

No, Go, Not Yet

Acts 15:36-16:10

- ***“And after some days Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us return and visit the brothers in every city where we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they are.” Now Barnabas wanted to take with them John called Mark. But Paul thought best not to take with them one who had withdrawn from them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work. And there arose a sharp disagreement, so that they separated from each other. Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus, but Paul chose Silas and departed, having been commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.” -Acts 15:36-41 (ESV)***

- PRAY

- Paul and Barnabas go way back.
- Just to recap, Paul had this dramatic conversion where he went from being a pharisee that wanted to kill all the Christians, to being one of the most active missionaries for the Gospel of Jesus Christ that the world has ever seen.
- But early on in his new walk with Christ, a lot of the believers were still wary of him.
- In Acts chapter 9, it said, ***“And when [Paul] had come to Jerusalem, he attempted to join the disciples. And they were all afraid of him, for they did not believe that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles and declared to them how on the road he had seen the Lord, who spoke to him, and how at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus. So he went in and out among them at Jerusalem, preaching boldly in the name of the Lord.” -Acts 9:26-29 ESV***

- So even when everyone still wasn't sure about Paul, and thought he was just doing some sort of covert operation to destroy the ministry from the inside out... Barnabas was willing to stand up for Paul and vouch for him
 - But that's just the kind of guy that Barnabas was. He was an encourager, he saw the potential in people, and loved to see God move powerfully in and through the least likely people
- Not long after that, we see in chapter 11 that a new church was started in Antioch and Barnabas was sent to lead that church.
 - Barnabas was so encouraged by the believers that he had seen there and what God was doing in and through that church—but He didn't want to lead that church by himself so he went and got his boy Paul
- Verse 25 says ***“So Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for [Paul], and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church and taught a***

great many people. And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians.” -Acts 11:25-26 (ESV)

- Then when we get to chapter 13, and we see the church leaders were gathered together and it says, ***“While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and [Paul] for the work to which I have called them.” Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.” -Acts 13:2-3 (ESV)***
- So in 47AD Paul begins his first missionary journey, He and Barnabas and they bring Barnabas' cousin, John Mark, along with them.
- **MAP** They first set sail to the island of Cyprus and they cover the whole island spreading the Gospel and leading people to Jesus
- This is where they shut up the false prophet and led the proconsul to Christ

- From there Luke tells us ***“Now Paul and his companions set sail from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia. And John left them and returned to Jerusalem, but they went on from Perga and came to Antioch in Pisidia.” -Acts 13:14-13 (ESV) (PUT MAP BACK UP)***
- So Paul and Barnabas are not sure why John Mark left, but they keep trucking along through a number of different cities throughout Galatia and then after they had preached all over those areas they decided to retrace their steps and backtrack throughout every where they had been in Asia Minor to visit those new believers one more time before they headed back home to Antioch.
- This was about a year-and-a-half to 2 year long journey. And this was not an easy process, they faced a lot of opposition, they had to run for their lives at times, Paul was even STONED at Iconium.
- But whenever they started this journey, there were no churches in any of these areas and by the time Paul was done traveling, there were churches all over the place.
- They had literally put their blood, sweat, and tears into the mission of the Gospel and it was worth every bit of sacrifice they had to make.
- So after about another year, in 49 AD Paul says to Barnabas, “Let’s go back and see all of the people we saw and led to the Lord on our last trip and see how the churches are doin!”
- Barnabas says, “Cool, I love it! I’ll go get John Mark”
- But Paul, says, “Uhhhhh I don’t think so.” Chapter 15, says, ***“But Paul thought best not to take with them one who had withdrawn from them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work. And there arose a sharp disagreement, so that they separated from each other. Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus, but Paul chose Silas and departed, having been***

commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord.” -Acts 15:38-40 (ESV)

