

sermon notes

October 12, 2025 | Pastor Tony Caffey, Messiah Bible Church
No Other Name | “Messiness on the Way to Macedonia” | **Acts 15:36–16:10**

Three “not-so-great” things that God uses to accomplish his greater purposes:

1) _____ (15:36–41)

2) _____ (16:1–5)

3) _____ (16:6–10)

Questions for further application of God’s Word:

GO DEEPER

Read Acts 15:36–41. Briefly summarize the conflict between Paul and Barnabas. Was Paul in the right, or was Barnabas? Make a case for each of them.

Read Acts 16:1–5. Timothy allowed himself to be circumcised in order to help spread the gospel. Is this inconsistent with what the Jerusalem Council concluded in Acts 15:1–35? Why or why not? Was Paul being hypocritical with his actions in these two chapters?

GET PERSONAL

When has God used “conflict” in your life to accomplish his greater purposes? Have you ever maintained a completely conflict-free relationship? Is that possible? Explain why confession, repentance, and forgiveness help sustain lasting relationships.

When you are in a conflict, do you allow your “reasonableness to be made known to everyone” (Phil 4:5)? What does that mean in practical terms?

Timothy gave up his right to live as an uncircumcised believer. Give some twenty-first-century examples of rights given up for the sake of the gospel. What are some rights you have personally given up in order to help spread the message of Christ?

Read Acts 16:6–10. Was there ever a time in your life when a “closed door” proved especially painful. What did you learn through that experience? Did your faith grow as a result? Have you thanked and praised God for that “closed door”?

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Make a list of “not-so-great” things that have transpired in your life. Then consider how God might have used those for a greater purpose (realizing, of course, that we can’t always see God’s full plan or purposes).

ADVANCED QUESTIONS FOR DEEPER STUDY

The Holy Spirit led Paul to Macedonia and blocked him from going to Asia. Has God ever prompted or prodded you by the Holy Spirit? How did you know that it was the Holy Spirit’s prompting and not your own desires? How do we discern the leading of the Holy Spirit? Is it similar or dissimilar from how Paul and the other apostles experienced it in the book of Acts?