

Title: THE DUAL COMMISSION IN PRACTICE, ACTS 16:1 – 15
(Chatham, NJ; 05/01/2016, AM) [Pc – Topical, Narrative Analysis]

Theme: Paul's second missionary journey illustrates the dual nature of the Great Commission: make disciples and teach them to obey.

Purpose: To demonstrate how Paul fulfills both aspects of the commission, and to exhort us not only to grow in our knowledge of God's ways but also to understand our personal role in it.

Introduction:

1. The Book of Acts narrates the Great Commission in practice.
2. Mostly it follows the Apostle's Peter and Paul; there is much more to the narrative.
3. We write new chapters in God's story of redemption every day.
4. This section illustrates what I call the dual commission: two sides of the Great Commission, one as important as the other.
5. One side is "make disciples," (baptizing them is part of the first aspect) and the other side is "teaching them." (technically also a part of "make disciples")
6. Both aspects must be maintained and fulfilled.

I. Begin with the Second Part: Teaching Them to Observe All that I Have Commanded You

- A. Strengthening the Churches, Acts 15:41
 1. Began in verse 36
 2. Ignore the dispute for our thought today
 3. See that strengthening the churches fulfilled the second aspect of G. C.
 4. He begins his third journey the same way, 18:23
 5. The church prioritized growth of the disciples as well as growth in new disciples
- B. A Lifetime of Learning and Growing
 1. Scripture functions for "training in righteousness," 2 Tim. 3:16
 2. Hebrews 5:14 assumes we must be trained in discernment
 3. Put off old self, put on new self, Eph. 4:22-24, reflects concern for continued growth, and Paul gets very specific in verses 25-32 (anger, stealing, forgiveness)
 4. Family life included in discipleship: wives, husbands, children (5:22-6:4)
 5. Book of Titus includes how we are to engage the larger community: be devoted to doing good
 6. A disciple continues to repent, learn, and grow

II. The Making Disciples Part: the Macedonian Call

- A. Paul prevented from going into Asia, 16:6
 1. Eventually he will go there, 19:10
 2. For now, he concludes that the Spirit leads him to Macedonia
 3. He goes, not knowing exactly where in Macedonia
- B. In Philippi, 16:11-12
 1. Because it was a leading city and Roman colony?
 2. He stays there "some days" (12)
 3. Might he still be wondering how God's lead would play out?
 4. Does he see the potential in a city probably filled with the rich, powerful, and prestigious? (he will experience a different social strata in Corinth later)
 5. Paul has his mind and eyes open to God's leading: God wants me here, let me make the best of it
- C. To the place of prayer, 13 (no synagogue?)
 1. He talks to the women gathered there

2. Lydia is in the audience, a worshipper of God: a Gentile convert to Judaism
3. She was originally from Thyatira, and had come probably because of the trade in purple dyes and fabric: a trade geared toward the wealthy and powerful; purple garments were expensive to produce and hence a symbol of prestige
4. Could Paul have guessed which of the women would respond?
5. Might he have guessed that his work there would have started with this Gentile?
6. This conversion displays a quiet, subtle, yet momentous drama: "The Lord opened her heart."
7. I think there is more drama than meets the eye: angels rejoice even if it doesn't occur with a great and immediate reversal
8. Drama will occur in the next convert in Philippi: the jailer
9. But for now God's plan begins simply with a woman who hears and believes
10. Do not pass this off as something easy to ignore; God is at work.

III. The Great Commission in Our Practice

A. Lydia and her influence

1. She met people everyday: customers (nobles, wealthy officials), their servants, her suppliers, etc.
2. She is a business woman, an entrepreneur
3. Think of her as a red blood cell delivering the oxygen of the Gospel to other cells in the community
4. She will have the church community to continue supplying her with more oxygen by teaching her and encouraging her (18:40, there are others by this time)

B. What influence do you possess?

1. To make disciples: co-workers, neighbors, etc.
2. To teach other disciples – we mustn't neglect this
3. Our influence in the church is just as important as our influence among non-Christians
4. Where do you fit in?

Conclusion:

1. How do you satisfy the Great Commission?
2. Make disciples, teach others?
3. It must begin with God opening your heart to the message.
4. It continues as you are taught and as you are able to teach others.
5. Has God opened your heart to the message today?