- The band’s breaking up! I can imagine this conversation going down:
 - *Barnabas: “Sweet! I’ll go get John Mark!”*
 - *Paul: “Ummmm, no you won’t...”*
 - *Barnabas: “Why not??”*
 - *Paul: “Because he completely abandoned us last time! He’s not reliable, we don’t know if we can trust him!”*
 - *Barnabas: “That’s funny Paul, I remember when they used to say the same thing about you, but I stuck with you, you remember that?”*
 - *Paul: “Oh please, that’s not even remotely close to being the same thing”*
 - *Is too! Is not! IS TOO! IS NOT!!*
- I love that the bible doesn’t hide these accounts of turmoil even between leaders

- The greek word used here is **Sharp Disagreement (paroxysmos)**: (par-ox-oos-moss) **Irritation, contention, violent anger, passion**
 - So did this come to fisticuffs?? I don’t know....mayyyybee
 - I like to picture it more like they got into an awkward wrestling match that had no clear winner...like you see in goofy tv shows ya know?
 - But they got heated in the moment, they were childish, they said and did some things that they would go on to regret
- But it’s encouraging to read things like this because even Paul and Barnabas— even with all that they accomplished for the Kingdom— were far from perfect and they were still learning and growing until the day they died.
- But when we read about this disagreement, our first reaction is to take a side right?

- Most of us would think, well the rest of the book of Acts follows Paul so he must have been the one that was right here!
 - But I don't think that's the right way to look at it
- Who was right and who was wrong? Well, neither of them were wrong, and really they both were right. They just had different philosophies and perspectives.
- I heard one pastor say it this way:
 - Paul's thought process was: "What can this person do for the work of God?"
 - Barnabas' thought process was: "What can the work of God do for this person?"
 - Barnabas couldn't believe that Paul couldn't understand that it would be good for John Mark to be involved, it would encourage him and build him up
 - And Paul couldn't believe that Barnabas couldn't understand that Paul didn't care

about John Mark's feelings, he cared about reaching the lost

- And it's a difference in wiring and calling
 - Barnabas was an encourager and a nurturer by nature...his calling was to to help nature and grow and encourage and build up the believers of the local church
 - Paul was more focused on the unbelievers. He was like an entrepreneur, he was a serial church planter, he was always grindin and moving forward
- They had the same mission, but they were wired differently and saw things in different ways...and that's ok.
- And when they realized they couldn't find a compromise, they did the healthy thing and decided to separate...and the only result of that was God now had two teams.
- Now they're just going to divide and conquer and continue to carry out the mission, just now

they'll be able to operate in their own strengths.

- We know that this did not lead to lingering bitterness because Paul writes in 2 Timothy chapter 4 and says, "Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is very useful to me for ministry."
- So Paul had come to have an appreciation for John Mark.
 - And maybe after he wrote the Gospel of Mark...it very well may have been that while they were on that trip, John Mark got so burdened for the Gentile people that he decides to write a Gospel, detailing the life and ministry of Jesus for those who were not familiar with Jewish customs and traditions
 - We also know from various 2nd Century church leaders that John Mark served a stint as the personal secretary to the Apostle Peter
 - So it could have been that he left Paul and Barnabas in Pamphylia, and made his way

back to Jerusalem to work with Peter and start on His book that we still read today.

- So maybe Paul would come to realize that he left them for a good reason
- But either way, Paul and Barnabas' splitting up was unfortunate, but God used both groups in powerful ways for a long time.
- **YOU CAN DISAGREE AND STILL BE ON THE SAME TEAM**
- So often we get caught up in these menial differences of philosophies and we'll spend more time competing with other Christians than focusing on the mission.
 - A year or two ago I was at a Discipleship conference in Concord that goes on every year.
 - I was with a buddy whose ordination I helped officiate last Sunday
 - And in one of this sessions, this Pastor gets up and he's preaching from the Gospel of Mark and the passage where the Disciples

tell Jesus “Hey we saw these randoms casting out demons in Your Name, but we told them to stop because they’re not with us.”

- And then Jesus essentially says, “Leave them alone, anyone who’s not against us is for us”...you remember that passage?
- Ok, so he uses that passage and makes the point: “We need good doctrine”
 - Ummm, I mean yea that’s true but how do you get that from that passage?
- Then he proceeds to put up this pyramid of like essential doctrines, you know, like at the top he had the divinity of Jesus, the Trinity, salvation by grace through faith alone...those are non-negotiable doctrines right
- But then he had lower on the pyramid things like: views of the end times, spiritual gifts, women in ministry and things of the like
- and he said, “Now there are other Christians who believe differently than we do about

theses things...now, they’re still saved...but they’re not with us.

