



PERSONAL REFLECTIONS & DISCUSSION

*Lamb of God Lutheran Church, Columbus, OH
September 16, 2018*

Just before he ascended, Jesus told his disciples, “You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). It would not be easy for them to be witnesses. Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria were familiar (and yet often hostile), but “the ends of the earth” stretched their vision to unfamiliar territory.

To the Ends of the Earth presents an important time and setting in the history of the spread of the gospel. God directed Paul and his missionary team to carry the gospel into the Greek world—to Macedonia. They arrived at Philippi, a Roman colony dominated by retired Roman soldiers and without a Jewish synagogue (Acts 16). Perhaps it was as foreign as any place they could imagine. It might have seemed to them like the ends of the earth. In addition to the opposition and hostility they encountered in the community, their own sinful hearts were no doubt pleading with them to give up and go away.

Our calling to be witnesses “to the ends of the earth” is no less difficult and no less important than the work God entrusted to Paul and his companions. May our study of God’s work through witnesses like Paul help us to clearly see our calling and strengthen and encourage us to carry it out with Spirit-given, joy-filled confidence.

- 1) What excites you the most about a bible study on Christian witnessing? What are you most looking forward to in this study?
- 2) What frightens or concerns you the most about a bible study on Christian witnessing? What are you least looking forward to in this study?
- 3) As you view the video, identify the barriers that Paul and his companions encountered as they sought to witness in Philippi.

4) Compare your list with the person seated next to you. Then, work together to identify barriers to your own gospel witnessing that mirror each of those barriers that Paul and his companions faced.

5) Which barrier is the most difficult for you to overcome, and why?

6) Discuss the insight that the following passages provide into Paul's life as a Christian witness. Then describe how this insight affects your personal approach to witnessing.

- Ephesians 6:19-20 - ¹⁹ Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should. (*see also Colossians 4:2-6*)
- Acts 20:22-24 - ²² "And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. ²³ I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. ²⁴ However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace." (*see also Philippians 1:12-14*)
- 2 Corinthians 5:14-15,18 - ¹⁴ For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. ¹⁵ And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again... ¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.
- 2 Timothy 3:10-17

THIS WEEK: *Identify 1-2 specific witnessing opportunities (people, places, etc.) you have, and put into words the specific barriers you face. Pray for wisdom, love, and strength to overcome those barriers.*

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®.
Copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide.