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## Sermon Text Discussion 1/15/18

Our Unpredictable Mission and the Power of God

Acts 15:35-16:40

By Drew Hunter

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### Overview

This text is a turning point in the book of Acts; and it's a turning point in history. The gospel has been spreading from Jerusalem outward. And now in this text, it enters Europe for the first time in history. The few men who did this had no idea the kind of impact this would have on the entire world for the next two millennia. Before they get to Europe however, they have some challenges. Something surprising and unexpected happens in almost every paragraph in this text. But through all this unpredictability, we see the one constant: God working to spread the gospel and bring people to faith in Christ. This is what we should expect if we live on mission – if we give our lives to following Jesus and making him known. We cannot predict how things will go, but we can expect God to work. The outline we'll follow for this text:

1. Balanced mission
2. Unexpected challenges
3. Surprising conversions

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### Quotations

Why is it worth it to work through these challenges? Because of what God does through our efforts. If God decides to use us, we can expect to see him bring new life to people through faith in Jesus. (Drew Hunter)

The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul. (Acts 16:14b)

"If I'm called to preach the gospel among a lot of people who are cultural teetotalers [those who say no one should drink alcohol], I'll give up alcohol for the sake of the gospel. But if they start saying, "You cannot be a Christian and drink alcohol," I'll reply, "Pass the port". (Don Carson)

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### Understanding & Application

1. Paul and other leaders focus their attention on several important aspects of the mission of the church. In doing so however, they don't over-emphasize one to the neglect of the other. Drew mentioned two different sets of balances. What are those two different sets of balances. Give an example of each. Do you tend to focus on one end of these two different balances too much?
2. What should we expect if we live on mission? What three types of challenges can be seen in this text? Give an example of each. Have you experienced these types of challenges?
3. Explain the challenge of partnership that Paul and Barnabas experienced. How did they solve this problem?
4. Why did Paul have no concern circumcising Timothy, but refuse to circumcise Titus? Have you ever been in a situation where you felt like you needed to contextualize yourself in some manner to remove a distraction from the gospel?
5. What did Paul do when he was hindered from going to a new area? What didn't he do when he was hindered from going to a new area? What can we learn from Paul's response? What two extremes does Paul balance?

6. Explain some of the differences seen in the three conversions (Lydia, slave girl ((experiences the power of Christ)), and the jailer.