

Week of May 27-June 2

## **DOOR AND WINDOW MINISTRY**

**Scripture Reading:** Read Acts chapter 16

Do you know which movie won best picture and best director Oscars (along with three others) at the 38<sup>th</sup> annual Academy Award show? Let me give you a hint. Think “Do Re Mi.” That’s right. It was the Sound of Music starring Julie Andrews and Christopher Plummer. It remains a favorite of fans even after all these years. At one point in the film, Maria (played by Andrews) and the Captain (played by Plummer) finally admit to the love they have for each other. In the context of this conversation, Maria notes, “The Reverend Mother always says, ‘when the Lord closes a door, somewhere he opens a window’.”

In our chapter reading today, Paul ran into some closed doors. *“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. When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to.”* Apparently, Paul and Silas had planned on extending their missionary work into Asia (modern day Turkey) but the Holy Spirit wouldn’t let them. That doesn’t make sense, does it? God stopped the gospel from going forth by closing a door to this missionary team? Why would God do that? The Scripture doesn’t tell us directly. We can speculate and say that it’s because the harvest wasn’t yet ready. Maybe, it wasn’t time yet for Asia. We just don’t know. All we do know is that the Holy Spirit said “no!”

Alexander Graham Bell (inventor of the telephone) declared *“When one door closes, another opens; but we often look so long and so regretfully upon the closed door that we do not see the one which has opened for us.”* Paul and Silas, when facing God’s closed doors, didn’t whine or moan. They simply continued to trust that the Holy Spirit would open another door elsewhere. He did. The closed doors of ministry in Asia and Bithynia opened a window of opportunity for the gospel to go west into Macedonia and Achaia. The cities of Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens and Corinth were all opened to the gospel because of the closed door in Asia. The church at Philippi became a major source of financial and spiritual support for Paul on his missionary journeys. Extended ministry in Corinth was possible, too, because of the closed door in Asia.

What happened to Paul and Silas still happens today. God still closes doors in our lives. Sometimes, he closes them permanently. Other times, it’s only temporary. In Paul’s case, he did make it to Asia but it was not until his third missionary journey (see Acts 19). When we respond appropriately to God’s closed doors and look for open windows of ministry, we move forward in fulfilling God’s call on our lives. It really comes down to trusting the leading and prompting of the Holy Spirit. Paul and Silas trusted and wonderful “window ministry” resulted. The same thing can happen in your life too.

**Action Step & Prayer Focus:** Have you found yourself in front of a closed door recently? Instead of complaining that the door is closed or trying to pry it open, look around and pray for God to show you the window of ministry He is opening for you instead.

**Take-a-way:** *When God closes a door, look for the open window.*