- I looked at my buddy, and I’m like “Is he serious?” I thought I heard him wrong because he literally was saying the exact opposite of what he had just read Jesus say to His disciples
 - I could not believe what I was hearing
- But that’s how easy it is for Christians to make enemies or at least separate themselves from other Christians
- We gotta get to the point where we recognize that if we believe in the same Jesus and the Same Great Commission, we may have different philosophies and views on how it all works, but it doesn’t really matter, we serve the same God, have the same mission, we’re on the same team.
- If we can keep the main thing the main thing, there can still be some things that we disagree about and it doesn’t have to make us enemies

- I don't know why so many of us forget Paul's verse in 1 Corinthians 2 when he said, ***"For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified."*** -1 ***Corinthians 2:2 (ESV)***
- Paul had grown to the point where He realized that he needed to keep the main thing the main thing.
- *Jesus is God, He became a man, He lived and died and rose again so that we could be saved. Now that we've been saved, it's our job to go tell people about Him.*
- It's that simple. And yes there are going to be a thousand little doctrinal and theological differences that a lot of us disagree on, but if we agree on Who Jesus is and what He has called us to do...we're on the same team, and everything else is a distraction.
- Paul and Barnabas had a distraction, couldn't find common ground. **MAP 2** So they eliminated the distraction by separating and continuing the mission.
- Barnabas goes back to Cyprus, to the first church that they had started— and nurtures and grows that church, and Paul keeps his entrepreneurial spirit going.
- But Barnabas left some big shoes to fill. And Paul had chosen Silas to accompany him, but in the beginning of chapter 16 he recruits Timothy as well.
- ***"Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek. He was well spoken of by the brothers at Lystra and Iconium. Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him, and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. As they went on their way through the cities, they delivered to them for observance the decisions that had been reached by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem. So the***

churches were strengthened in the faith, and they increased in numbers daily.” -Acts 16:1-5 (ESV)

- Now this is strange because in chapter 15 we have this whole discourse within this council that ends up declaring that circumcision is not a requirement for believers to be a part of the people of God as it had been for the Jews
 - So why in the world would Paul make Timothy get circumcised??
 - Also, a number of questions: as to how this conversation came up, who actually did it, what did Timothy think about all of this as a grown man, how is anyone going to know if he is or if he isn't, and why does it even matter?!
 - And if I'm honest with you, a lot of those answers—I don't wanna know!
 - But what I do know is that Paul didn't do this because he questioned Timothy's commitment or faith
- No, Paul made a calculated decision to eliminate what could be a potential distraction
 - He knew that they were going to be traveling to a lot of places that had large Jewish populations, and they would not be able to freely minister to them.
- Because the council in Jerusalem may have agreed that this isn't an issue to be divided on anymore, but that doesn't mean that the Jewish community as a whole has agreed on that
 - And Paul is probably wanting to limit the amount of death threats and stone-ings this go round— so he decides to have Timothy circumcised help them better evangelize on this trip
 - And we know that Paul doesn't always do this, because when the Jews tried to get him to have Titus circumcised he refused to give in to those demands

- But also Titus was sent to minister in Crete, not to Jews so it wasn't going to be an issue to them...so he wasn't giving in to their old covenant legalistic traditions
 - But Timothy, was not as fortunate, and we are going to move on to the next passage...
- Verse 6 says: ***And they went through the region of Phrygia*** (Frig-ia) ***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.*** ***Acts 16:6-7 (ESV)***
- Now this is interesting, because they're out trying to evangelize and share the Gospel, and the Lord says, "Nope, not those people."
- It's interesting because I feel like most of us, if we encounter any opposition or roadblocks in sharing the Gospel, our first reaction is, "Oh its satan! The enemy prevented us from going there!"
- But they didn't even entertain that thought, because the reality is- *Yes, the enemy will create opposition for us, but the enemy really has no power to stop the mission of God.*
- Satan and all of his power and his resources do not hold a candle to the power of the Holy Spirit within us. And there is nothing the enemy can do to keep God from carrying out His mission.
- So God was the only one who could close those doors.
 - *And when we are carrying out the mission of God and following His will, sometimes He says No, sometimes He says Go, and sometimes He says Not Yet*
 - Because its not like those cities in Asia Minor just were never going to hear the Gospel, it's not like God said "Oh I don't wanna save those people."
 - Because if you notice some of those cities in that area are Ephesus, Laodicea, Colossae, and Philadelphia which were all major

