

## Acts of Jesus – part 28

More than 100 years ago a young man started out as a clerk in a hardware store. Like a lot of hardware stores, its inventory included thousands of dollars' worth of items that were obsolete or seldom needed by customers. This young man had the bright idea to sell that obsolete inventory by placing a table in the center of the store and all the items on that table were ten cents. Well, it went over really well—the obsolete items sold and the store gained some money for its otherwise worthless inventory. The young man ran a second sell and it went over just as well as the first. This gave this young entrepreneur an idea, "Why not open a store that sold only nickel and dime items?" He could run the store and his boss could oversee it and provide him the inventory. The young man's boss said, "It'll never work because you can't find enough items to sell at a nickel and a dime." Disappointed, the young man eventually went out and started his own 5 and dime store and made an absolute fortune out of the idea. That young man's name was F.W. Woolworth. Years later his former boss lamented, "**As best as I can tell, every word I used in the sentence that I spoke turning Woolworth down has cost me about a million dollars apiece.**"

--Ever missed an opportunity? Sometimes opportunities come in disguise—even disguised as barriers, even closed doors.

--In our study today, we are going to see that some early missionaries discovered a great open door of opportunity, but that open door came at the expense of several closed ones.

--We are at the place of the second missionary journey here in Acts:

Paul and Barnabas have returned from the first and now have decided to go out again, but they differed over whether to bring Barnabas's cousin named John Mark who had deserted them before. The disagreement was so strong that they decided to go on separate missionary journeys—Paul took a guy named Silas with him.

**Acts 16:4-10**-- As a point of importance, "They" changes to "we" down in V. 10 which means that Luke has now joined up with Paul.

--Isn't it comforting to know that even the apostles were not always clear as to what God's will was for them?

--They were just regular people who were totally sold out to God and His will—and God used them.

--He will do the same with us if we'll let Him.

There are a couple of points to address here immediately:

1. When God closes a door (when things fall through; when it doesn't work out) it means there is one open somewhere else.

--This is always true, but it's our commitment to our original venture that causes the trouble

--God is leading us in the way He wants us to go—to be sure. The difficulty comes when that differs from our own plans.

--If you really want God's direction for our lives, then we need to give Him freedom to disagree with our current direction.

--Sometimes it's like God didn't get the memo stating what you planned to do already!

--Struggling with open and closed doors is a healthy part of life and one of many ways we come to know God better.

--We tend to not want our children or those we love to go through the same struggles we went through in trying to find our way.

--Those hardships made us what we are today and gave us the relationship we have with God.

2. Closed door doesn't mean forever; Paul did wind up going to these areas later and had a fruitful ministry there.

a. It's not true that a lack of instant success means that you are not in the right place doing the right thing.