

A MACEDONIAN MOMENT: MACEDONIAN GUIDANCE

⁶ 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. ⁷ When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. ⁸ So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. ⁹ During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” ¹⁰ 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.

Acts 16:6-10

I. Understanding closed doors

- A. Some of the greatest advances in the world are made not as a first choice, but as a second choice.
- B. The Bible and the world abound with examples of those who achieved far more than they anticipated with what they considered a second choice.

* Some of the greatest advances in the world occurred not as a first choice, but as a second choice.

*Rayon *Silly Putty *Teflon *Super glue *Scotch Guard
* Penicillin * Coronary catheterization *Ink jet printers
*Microwave ovens.

- C. The Apostle Paul’s first choice was to go to preach in proconsular Asia--Phrygia, Galatia, Mysia, and Bythinia--

where he would have encountered the great cities of Ephesus, Smyrna, Sardis, Thyatira, Philadelphia, Nice, Nicomedia, and Chalcedon. It was a “good idea,” but not a “God idea.”

D. Paul received four No’s to his plans, which were never explained in his lifetime. (Acts 16:6-8)

E. Closed doors are often necessary.

F. Closed doors are not necessarily a rebuke.

G. Close doors lead to an open vision.

II. God’s open door for Paul transcended his capacity for dreaming.

A. Paul wound up in Troas, near Ancient Troy, which marks the geographical, psychological, and historical turning point of the gospel moving from its eastern birthplace to the Western Hemisphere--from Asia to Europe!

B. Paul was standing at the climax of a period of heartbreaking frustration and perplexity.

C. He arrived at Troas unemployed, exhausted, with closing doors all around him, puzzled at the divine refusals.

D. Yet 60 miles across the straights from Troy was Greece. A whole new world opened up in Paul’s vision!

E. Just behind God’s open door lay the funding of the gospel mission to Europe (Acts 16:13-19), victory over demonic powers (Acts 16:16-18), and a foothold of the gospel in the city of Philippi.
(Acts 16:25-27)

III. God's theology of "No." Twelve Bible examples of God saying no.

- A. God said no to Israel entering the promised land, because of their unbelief. (Numbers 13-14)
- B. God said no to Moses entering the promised land, because of his sin. (Numbers 20:1-12)
- C. God said no to Balaam, because of his favor over Israel. (Numbers 22-25)
- D. God said no to healing David's child by Bathsheba. (2 Samuel 12:16,18)
- E. God said no to David building the temple. (I Chronicles 17:14)
- F. God said no to Elijah, because he had something better for him. (I Kings 19:1-4)
- G. God said no to the Syro-Phoenician woman to test her faith. (Mark 7:24-30)
- H. God said no to James and John, because of divine appointment. (Mark 10:35-45)
- I. God said no to Jesus, because of the importance of his mission. (Luke 22:41-47)
- K. God said no to Paul preaching in Asia minor. (Acts 16:16-19)
- L. God said no to removing Paul's thorn. (II Corinthians 12:7)
- M. God says no when praying in opposition to his will. (I John 5:14,15)

IV. Seven facts concerning closed doors

- A. Closed doors may force us down different paths in the company of different people.
 - B. Closed doors may keep us from sacrificing the eternal on the altar of the temporary.
 - C. Closed doors to one person may mean open doors to another.
 - D. Closed doors teach us the value of kingdom timing.
 - * We don't harvest peanuts in April, but October. We don't harvest tomatoes in January, but June. We don't harvest watermelon in February, but July.
 - E. Closed doors are not necessarily rejection, but rather redirection.
 - F. Closed doors are not necessarily punishment, but rather preparation.
 - G. Closed doors can help supplant prejudicial thinking: Jew over Gentile; men over women; east over west.
- V. Seven steps in Macedonian guidance.
- A. Scriptural guidance (II Timothy 3:16)
 - B. The inner witness (Romans 8:17)
 - C. Prophetic confirmation (I Corinthians 14:3)
 - D. Wise counsel (Proverbs 11:14)
 - E. Circumstances (Numbers 22:23,25,27)
 - F. Peace (Colossians 3:15)
 - G. Provision (Luke 12:24)