players in the early church that Paul would eventually go to...but God just had a different mission for them at that specific time.

- But **GOD'S NO IS JUST AS IMPORTANT AS HIS GO**

- Now how did the Holy Spirit tell them no??

- WE DON'T KNOW!

- One of the more interesting speculations that I heard was that perhaps Paul kept getting sick. We know from scripture that Paul battled a number of health issues throughout his ministry, and maybe as they were traveling throughout that area of what was called Asia back then, whenever he tried to speak to the people he just didn't have the strength. Or that he didn't have the strength to travel North.

- But what's interesting is that they go down to Troas which was a major port city. And in chapter 16 verse 10 is the first time that the narrative of Acts goes from 3rd person to 1st

person. And we know that Luke, who was a Doctor— was the author.

- Luke was from Antioch, where Paul's sending church was, and most likely he was employed by Theophilus as his personal doctor, and it could have been when they realized how much medical attention was needed, Theophilus sends Luke to go accompany them.

- So it's interesting to think that maybe they had to ship Doctor Luke in to Troas to care for Paul and they decided to have Luke join them throughout the rest of their travels to provide doctoral care for Paul whenever needed.
- It's an interesting thought— however, we still don't know for certain HOW the Holy Spirit prevented them from speaking and going to the places.

- But most of the time whenever we are following God's mission, we're not getting the

clear cut neon sign from Heaven telling us what or what not to do.

- Sometimes God does do that, but most of the time we don't get that luxury.
 - Like whenever I went to Shelby, I clearly heard the Holy Spirit say to me in Rocky Creek Baptist Church saying "Go to Shelby"
 - Now I absolutely questioned that, but He affirmed it in a number of different ways.
- However, coming to Hickory was different. I didn't have any Holy Spirit voice or sign saying that Rachel and I are supposed to be in Hickory.
- In fact, we thought we were going to Pennsylvania. We had come up with a 3-year plan to plant a church back when we were engaged and we had a list of three criteria that was somewhere outside of the Bible Belt, A Suburb of a Big City, and A College Town.

- We looked at a number of different locations and we had settled on Bethlehem, PA. There seemed to be a huge need, it was one of the target cities for the Send Network where church plants were desperately needed. It was only an hour from Philly, NYC, and Baltimore, the fastest growing region in PA, and home to Lehigh University. (Most famously known for beating Duke in the NCAA tournament)
 - We had taken vision trips, made some great connections, and presented that location to the elders of our church and Rachel and I both felt that was where we were going to go.
- However, the further we got along into the process, I could notice that something wasn't sitting right with Rachel.
- She never said, "No, we don't need to go there." She would always say, that we should still go. But she would start tearing up every time we'd start making more plans and I

couldn't focus on anything other than that tear rolling down her cheek whenever we would be talking through it

- Now, if you don't know Rachel, this isn't her nature. She is not naturally an emotional person
- On our wedding day I was boo-hooing like a 12 year old, it was the first time I had cried in like 7 years, but Rachel, she was just as chill as could be.
- There was one point in the ceremony where we were braiding together the chord of 3 strands and my brother is holding the board with the chords on it, and he's all emotional —but he's a softy and cries at everything.
 - He looks at Rachel and says, "You're stone cold."
- So this isn't in Rachel's nature to get emotional in this way

