



## Sermon: Sunday, June 1, 2025

### “Paul’s Vision”

**SCRIPTURE: Acts 16:9-15** <sup>9</sup> During the night Paul had a vision: there stood a man of Macedonia pleading with him and saying, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” <sup>10</sup> When he had seen the vision, we immediately tried to cross over to Macedonia, being convinced that God had called us to proclaim the good news to them. <sup>11</sup> We therefore set sail from Troas and took a straight course to Samothrace, the following day to Neapolis, <sup>12</sup> and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city for some days. <sup>13</sup> On the Sabbath day we went outside the gate by the river, where we supposed there was a place of prayer, and we sat down and spoke to the women who had gathered there. <sup>14</sup> A certain woman named Lydia, a worshiper of God, was listening to us; she was from the city of Thyatira and a dealer in purple cloth. The Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul. <sup>15</sup> When she and her household were baptized, she urged us, saying, “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come and stay at my home.” And she prevailed upon us.

#### Introduction: Alexandria Troas

Today, we celebrate the seventh Sunday of Easter. In today’s text, we encounter the city of Alexandria Troas. This was a port city on the coast of modern-day Turkey, known today as Dalyan. Troas was a key city in the Aegean Sea, linking Macedonia and Greece. It was a major trading hub, and at the time of Paul, it was the most prosperous port city—richer even than Ephesus. It’s also famous as the setting for the story of the Trojan Horse.

But why did Paul come to Troas? In the book of Acts, we read about Paul’s missionary journeys. His first was with Barnabas, but they later disagreed over whether to take Mark with them. Paul didn’t trust Mark’s sincerity, so he and Barnabas went separate ways. Paul continued his missions with Silas. In Acts 16:6-7, we see that Paul, while faithfully preaching, was blocked by the Holy Spirit and the Spirit of Jesus from spreading the word in Asia. This led Paul and his team to Troas, which was the westernmost point in Turkey.

#### Body: Paul’s Vision of the Man of Macedonia

While in Troas, Paul had a vision. In Acts 16:9, it’s described like this: **“During the night, Paul had a vision: there stood a man of Macedonia pleading with him and saying, ‘Come over to Macedonia and help us.’”** After much thought, Paul made the decision to go to Macedonia, believing that God had called him to bring the gospel there. Verse 10 says, **“When he had seen the vision, we immediately tried to cross over to Macedonia, being convinced that God had called us to proclaim the good news to them.”**

In verse 11, we learn that Paul and his companions set sail from Troas. They stopped at the island of Samothrace, then continued their journey and arrived at Neapolis the next day. It was a long trip, but they eventually made their way to Philippi.

As we continue reading, we see the birth of a new church in Philippi. After spending a few days there, Paul went to the riverside on the Sabbath to pray, where he met a group of women, including Lydia. Lydia, a successful dealer in purple cloth, was moved by Paul’s message. She and her household were baptized, and she invited Paul and his companions to stay at her home. This is how the Philippian church was born.

This church became very dear to Paul. Even after he left Macedonia, the Philippian believers supported him in his ministry. In Philippians 4:15-20, Paul expresses his gratitude, saying, **“You Philippians indeed know**

**that in the early days of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you alone. 16 For even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me help for my needs more than once. 17 Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the profit that accumulates to your account... and my God will fully satisfy every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”**

Paul had no way of knowing that his decision to go to Europe would have such a lasting impact on the spread of Christianity. He had planned to preach in Asia, but when the Holy Spirit blocked that path, he had to choose a new direction. It was not an easy decision, but Paul had a new vision—one that he believed came directly from God.

How could Paul embrace this new vision? We find the answer in his words from Romans 14:8, where he says, **“If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's.”**

Paul had experienced the grace of Jesus Christ in such a deep way that the issues of life and death were no longer a burden. He was no longer concerned with his own comfort or safety. He was freed from the fear of failure and the desire for success. In this freedom, Paul was able to receive a holy vision from God and act on it.

This is the key message of the book of Acts. In Acts 1:8, Jesus tells his disciples, **“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”** Paul’s ministry, as the representative of Jesus’ witnesses to the ends of the earth, is a model for all Christians. For us, living as witnesses of Christ is the goal.

### **Conclusion: Life as a Witness of Christ**

The most important thing in life is to be free from sin and death. This freedom comes through Christ, and it means being free from the worries and fears that often control us. True freedom is not about wealth, power, or success—it’s about having a soul that is unburdened and at peace with God.

Even though we may still struggle with sin and death in our lives, if we desire Christ’s grace and truth, we will learn to live as witnesses of Jesus. As we grow in this desire, we too will experience holy visions, just like Paul did in Troas. We will know what it means to live with a deeper purpose, spreading the gospel to the ends of the earth. **Amen.**