

Acts 16:9-15

Not all plain sailing

Paul has a vision of a man from Macedonia urging him to come over to help them. Paul and his companions set sail immediately, but, when they arrive in Philippi, instead of meeting a man, Paul encounters a God-fearing woman named Lydia.

Read this week's passage:



DRAW



and cut out an anchor shape, reflecting on how God helps you to stay steady in turbulent times.

LOOK

through photos of holidays or journeys you've been on. Did you have to travel far? Did you go by boat, plane or a long walk or drive? Did you have any unexpected stops or delays on your journey? Did you meet anyone who you still keep in touch with today?



a boat (from paper, or junk modelling) and try to sail it on a local pond or body of water (adults to supervise children). Does it float?

Living Scripture

'During the night Paul had a vision.' Acts 16:9

Paul and his companions were called by God through a vision to Macedonia. The call seemed so clear. How simple it was for them to immediately set sail for Philippi. But the journey there and finding whom God had called them to was not as straightforward nor obvious. The Mediterranean is not known for its calm waters. And Paul goes expecting a man and instead meets a God-fearing woman! How often do we feel God's guidance, but as we follow, it doesn't turn out exactly the way we'd imagined? God's ways are not our ways, and it doesn't mean we didn't hear his voice, or were not following well. Perhaps God is working things out with us as we go. Perhaps God speaks to us through our own presuppositions and opens our eyes to more of his truth as we follow. It's dangerous to see all difficulty, delay or opposition as a sign that we are on the wrong track. Like Paul, in faith we follow as best we understand, and allow God to guide our steps. Have you felt God nudging you into new things? Have you seen visions turn out differently from what you first imagined?

First impressions

- Have you experienced a turbulent journey? How did it feel?
- Has your faith journey been plain sailing – did you expect it to be?
- What opportunities might there be for local business leaders – like Lydia – to be involved with your church?



Pray

God, who is always there,
help us to feel you close
when our journey through life becomes bumpy.
God, who knows all things,
help us to follow you through the unexpected.
God, who loves us,
help us to always know that love.
Amen.



Write

a letter to yourself to be opened in the future (1 year, 5 years?) about what you are expecting in life. Or write a letter to your younger self, reflecting on what God has done – have you seen God at work in unexpected ways?

