

## God's Better Plan

*... and they were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.*

*(Acts 16: 6b,7)*

Jesus' last words in what is known as the Great Commission are encapsulated in the Gospel of Mark- "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature". This commission has been given to every believer since the first century and is to be continued in our current days. No matter where we go, we must carry that gospel message. Whether God has called us to a foreign land or to remain at home, we all are to participate in this great endeavor. In this spiritually dark hour, we desperately need the impact of the gospel to influence our communities, our country, and our world for Christ. With people in need all around us, there is no shortage of opportunities. With that said, we serve His purpose much better when our steps are ordered from above. Proverbs states, "A man's heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps". Today's text is an example of being in the right place at the right time because of the Lord's divine plan and the Holy Spirit's leading.

In Acts sixteen, the Apostles and the first-century disciples have advanced the gospel message. As persecution scattered them abroad, they went everywhere preaching the Word. Paul shows a desire to venture into Asia with this message but was forbidden by the Holy Ghost, and when they tried to go into Bithynia, the Spirit forbade them. No reason or explanation is given why they were not allowed by the Spirit, but as the text continues, we find that God had a better plan for them. When the Apostle Paul halts his journey toward Asia, he then receives what is known as the Macedonian Vision. Obedience to this calling produced the conversion of Lydia and her household, the Philippian jailor and all of his house, and the establishment of churches on the European continent. Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, and more, were challenged and changed because of the message of the resurrected Savior. The results of this calling also laid the groundwork for the production of the New Testament by which multitudes through the ages have been converted.

As God has called us to carry on the propagation of the gospel message, we need to be sensitive to the leading of the Spirit. He has a plan for not only what is best for us, but also for those with whom we come in contact. Sometimes we will see the direct impact of this message, and at other times it will be that "bread that is cast upon the waters, that thou shalt find it after many days". May God grant us the grace to develop a sensitive spirit to discern His leading so that we might follow His better plan. ~ J. Ekis