

Hang on to your hat—what we’re talking about today can *significantly upgrade or deepen* daily workplace life for many. But it’s beyond that: it’s not just about our workplace lives...it has to do with every facet of our lives! Now the underlying story here is a Kingdom event that re-vectored history. And key elements of that story are applicable to believers like you and me today! Intrigued?

So, initially, the funny thing is, this event we’re diving into for instruction was basically a shift in a planned supply-chain path. What I’m talking about is what Christians have labeled “The Macedonian Call.” So here we go with that story from the book of Acts, from the Apostle Paul’s “second missionary journey.”

“And they [Paul, Silas, and Timothy] went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. And when they had come up to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them. So, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing there, urging him and saying, ‘Come over to Macedonia and help us.’ And when Paul had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them. So, setting sail from Troas, we made a direct voyage to Samothrace, and the following day to Neapolis, and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony...” (Acts 16:6-12 ESV) Whoa...so let’s identify eight key observations about this remarkable event!

Observation 1. This story was a signature event in the grand supply chain of God! Christ died for the sins of every person on the Cross, and after His crucifixion, He commanded that every believer be a part of His gospel supply-chain by going forth to the nations and making disciples. This is not manifesting “God + robots”...to the contrary, this is “God + His adopted children” partnering in the fulfillment of the grandest supply chain of all—the manifesting of God’s love in every person who embraces Christ and Him crucified!

Observation 2. Paul, Silas, and Timothy were demonstrably active in obeying the Great Commission to go forth from Jerusalem to “speak the word” in Asia, to proclaim the gospel and make disciples beyond Jerusalem—again, as Jesus so commanded in His last words before His Ascension to the right hand of the Father! ‘Course, missionary journeys also had faithful “senders” acting in accordance with Romans 10:15.

Observation 3. We see God’s Spirit *twice* did not allow the three to do what they went to do! That is quite startling, *because the Holy Spirit kept them from doing exactly the type of task God wanted them to!* But here’s the deal, this was only *temporarily* a shift in God’s supply-chain path. Indeed, the three men were on the right journey with the right purpose...*but God had different delivery nodes than they planned!*

Observation 4. Yes, the Holy Spirit forbade “them”—meaning He constrained all three men...*twice!* This means that Paul, Silas, and Timothy were what can be called out as “practicing Trinitarians.” Yes, they were *not* limiting themselves to what some have called “practicing binitarians,” you know, like some folks who may call out Father, Son and Holy Spirit in a creed *but* shut out the Holy Spirit in daily focus, practice, and influence. ...And then Paul had a vision. Yes, these three were unfazed that the Spirit shifted them to specific changes that, importantly, were still in alignment with speaking the word! Silas and Timothy followed the vision given to Paul, trusting in Paul’s receiving of the shift. And God recorded this event for our instruction today...after all, in accordance with Jesus’ direct teaching in John 14 and with Bible verses elsewhere in the New Testament, the Holy Spirit was sent to believers for each to foster a Spirit-led life!

Observation 5. So, in Troas, God altered the supply-chain plans these three believers had communicated to their fellow believers in Jerusalem. Yeah, God shifted them from a land-traversing trip to a seagoing-enabled enterprise targeting a different geographic place and different people—and that done based solely upon a vision given Paul! You see, Paul had cultivated a Spirit-led life and unhesitating altered their path—*clearly a major shift in their supply-chain plans even while maintaining the same strategic mission!*

Observation 6. Luke, the author of this narrative in the Book of Acts, joined the three in Troas, as evidenced by the change in pronouns from “they” to “we.” So, Luke embraced Paul’s Spirit-led change!

