



Acts 16:6-15



## Overview

Sunday was the first in our 5 week series on MARKETPLACE MISSIONARIES. This follows on from the 9-5 series which concluded with the question: **‘Can you think of yourself as a marketplace missionary?’**



## Getting to Know You

You excitedly tell some friends about a great movie you’ve recently seen and naturally they ask you “What was it all about?” Based on your answer, they may decide to go and see it for themselves. In the same way, how we view and talk about the Bible can also affect how others choose to engage with it.

**Q: How would you sum up the question – ‘The Bible: What’s it all about?’**  
**Discuss.**



## Digging Deeper

As an answer to the question, “What’s the Bible all about?”, Murray Robertson (a retired Baptist Pastor) stated:

*‘The mission heart of God who comes seeking the lost, the poor, the broken and the estranged – that’s the Bible’s metanarrative from Abraham right through.*

*That message needs to come through all our preaching until people grasp it. And when they grasp it they’ll start living it out. - Murray Robertson*

**Q: What do you think of Murray’s summary?**

Paul had a heart for sharing the amazing story of God’s love and Christ’s sacrifice.  
Read Acts 16:6-15

**Q: What are the things that stand out for you in this passage?**

Paul would have gone anywhere because God’s mission was his mission. But we see clearly that he received guidance in two distinct ways:

1. v6-7 – The Holy Spirit **prevented** them from preaching ...
2. v9-10 – In a vision that Paul had, they felt **called to go to** Macedonia

Paul and Silas could have found themselves frustrated by 'closed doors' around them or they could have simply ignored the vision and stayed where they were ... but they didn't - They remained hungry to share the news about God's heart for the lost - and while their ultimate experiences were quite different from their initial expectations, they continued to trust and follow God wherever He led them.

While Paul and his team were out and about looking for the man from his vision, they instead found:

- A woman not a man.
- A Gentile not a Jew.
- A river not a synagogue.
- Wealthy not poor.
- A family not just one person

And thanks to Paul's diligence, Lydia ultimately became a key leader in the church of Macedonia, through which, the gospel was eventually delivered to the entire European continent.

**Q: Can you think of specific times when God has guided you in these different ways – either by opening doors, or by closing doors?**

**Q: What were the results when you followed your own path instead of God's?**

**Q: What were the results when you trusted God's leading instead of your own?**

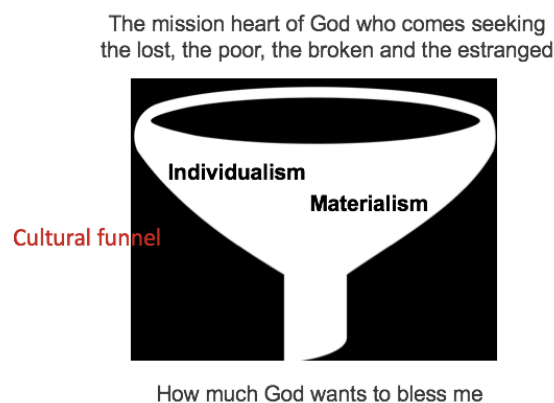
In our own lives, there is a tendency to get frustrated or despondent when God doesn't quite answer or lead in the way which we expect, but if we are open to His re-direction we will always be amazed at the outcome.



## Taking it home

The way we express our faith is often based on our understanding of the Bible and what we allow ourselves to be influenced by.

If we agree with Murray's viewpoint of the Mission heart of God, but allow ourselves to be influenced by a culture of materialism and individualism, our faith may look very much like this:



And we can end up with a over simplified "God wants to bless me" faith.

**Q: What are some other cultural funnels we may allow to skew or confuse the outworking of our faith?**

**Q: How can we guard against these influences and stay open to God's heart for the world?**

With a heart of a missionary:

**Q: who would be the 'Macedonian man' in your world today who you can reach out to?**

**Q: who or what has God recently put on your heart that you've not acted on yet?**



## **Prayer**

Consider for a moment what your prayers are like. Do you pray with a missionary heart? Do they include others or are your prayers often only self-focussed?

Spend time praying for each other, asking God to give you a heart with a missionary focus, and then pray for people who God puts on your heart.