NY Times, April 3 1991. An art collector spent $4 on a painting at a flea market in Pennsylvania. He thought the painting was weak, and that’s not really why he bought it. He **admired** the frame. It was *beautiful* and *ornate*…and a bargain at $4….so he bought it. He took it home and began to remove the painting from the frame and as he did he noticed something was behind the painting…it looked to be an old document, folded to fit. He removed the document to discover that it was an original copy of the Declaration of Independence!! True story. He sold it for $4M at an auction!

***Why tell that story?*** Because the Word of God is like that. What’s more, walking with the Lord is like that!! The frame is what ***attracts*** us so often. The structure of the truth. Plain and clear, simple and practical, tried and true, historical yet presently practical…but take it home, work with it a bit…that’s where the ***rarity*** is discovered! That’s where the value is truly revealed! So much of our text today is like that. Our text from Wednesday was like that. (Man, your walk is like that.) Psalm 119:162 says, *“I rejoice at Your word as one who finds great treasure.”* There is such a depth of value, eternal value, treasure of character and treasure of hope and treasure of joy…treasure of love…but folks settle for the ***weak painting…***

I’m a sucker for a good treasure hunt! National Treasure!? Indiana Jones?! I mean come on!! Well what if at the end of the story, **they find nothing?!** Wouldn’t that be ***sad?*** Or they find like one half corroded spoon? Or just a lousy flea market painting…***National Let Down Part 2.*** ***Indiana Jones and the Boring Crusade!*** And you watch the movie and they miss the treasure because they walk right by it…**FRUSTRATION!** Hunt the treasure! Be like a *prayerful pious pirate!* (Ok that was a bad setup to a bad joke) Why does it take so long for a pirate to learn the alphabet? Because they spend years at C! HA!!! ***On to the hunt…***

Acts Chapter 16 Verses 1 – 2

* Here we are introduced to Timothy. Timothy would go on to become as Paul describes him in 1 Timothy 1:2, *“A true son in the faith.”* We learn that Timothy was of **good character**, *sweet, pure and gracious*…but **not** strong. Full of love and unselfishness, we read throughout Paul’s letters to him that Timothy often had *‘infirmities’* and *‘tears.’* He needed to be **encouraged** often to *‘stir up the gift that was in him,’* and he needed to be **reassured and braced** by Paul to *‘not be ashamed,’* but to fight against the tyrannical *‘spirit of fear,’* within him. Paul would write to him, *‘be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.’*
* Paul became *like a father* to Timothy. Why? Timothy’s **character** revealed in Paul’s letters give us a clue…as does this verse here in the beginning of Acts 16. ***Timothy needed him.*** There’s a bit of a sad story here that is all over the place in the church. Eunice was Timothy’s mother. She had taught him the scriptures since he was a child. We know that from 2 Timothy 3:15…but all we know of Timothy’s father is that he was a Greek. Nothing wrong with Greeks…I happen to be one myself, but the implication is clear…and the silence on Timothy’s biological father is deafening…
* **It’s really a sad story.** I’m going to make this statement and perhaps it’s not fair…but most if not all biblical *types* agree…Eunice either came to faith after having Timothy, or, and here’s the statement, Eunice, Timothy’s mom **made a decision** that ***installed*** sadness, infirmity, insecurity and fear into her son. She married a man that did not love the Lord…*she chose her own heart over the heart of her son’s.*
* This I see often and it cuts to the very core of your heart when you see the multiplied countless saddening shockwaves it causes in the lives of those involved. ***If you love the Lord, then let your marriage, your choice in whom you share your life with, let that decision be made in wisdom.*** There will be innumerable difficulties if you join yourself to a man or a woman who has a different ultimate life priority than you. ***Someone living for Jesus and someone living for self will create a very very sad son.*** 2 Corinthians 6:14, God says, *“Do not do it.”*
* I believe Paul was heart-broken over Timothy. His humility, his character, his selflessness was evident…he was well spoken of…but Paul would ask, *“Where is this one’s father?”* And the Word is **silent**…I know what it’s like to be that one that is spoken well of…to have the achievement and the earned honor…and yet not have the approval of my father. In a way, it saps every bit of your inner strength. ***Paul found darkness like he’s never seen*** in the hidden incurable pain of this young man…please folks, those that are yet unmarried, ***don’t break your vow to God by making a vow to some man or some woman…***
* Now, some of you say, *“That’s already me, thats already the situation I’m in…”* Paul would say in 1 Corinthians 7:27, *“Are you bound to a wife, do not seek to be loosed…”* Divorce for any reason other than adultery or abandonment is not from the Lord. There is hope but that hope is not for him or for her primarily, **it’s for you.** God will fill all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus (Phil 4:19). What you lack in this physical realm, God will strengthen in the inner man, in the inner woman, ***if you marry yourself to Him.*** Seek Him and glorify Him. That’s *hard, tough, a daily battle*, but God will meet you there…**and** if that is you, you ought to become a living testimony to the singles you know…to point them to a Godly future spouse. You have a peculiar ministry and **it is needed!**

