“Guide, Guard, and Direct Us”
(Adapted by Paul R. Blake from an outline by Mark Copeland)

Introduction:
A. Acts 16:6-10
   1. The Lord’s guidance of Paul was evident throughout his work
      a. Acts 13:2-4
   2. This is not typical of how God directs His people
B. How does God guide and direct His people today?

I. GOD’S GUIDANCE OF PAUL AND HIS COMPANIONS
   A. Forbidden to preach in Asia by the Holy Spirit - Acts 16:6
      1. Paul later spent over two years in Ephesus - Acts 19:1, 10
      2. Perhaps the Spirit forbade them at this time, knowing that they would
         have the opportunity to preach in Asia later
   B. Not permitted to go into Bithynia by the Spirit - Acts 16:7
      1. Peter later wrote to Christians in Bithynia - 1Peter 1:1
      2. Perhaps the Spirit did not permit them at this time, knowing that others
         would minister to Bithynia in the future
   C. Arrived at Troas after bypassing Mysia - Acts 16:8
      1. Paul has a vision of a man of Macedonia - Acts 16:9
      2. They drew conclusions about the meaning of the vision: the Lord
         wanted them to preach the gospel in Macedonia - Acts 16:10
      3. It is at this point that we conclude that Luke is with them, as he
         consistently uses personal pronouns

II. UNDERSTANDING GOD’S GUIDANCE TODAY
   A. God’s proclaimed will - 1Thes. 5:18; 1Peter 2:15
      1. Made manifest by God - Heb. 1:1-2; John 16:12-13; 1Cor. 14:36-37
      2. We must do His will in order to be saved - Matt. 7:21
      3. God reveals His will in the scriptures - 2Tim. 3:16-17
   B. God’s providential will - Rom. 1:10, 15:32
      1. That is why we pray about our plans - James 4:13, 15
   C. God’s permissive will
      1. God allows things to happen that are not necessarily in keeping with His
         desired will
         a. Free will enables people to choose to sin and hurt other people
         b. God is not pleased and will render judgment - Acts 17:30-31
         c. He is able to fulfill His own will, in spite of this - Isa. 10:5-7
      3. God permits people to do things that are matters of Divine indifference
         a. Rom. 14:5-6
         b. Not all choices please God, nor are demanded by God; so, how
            do we know we are cooperating with the will of God?
III. COOPERATING WITH GOD’S GUIDANCE TODAY

A. Focus on the proclaimed will of God
   1. 2Tim. 2:15; 1Tim. 4:16
   2. We will not be ignorant of what we must know and do
   3. We will avoid choices that are contrary to God's will

B. Obtain advice from other dedicated Christians
   1. Prov. 11:14, 12:15

C. Pray diligently for the ability to discern wisely - James 1:5
   1. Wisdom is that spiritual insight that enables us to evaluate situations clearly and helps us to utilize the options and abilities we have

D. Commit your way to the Lord
   1. Whatever you do, do it for the Lord's sake - Psalm 37:5-6, 23-24
   2. Make your plans subject to God's will, both proclaimed and providential
   3. Ask God to close the door on your choice if it is His will
   4. If He closes the door on your choice, be content to look for alternatives

E. Things to remember
   1. God is able to accomplish His will regardless of whether we cooperate or not, whether we obey or disobey, whether we do nothing or do our own thing.
      a. However, it is in our best interests to be guided and directed by the will of God
      b. Esther 4:14 - Do the right thing regardless of the consequences
   2. A choice may not be between good & bad, but between good & better
   3. God can use us in many different ways; be prepared and humble enough to serve Him in whatever task is at hand
   4. If God has given you time to choose, use that time to pray, grow, and gain wisdom
   5. Whatever your hands find to do in current circumstances, do it with all of your might - Ecc. 9:10

Conclusion:
   A. Our goal should be to "stand perfect and complete in all the will of God"
      1. Col. 4:12
   B. Pray for guidance and direction from the will of God. Jesus did.
      1. Matt. 6:10; 26:39