



"The Call: The Life and Ministry of the Apostle Paul"

By Pastor Adam Hamilton

Session 3: Called to Suffer

(January 22, 2026 6:30 PM)

INTRODUCTION

Paul's Timeline So Far...

- 5 BC – 10 AD – Paul is born (estimate)
- 16 – 22 AD – Paul begins Jewish studies in Jerusalem
- 32 AD – Paul arrests Jesus followers in Palestine (estimate)
- 35 AD – Paul is converted on road to Damascus (estimate)
- 35 – 38 AD – Paul in Arabia, then Damascus
- 38 AD – Paul meets Peter and James in Jerusalem
- 38 – 48 AD – Paul in Tarsus and region (estimate)
- 47 AD – Barnabas to Syrian Antioch; with Paul at Tarsus
- 48 AD – Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem
- 49 AD – Paul and Barnabas begin “first” missionary journey
- 49 – 50 AD – Paul and Barnabas return to Syrian Antioch
- 49 – 50 AD – Paul writes Galatians (?)
- 50 AD – Conflict over Circumcision
- 50 AD – Jerusalem Council
- 50 AD – Paul and Silas begin second missionary journey
- 50 – 51 AD – To Galatia, Macedonia, Achaia



Scripture Focus – Acts 14:27-28

- Are there conflicts you can name that our congregation is facing or has faced in the past?

In tonight's session, we will explore the first major conflict that the early church faced and how Christians resolved that conflict. Then we will examine Paul's 2nd missionary journey.

OPENING PRAYER

Gracious God, we have been promised that where two or three are gathered together, there will your Spirit 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 Christ, Amen.

Session 3 Video – “Called to Suffer”

Paul and Silas began the Second Missionary Journey, taking the gospel to Europe. In Philippi, Paul met and baptized Lydia, drove evil spirits from a slave girl, and was thrown into prison with Silas. An earthquake freed them, and they converted the jailer before leaving Philippi.

- Why did Paul decide to take the gospel to Europe? Have you ever pushed yourself beyond your comfort zone? What happened?
- Why were Paul and Silas thrown into prison after healing the slave girl? How did they escape, and what did they do during the escape?
- Why were the magistrates afraid when they learned Paul was a Roman citizen? Why do you think Paul decided to challenge the magistrates before leaving town?
- What can we learn about suffering from the example of Paul?

THE JERUSALEM COUNCIL

Scripture Reading – Acts 15:1 – 31

- What was the Christian church's first major controversy?
- The results of the Jerusalem council were most remarkable. Why?
- Why does Hamilton assert that the council's decisions likely sealed the fate of Christianity as a separate religion from Judaism?

CONFLICT WITH A COLLEAGUE

Scripture Focus – Acts 15:32 – 41

- Like all of us, sometimes Paul's greatest strengths could also be his greatest weaknesses. How did Paul's perseverance play into his disagreement with Barnabas?
- How did this disagreement affect Paul's second missionary journey? Who accompanied him on this journey?

PAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY

- Who joined Paul and Silas at Derbe?

Scripture Focus – Acts 16:1-3, 1 Timothy 1:5, 2 Timothy 3:14-16

- Given the controversy over circumcision, were you surprised to read that Paul had Timothy circumcised?

Scripture Focus – Acts 16:6-10

- Have you ever been prevented from going where you wanted to go and doing what you wanted to do? What were the circumstances, how did you feel, and what were your reactions?
- Was there an occasion when you experienced disappointment, only to have new and amazing opportunities open up for you? Looking back, how do you interpret this experience?

Scripture Focus – Acts 16:10

- What does the word *we* suggest about who might have joined the missionary journey?

MINISTRY AT PHILIPPI

Paul's usual habit upon entering a town was to go to the synagogue and begin teaching. Imagine begin among the regular attenders at the synagogue in Pisidian Antioch – Jews and God-fearers – as Paul began to speak.

Scripture Focus – Acts 16:11-15

- Who was converted during these verses?
- Is there anything surprising or unusual about the situation or the people involved?
- What were the circumstances of the baptism?

Scripture Focus – Acts 16:17-40

- Who was converted during these verses?
- Is there anything surprising or unusual about the situation or the people involved?
- What were the circumstances of the baptism?

Follow Up Questions...

- Hamilton points out times when Paul treated women with dignity and other times when Paul seemed to relegate women to a subordinate role. What explanation does Hamiton give for this apparent contradiction? How do you respond?
- When Paul released the young women in Acts 16 from her demon, she was then unable to make money for her owners. Often an encounter with the power of Christ will come at some economic cost. Have you ever experienced this?

- Paul and Silas experienced suffering while in prison in Philippi. How did they respond? What do you make of the fact that Paul did not make known his Roman citizenship until he was released? When have you endured suffering? Do you agree with the author that our faith changes how we face suffering?

CLOSING

- What particularly struck you about this early church disagreement and Paul's second missionary journey? Were there any surprises?

Ways to Deepen Faith...

1. **Imaging Prayer on Conflict** – Some participants may want to spend the coming week offering a conflict situation to God in prayer. Identify either the situation or issue about which the church is in conflict or, more personally, a person with whom you have an unresolved conflict. After centering yourself in prayer, extend your hands, palms cupped, imagining holding the situation or the person up to God in prayer. Be receptive to what the Spirit may say to you.
2. **Who is Your John Paul or Timothy?** – Previously, we have considered a person in our lives who has served as a Barnabas. Now, consider who might be persons you could mentor as Paul did John Paul and Timothy. Mentoring involves not only offering an example of strength but also of how to deal with one's weaknesses.

CLOSING PRAYER

Gracious God, make us ever aware that your pour out your love on us freely. By your Spirit, open our ears and eyes to where you would have us go and what you would have us do, whether in places familiar to us or those unknown. In the name of Jesus Christ the Lord, Amen.

Session 4: "Called to Love: Paul's Second Missionary Journey – Part 2"

Wednesday, January 28 7:30 PM Facebook Live

(If you have the book, read Chapter 4 in advance.)
