," she lost her ability to be a fortune-teller. Adam Hamilton comments, "Often an encounter with the power of Christ will come at some economic cost." Can you think of a modern example of this? What happened as a result?
5. Paul and Silas were severely beaten in the public square, then put in prison. How did they respond to this kind of suffering? What do you make of the fact that Paul does not claim the rights of his Roman citizenship before the public beating? Do you agree with Adam Hamilton that our faith changes how we face and endure suffering? If so, how?

Closing prayer: Holy God, you call each of us by name and ask us to follow you. Help us to see the ways that we can answer your call. Enable us to find ways to encourage each other as we seek to follow Christ. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.