

Devoted and Unshaken: The Book of Acts
“When Plans Change, Stay Flexible” (#17) Acts 16:6-34
Cornerstone Church of Poway
Pastor Ed Turley
August 17th, 2025

Sermon Notes

Big Idea: When God changes our plans, remain steadfast in our mission, knowing His purposes are greater than our expectations.

When Plans Change, Stay Flexible:

1. Trust God When He Redirects You

⁶ Next Paul and Silas traveled through the area of Phrygia and Galatia, because the **Holy Spirit had prevented them from preaching the word in the province of Asia at that time.** ⁷ Then coming to the **borders of Mysia**, they headed north for the **province of Bithynia**, but **again the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them to go there.** ⁸ **So instead,** they went on through Mysia to the seaport of Troas. ⁹ That night Paul had a **vision:** A **man** from Macedonia in northern Greece was standing there, pleading with him, “Come over to Macedonia and help us!” ¹⁰ So we decided to leave for Macedonia at once, having concluded that God was calling us **to preach the Good News there.**

Acts 16:6-10 (NLT2)

Notes: _____

2. Be Ready for Divine Appointments

¹¹ We boarded a boat at **Troas** and sailed straight across to the island of **Samothrace**, and the next day we landed at **Neapolis.** ¹² From there we reached **Philippi**, a major city of that district of **Macedonia** and a **Roman colony.** And we stayed there several days. ¹³ On the Sabbath we went a little way outside the city to a **riverbank**, where we thought people would be **meeting for prayer**, and we sat down to speak with **some women** who had gathered there. ¹⁴ One of them was **Lydia** from Thyatira, **a merchant of expensive purple cloth**, who worshiped God. As she listened to us, the Lord opened her heart, and **she accepted** what Paul was saying. ¹⁵ She was **baptized** along with other members of her household, and she asked us to be her guests. “If you agree that I am a true believer in the Lord,” she said, “come and stay at my home.” And she urged us until we agreed.

Acts 16:11-15 (NLT2)

Notes: _____

3. Stand Firm When Faith Is Tested

¹⁶ One day as we were going down to the **place of prayer**, we met a **demon-possessed slave girl**. She was a **fortune-teller** who earned a lot of money for her masters. ¹⁷ She followed Paul and the rest of us, **shouting**, “These men are servants of the Most High God, and they have come to tell you how to be saved.” ¹⁸ This went on **day after day** until **Paul got so exasperated** that he turned and said to the demon within her, “**I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.**” And instantly it left her. ¹⁹ Her masters’ hopes of wealth were now shattered, so they grabbed Paul and Silas and dragged them before the authorities at the marketplace. ²⁰ “**The whole city is in an uproar** because of these Jews!” they shouted to the city officials. ²¹ “They are **teaching customs that are illegal** for us Romans to practice.” **Acts 16:16-21 (NLT2)**

²² **A mob quickly formed** against Paul and Silas, and the city officials ordered them **stripped and beaten with wooden rods**. ²³ They were **severely beaten**, and then they were thrown into prison. The jailer was ordered to make sure they didn’t escape. ²⁴ So the jailer put them into the **inner dungeon** and **clamped their feet in the stocks**. ²⁵ **Around midnight** Paul and Silas were **praying and singing hymns to God**, and the **other prisoners were listening**. ²⁶ Suddenly, there was a **massive earthquake**, and **the prison was shaken to its foundations**. All the **doors immediately flew open**, and **the chains of every prisoner fell off!** ²⁷ The **jailer woke up** to see the prison doors wide open. He **assumed** the prisoners had **escaped**, so **he drew his sword to kill himself**. **Acts 16:22-27 (NLT2)**

²⁸ But Paul shouted to him, “**Stop! Don’t kill yourself! We are all here!**” ²⁹ The jailer called for lights and ran to the dungeon and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. ³⁰ Then he brought them out and asked, “**Sirs, what must I do to be saved?**” ³¹ They replied, “**Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, along with everyone in your household.**” ³² **And they shared the word of the Lord with him and with all who lived in his household.** ³³ Even at that hour of the night, the **jailer cared for them and washed their wounds**. Then he and everyone in his household were **immediately baptized**. ³⁴ **He brought them into his house and set a meal** before them, and **he and his entire household rejoiced because they all believed in God**. **Acts 16:28-34 (NLT2)**

Notes: _____

- Will you commit to staying flexible and steadfast in your faith, no matter how plans shift?

My Next Right Step:

- [] I choose to trust Jesus today as my Lord and Savior
- [] I want to be baptized as a public declaration of faith.
- [] Sign up for a small group on Church App in August



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Talk It Over

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Opening Icebreaker (5–10 min)

Share a time when your plans completely changed — maybe a vacation, a work project, or even something small. How did you feel at first, and what ended up happening?

Read Together: Acts 16:6–40

Have someone summarize the three main events:

- Paul redirected to Macedonia (vv. 6–10)
- Lydia's conversion (vv. 13–15)
- Paul & Silas in prison (vv. 16–40)

Discussion Questions

1. Trust God When He Redirects You (Acts 16:6–10)

What do you notice about the way Paul responded when the Spirit closed doors?

How do you usually respond when your plans change unexpectedly?

Read Proverbs 16:9.

How can we tell the difference between a closed door from God and simply facing an obstacle we're meant to push through?

2. Be Ready for Divine Appointments (Acts 16:13–15)

Why do you think God led Paul to begin ministry in Philippi with a small prayer gathering by the river?

Have you ever had an unexpected conversation that turned into a significant spiritual moment?

How can we be more sensitive to the "Lydias" God places in our path?

3. Stand Firm When Faith Is Tested (Acts 16:22–34)

What strikes you about Paul and Silas praying and singing in prison?

What do you think the other prisoners and the jailer noticed about them?

How might our attitude in trials influence those around us?"

Read James 1:2–4

How does steadfast faith during trials impact those who are watching us?

Life Application

Which of the three points — Trust God's redirection, Look for divine appointments, or Stand firm in trials — do you most need to apply this week?

Who might be your "Lydia" or your "jailer" — someone God is preparing you to reach?

What's one practical step you can take this week to be more flexible to God's leading?

Prayer Time (10–15 min)

Pray for each person to trust God in any changes happening in their life right now.

Ask God to open doors for divine appointments this week.

Pray for flexibility in trials so that others will see Christ in us.