- So that was starting to weigh on me and I was considering all of that as we continued to pray through it all
 - And on Valentine's day in 2021, we were having dinner a local restaurant in Shelby and we really talked through it, and by the end of that conversation we concluded that ok, Pennsylvania may be in the cards one day, but that's just not the move right now.
- Now I've had some push back on that. Some of asked, "Oh so just because Rachel feels a certain way, it's all of the sudden not God's call?? So are you living by faith or just by whatever Rachel says??"
- Now that is a valid question and I appreciate the concern, so let me address that for a second
 - I told Rachel going into this, that the way we were going to find out where we are going to go, is that I was going to say Yes to 100 different places and she would say no to 99

and that's how we would know where we were going

- And the reason I could confidently say that is because I know myself, I'm a military kid I can get excited about and live just about anywhere
- But more importantly I know my wife. And I KNOW I married a woman who seeks the Lord's face every day. I KNOW I married a woman who prays for me more than anyone on the planet. And I KNOW I married a woman who is going to hear from God in ways that I don't!
 - And in this season of my life, it's no longer just God sending me somewhere, but now I have a life tied to another person as we have become One Flesh and He's never going to call one of us without the other.
 - And if my wife is feeling like the Lord is directing us in a different direction I have the FAITH and confidence that the Lord is giving

her a level of discernment that I haven't taken the time to consider yet.

- You know that might be why the Bible says "He who finds a wife find a good thing." Because I don't know how many times God uses a wife to reel her husband in whenever he needs it.
- So as we're sitting there talking at the restaurant on Valentines day. I had remembered that I had gotten dinner with one of my friends the previous week who had moved to Hickory, and I said, in jest, "You know Chavis has been trying to get us to move to Hickory for a while now."
 - And I was expecting her to laugh and shrug it off, but her face lit up like a Christmas tree.
 - So we weren't making any plans at that time, but we were going to add it to the prayer list of potential locations
- Not long after that. My pastor and I were meeting with one of our friends who used to work for the state convention...And he knew

that we were planning on planting a church and had begun to lead a new church planting network so he wanted to meet and talk through our plans.

- He was still under the assumption we were heading to PA, but I told him that had changed and felt like we weren't going to go that far
 - So I asked him, what college campuses were there in North Carolina that had little to no local church engagement that he knew of. And he told me only two locations. And one was Lenoir-Rhyne in Hickory, NC. And I hadn't told anyone anything about Hickory up to that point.
 - After the meeting I told Skip that me and Rachel had actually been talking about Hickory a little bit and he said, "Well let's start praying about it then."
- So at that point I'm thinking ok, the Lord might be blessing this. But Hickory still didn't make a ton of logical sense to me. Up in PA, there was a huge obvious need. A large population with

very few churches. But I'm googling all of the churches in Hickory and there seemed to be a lot of really good churches doing a lot of good things. There just didn't seem to be a huge need there.

- But I set up a meeting with some guys from the NC Baptist State Convention just to see what they would have to say.
- These guys could not have been more encouraging, helpful, or excited about what we were wanting to do. Especially when I told them that we wanted to be as close to LR as possible. Because I think we've been able have a pretty good blueprint for college ministry that could be reproduced
- And like I told them my desire is to have a church that is focused on building Godly families that is easily accessible to and intentional with college students in the Hickory area
- And they told me about how NC Baptist identifies what they refer to as pockets of

lostness in the state of North Carolina. And what those are are areas in the state that have high populations of unchurched or unreached households. And according to their research, one of the largest pockets of lostness in the state of NC was a 3 mile radius in Hickory, with LRU right at the center of it.

- So they said yes, we would love to support you and help you start a church in this area.
- They were so helpful throughout the process, helped us set up a 501c3, they took me through some training that lead to some funding help, one of them had me preach at their churching Granite Falls
- But Rachel and I had the initial conversation that maybe Hickory could be an option, and by that October we were moved here.
- Now, even after all of that...I'm not going to stand here and tell you God told us to Go to Hickory. I don't that's fair to say and can leave a lot of people confused. But I do know that God said "Go and Make disciples."

