



THE LIFE OF
PAUL

FAMILY DEVOS

Closed Doors

Scripture: Acts 16:6-15

Memory Verse: Isaiah 55:9

“For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.”

For My Family:

Have you ever had one of those days when it feels like nothing was going your way? Maybe you were even trying to do something nice for someone, but it just didn't work out. How did you feel? Were you frustrated? Confused? Angry? Perhaps Paul felt this way in today's story. If you remember from last time, Paul had just been in a fight with his friend Barnabas, and as a result they split up and formed two separate missionary teams. Barnabas took his cousin, John Mark, and Paul went with Silas and was later joined by Timothy and Luke. Paul's team first visited the churches he had planted on his first missionary journey, but soon they decided to preach the Gospel in new places.

Paul wanted to go to Asia (which is not the continent we refer to as Asia today, but a region in western Turkey), but something unexpected happened: the Holy Spirit wouldn't let his team go. This must have been confusing for Paul and his team. Why wouldn't the Holy Spirit allow them to go? Wasn't preaching the Gospel in Asia a good thing? Paul then tried to go north to an area known as Bithynia, but again the Holy Spirit wouldn't allow it. Imagine how you would feel in this situation! Paul was trying to tell these people about God, but God wasn't letting them! Soon enough, however, they would learn why.

One night, Paul had a vision of a man from a place called Macedonia asking them for help. Paul and his team then journeyed to Philippi, the capital city of Macedonia, and stayed there for several days. On the Sabbath day, Paul and his team went to the riverside, where there was a prayer meeting. Paul met a woman named Lydia who sold purple dye. Paul explained the Gospel message to her, she believed, and she was baptized. Paul then stayed longer in Philippi and continued to preach, but we'll learn more about that next time.

In this story, Paul was trying to do a good thing. He wanted to share the Gospel with people, but the Lord was preventing him. You also might experience situations when you have a desire to do a good thing, but God “closes the door” on that opportunity. It may seem strange or confusing to us, and we might wonder why God won't allow us to do it, but when we face closed doors, it's important to remember that God has a plan. He is wise. He knows what He's doing. Who knows if Lydia ever would have heard the Gospel if Paul had gone to the cities that he wanted to go to? And as we'll see next time, there were other people that God wanted to save in Philippi. So when your plans don't work out or God “closes doors” in your life, trust God. He knows what He's doing, He has a plan, and His ways are always better than our ways.

Questions for Young Children:

What kept happening when Paul tried to preach in Asia and Bithynia?

What did Paul see in his vision?

Who did Paul meet at Philippi? What happened to her?

Questions for Teens and Pre-teens:

How do you think Paul and his team felt when God prevented them from going to Asia or Bithynia?

Why do you think God didn't allow Paul to preach in those places?

Have you ever experienced a "closed door" (a situation where you wanted to do something, but God did not allow it to happen)? How did you feel? Why do you think God gives us "closed doors"?