Acts Chapter 16 Verse 3

* **Ouch!** And weird! ***HA!*** But Luke gives us the “why” here in this verse. | Did Paul, did Timothy HAVE to do this!? The letter Paul is carrying says clearly, *“absolutely not!”* The law is fulfilled, doesn’t apply…but Paul and Timothy aren’t doing this because of the law…they’re doing this because of ***others.*** So that the Jews would not be stumbled by Timothy…a Jew (*you get it from your momma*). And know this…it caused Timothy some pain! But hey, you put God first and others before yourself…***that’s probably going to cause a bit of discomfort…but that’s love in the light.***
* Someone once said, *“Love gives you the strength to transform pain into power.”* I like that. I’ve also heard this, *“The most powerful symptom of love is tenderness, service and kindness which becomes at times almost insupportable.”* Those things are true…for sure…but it is **real deal hard** to hold your silence when someone is just mean, isn’t it? To serve those who are so full of themselves that their cruelty and hardness is at times ***insatiable***…I have a tip for you, a bit of advice…instead of asking in yourself *why they keep doing it*…ask yourself *why you keep allowing it to hurt you*…**to sap your strength.** Where is your hope? Your affection. Your loyalty. Place all of those things in the Lord - **NOW**…and **THEN** you will be just fine.

Acts Chapter 16 Verses 4 – 5

* I like that. Paul, Silas, Timothy…their goal was to ***strengthen the church in faith.*** Not grow the church. Not bank the bucks. But to see people set free by the gospel and become strong in faith!

Acts Chapter 16 Verses 6 - 7 (Phyrgia – it was **cold** there, HA! What were they called? Phyrgia-ites – or better yets….***Phyrgerators!***) (Mysia – it was **miserable** there! HA!!)

* First point here is a restatement from studies past. **The Holy Spirit is a Person!** The third Person of the ***mysterious*** Holy Trinity! Why? How? Because He exhibits characteristics of a Person, not an *“It”* and here’s **one** of them…He forbids. Second point, why!? WHAT!? What’s going on here!? Well the answer is simple…***God wanted Paul somewhere else.*** Paul wanting to preach the Gospel in these places certainly wasn’t a bad thing but even so, God wanted him somewhere else.
* We’re not told how specifically God forbade this but Paul does write to the Galatians and describes a physical infirmity of sorts with his eyes and many deduce that Paul became very ill with some sort of illness that ultimately affected his sight…a bit of a stretch…but maybe. We’re just told nothing more here than he was stopped by the Holy Spirit. Perhaps more important to note here is that ***Paul was willing to lay down his plans and obey God***…(Texas story)

Acts Chapter 16 Verses 8 – 10

* This Macedonian man in Paul’s vision says, *“Come and help us.”* ***The greatest help that we can ever give someone is to share with them the gospel.*** That is the greatest help anyone could ever receive! Because along with someone receiving the truth of what has happened and realizing the good news of God and His Son, the reality of the Savior, when that is received, so is the indwelling power of the Spirit of God Himself. Hebrews calls it ***enlightening!*** Not only does light bring vision, warmth and revelation of reality…but enlightening speaks to me of a ***lightning strike*** in the heart…**a spiritual defib**, man!! And folks come alive unto the reality of eternity! There is no better help than that, no matter the situation!
* And we’re told here specifically how Paul was directed to Macedonia. Not sure if this was a vision just chilling, or it was probably a dream but Paul receives some solid direction in the form of a **vision** and they deploy immediately. *(Where do eye doctors get their music? iTunes!!! What do you call a dear without eyes? No idea!! What do you call a one-eyed dinosaur? Douthinkhesaraus!)*

Acts Chapter 16 Verses 11 – 15

* She doesn’t just agree…just believe….***just admire the frame***…she heeds the things spoken by Paul and God transacts individually with her…opens her specific heart…one on one with the Lord…and what flows forth from her? *Hospitality, love, service, welcome…joy*…Just like Lydia, I pray you and I, this church will be folks that are not only hearers of the Word of God, but doers…