Observation 7. Next, fruits abounded in Macedonia! Lydia converted to Christ, a fortune-telling slave girl was delivered, Paul and Silas were imprisoned and the jailer converted, and Paul preached in Athens. The churches in Philippi, Thessalonica, and nearby Corinth were founded! All of these events were ripe nodes on the supply chain for the good news of the Kingdom. *Do you think God knew that and re-vectored? Yeah.*

Observation 8. This supply-chain vectoring change—relying completely on believers’ guidance by the Holy Spirit—established a beachhead in modern Europe for the early church in expanding the Kingdom of God. And because of their planting the churches in Philippi, Thessalonica, and Corinth, ultimately fostering the Biblical epistles of Philippians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, and 1 & 2 Corinthians—benefitting us all to this very day! It’s no exaggeration to say that vectors of *both Kingdom history and human history were changed!*

So, how’s that for an astounding set of observations stemming from an astounding series of events? Now, let’s talk about what we specifically can learn from this amazing story...from three key angles.

The first angle: *the best supply chains for any enterprise—businesses or nonprofits—are built with the flexibility for taking advantage of emerging opportunities.* In fact, a large part of any enterprise’s strategy is determining which markets are riper than others and then adjusting the supply chain particulars—yes, re-vectoring to the fresh opportunity and then perhaps doubling back to the original approach. Hey, it’s clear that Paul and the team had settled fully into a land-based, constricted supply chain approach for their trip...but God diverted the gospel supply chain to a seagoing, Macedonia-focused approach! Yeah, that required a “tech” change—from roads to boats! So, is your enterprise sensitive to possible changes in target markets...like opening a specific international market? Fun! Challenging! Even opportunistic!

The second angle: *your personal, ever-developing place and activity in God’s supply chain, as directed by the Spirit.* Remember, we are all called to full-time ministry! If it surprises you to hear that...well, that’s not surprising, because the opposite has been taught “and caught” by many Christians for centuries. See my podcast about this issue, because it’s vital to your fullest life in Christ *that you’re convinced that you personally are in full-time ministry*, whether you’re a nurse or engineer or business executive or pastor! That means *you* are integral to the supply chain of the Great Commission...wherever you work!

And, as we’ve seen, God’s supply chain is infused with Spirit-led events building on the foundation of the Word! So, we can delight in asking that the Spirit of God be directing our steps, even re-vectoring us in directions and to people we don’t expect! Maybe even tomorrow. Or next week! Knowing that Paul was directed by the Holy Spirit well beyond the path planned for this journey—and all the way to writing God-breathed epistles—well, then, why would we want to be *undirected* by the Holy Spirit in our lives?

Third, *your personal workplace and life actions can be directed by God’s vectoring and re-vectoring!* Obviously, the Lord cares deeply about your competencies, your stewardship, and the outworking of your love at your workplace. So, do you expectantly ask for the Spirit of Jesus to direct you in all your relationships and workplace decisions? Since Jesus said, “My sheep hear My voice,” are you listening? Or have you developed a pattern of thinking that your vectoring and results pretty much rest upon you alone?

In our lives we are to be like Christ...and His ministry opened up dramatically after His being water-baptized in the Jordan and the Holy Spirit descended on Him. And why not look to Paul and the other Apostles and thousands in the early church? As Jesus taught in John 14:26: the Holy Spirit teaches us all things. So, are you an eager believer, expecting to enjoy the Spirit’s leading in every facet of daily life?

Here’s how we started this episode: “what we’re talking about today can *significantly upgrade or deepen* daily workplace life for many. But it’s beyond that: it’s not just about our workplace lives...it has to do with every facet of our lives!”

Look, it’s no exaggeration to say this: when we read Luke’s account in Acts 16—and many other stories in the Bible—we fully realize that the Spirit can and will help direct our life choices. Is there any doubt our paths in life will be bettered? *Who wants to settle for anything less?*

## *A&A: Application & Action*

1. Is your church a vibrant, persevering, fruitful participant of God's supply chain of the gospel of the Kingdom of God, both locally and worldwide? Be specific.
  
2. Besides the Macedonian Call, what are some other examples of the God's gospel supply chain maturing into other directions or ways, thereby improving the effectiveness of the church in fulfilling Kingdom purposes? This could be either in the early church or in more recent events. Be specific.
  
3. Do you believe you are fully discerning, absorbing, and following the Holy Spirit's direction—and perhaps even re-vectoring—in your workplace life? And how about in the other dimensions of your life? Discuss.