

## What Can We Learn From Jelly Roll? | Acts 16:1-15 | Keith Simon Sermon Discussion Participant Guide

**Icebreaker:** What was surprising about you becoming a Christian? Would others have been surprised?

### Recap

**Read:**

[Acts 1:8](#)

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

*So far in Acts, the gospel has been crossing all kinds of boundaries. Not only have Jews become Christians, but Samaritans and even Gentiles. Not just people in Israel, but also in Ethiopia, Syria, and now parts of modern-day Turkey. All kinds of people have become Christians: tradesmen, fishermen, Roman officials, priests, pagan worshippers, and religious legalists. God has used public preaching, one-on-one conversations, miraculous visions, and healings to draw people to himself. In the passage we'll look at today, we'll see how the gospel crosses even more boundaries. As we think about God's call for us to be witnesses, we can be encouraged that, in the words of Jelly Roll, "Anyone can have a relationship with Jesus."*

### Discussion

**Read:**

[Acts 16:1-5](#)

<sup>1</sup> Paul came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was Jewish and a believer but whose father was a Greek. <sup>2</sup> The believers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him. <sup>3</sup> Paul wanted to take him along on the journey, so he circumcised him because of the Jews who lived in that area, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. <sup>4</sup> As they traveled from town to town, they delivered the decisions reached by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for the people to obey. <sup>5</sup> So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers.

1. This is the Timothy who goes on to become one of Paul's most trusted co-workers. What do we learn about his family?

2. How was your family a mixed bag in how they influenced you spiritually?
3. Why did Paul have Timothy get circumcised when the Jerusalem Council in chapter 15 just said that Gentiles don't need to be circumcised?

**Read:**

**1 Corinthians 10:23-24**

<sup>23</sup> "I have the right to do anything," you say—but not everything is beneficial. "I have the right to do anything"—but not everything is constructive. <sup>24</sup> No one should seek their own good, but the good of others.

4. Paul here talks about his giving up his rights at times for the good of others. What rights might we need to surrender to reach others with the gospel?



**Read:**

**Acts 16:6-10**

<sup>6</sup> Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. <sup>7</sup> When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. <sup>8</sup> So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. <sup>9</sup> During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." <sup>10</sup> After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

5. How do these verses shape the way we should think about our plans and strategies?

# THE **crossing** **small groups**

6. What effect do you think the vision of the Macedonian man would have on Paul as opposed to just being told to go there? How can we humanize and personalize the people God has placed us around?
7. What do we learn about God's guidance through this passage?

## **Read:**

### [Acts 16:11-15](#)

<sup>11</sup> From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, and the next day we went on to Neapolis. <sup>12</sup> From there we traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days. <sup>13</sup> On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. <sup>14</sup> One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message. <sup>15</sup> When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us.

***Note:** Notice the change to "we" starting in verse 10. This is when Luke joins Paul's cohort. Luke could be from Troas or could be visiting or working in Troas. One possibility is that he is from Philippi. Troas is the site of the ancient city of Troy.*

8. What do we learn about Lydia? How does she help build the case that anyone can have a relationship with Jesus?
9. How does the fact that God opened her heart (v.14) humble us and encourage us as we try to be witnesses in the world?

## **Sharing and Prayer:**

On a notecard or a note on your phone, list two people who don't yet believe in Jesus that you are going to commit to pray regularly for. Go around the group and have everyone say a sentence or two prayer that God would both open our own hearts so that we might increase our own knowledge of Jesus and that he would open the hearts of all those we named that don't yet believe as we trust that anyone can have a relationship with Jesus.

## **Passages for the next two weeks:**

- March 8: Acts 16:16-40
- March 15: Acts 17:1-15