

## **Introduction**

- Reminder of context, journey after the Jerusalem Council
  - the split with Barnabas
  - the geographical extent of these few verses... (see map)

## **Paul worked with individuals**

- For their growth in faith and in service
  - Timothy as his protege...
  - contrast with my own experience!
  - compare Jesus' own example

### Do we?

## **Paul encouraged the church to work out Acts 15**

- Namely - cultivate attitudes of:
  - outsiders to the gospel are not to be treated as "Them", but welcomed as "us"
  - we will guard against our human tendency to veer towards Law, towards rules to define who is a Christian, rather than the Gospel truth that it is by grace
  - and we will, trusting in Christ, run risks for the gospel rather than simply playing it safe

### Do we?

## **Paul was ever dependent on the Spirit**

- For leading, direction
  - but notice how they worked on, when the Spirit's prompting is negative!
  - they knew what they should be doing all the time - namely preaching, strengthening the churches - the only question was where!
  - the Spirit prevented them doing so in one place - so they stopped and sat on their hands until the Spirit prompted them? **NO!!**
  - they kept preaching, wherever they could!

### Are we?

- Both open to the Spirit's prompting, listening, bringing the events of the day or the week or the years and saying to the Lord, "what does this mean?"
  - and also keeping on with what we **have** been called to do, to be witnesses to the life of Christ within us?

## **Paul shared Christ's compassion**

- In his vision heard the need and wasn't "Oh no, not more work" but caught by Christ's compassion
  - and so acted to help, in the way he could
  - what compassion do we have for the lost - in Fintry, in our workplaces, schools...

### Do we?

## **And so?**

- *So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers.* (v.5)

- Strengthened in the faith - means drew closer to Jesus!
  - greater intimacy with him, greater dependence on him, greater obedience of him, greater likeness of him
  - think we have a tendency to kind of "skip over" this first part, and latch onto the second - careful not to!