- And proverbs 16:9 says ***"A man's heart plans his way, But the LORD directs his steps."***
-Proverbs 16:9 (NKJV)
- We planned our way toward Bethlehem, PA but the Lord was directing elsewhere
- We planned our way toward Hickory, and the difference was it felt like the Lord started blessing it
- So I think it's less that the Lord told us to come here, and more that we got His blessing to come here. He gave His permission to come here.
- And I hope that's encouraging to some of you. Because a lot of times we wait around for that clear message from God, and I've gotten that before, he clearly told me to go to Shelby for that season of my life. But I didn't get that same quick clarity the next time. It was a much longer process
- But a lot of times following the Lords will and call for you life looks like making a plan, trying

to go a certain way and seeing if God will open the doors or direct your steps somewhere else.

- You see, Paul was directed elsewhere. He and his team planned their way through, Asia, the Lord directed elsewhere. They planned their way up to Bithynia, the Lord again directed elsewhere.

- So they settle down in Troas. Verse 8 says, ***“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.” -Acts 16:8-10 (ESV)***

- This cracks me up because as we’ve seen this isn’t the first time “they concluded” God was calling them to go somewhere.

- But that’s ok, because a lot of living by faith is trial and error. And there’s a whole lot of grace of the error.

- These guys didn’t get all upset because they couldn’t minister at that time in the previous areas that they tried, they just kept trucking along excited about whatever the Lord was up to.

- And what they didn’t realize at that time, is that because of their trip into Macedonia the Gospel was spread throughout South Eastern Europe, which opened the door at the right time for the message of Jesus to continue west until the message had reached all of Europe.

- And Paul and his team were still able to reach those cities they didn’t get to on their next trip out and the Lord still built some great churches there

- All of that to say, God knows what He’s doing. And we don’t have a clue.

- I read this week that Sovereign God doesn't give us everything that we ask for the same as a wise father doesn't give the car keys to a 5 year old.
- You know— we live in a time and a generation where everyone feels like they have to be these great intellects, right?
 - We feel all of this pressure to be prepared to enter into conversation or debate on any wide arrange of topics
 - We feel like we have to know everything about everything because we live in the information age
- But you know what's so much more freeing? When I realize you know what? All I am is a 5 year old trying to figure out life, one mistake a time— so I need to hold on to my Father's hand at all times so He can guide me, and protect me, and teach me.
- Last weekend, Rachel was out of town and I had my first long weekend on my own with both boys....and I still have not recovered
- And come Monday, while I'm waiting for her to get home I get the boys out of the house, just to keep them busy. I'm tired, I have like no thinking capacity so I decide to do something that mom always likes to do with the boys and that is go to Old Navy
 - I'm convinced that Old Navy is her secret addiction that she refuses to acknowledge
- But I don't know how she does it because these boys are insane!
 - I put Myers down for a second, to pick up a shirt that I want to get for my nephew, and the next second I turn around, he's in the shelving, and as I'm bending down to get him out, here comes Fletcher— t-shirt surfing down the shelf going to tackle Myers
 - I'm like, "WHAT IS GOING ON?!"
- And then we're walking back to the car and I'm at my wits end after I just bought two shirts that I mistakenly thought were on sale but weren't, and I wasn't just gonna leave them after the 20 mins I spent in line

- And Fletcher's not wanting to hold my hand, but I dad voice him, and tell him to hold my hand right now and he does
- But he's still wanting to walk on the cracks in the pavement all the way to the car
 - I say, "Buddy you gotta stop playin'" and he said "Noooo, I have to walk on the cracks!"
 - And I jerk him back to myself, and just as I do that...a car comes right by us from behind...a little too close and a little too fast for my liking
 - Now, was he in danger of actually being hit, I don't know, but it was too close for my comfort
- Now, I could get mad at, yell at, or throw something at this car being driven by someone that I do not know or have any influence over and will probably never see again
- Or, I can use this as a teachable moment for my son, who I do have influence over
 - And I stopped and said, "Fletcher, do you see! That's why you can't play in the parking lot. That is why you have to hold dad's hand and stay close to dad. Because that car could come by and hit you and you could get really hurt."
 - And you could tell, he processed it, and he said, "Oh, yea...that's how that works"
 - And then he squeezed my hand a little tighter, and walked closer to me the rest of the way to the truck.
- And I can't help but laugh because, how often is that me in my walk with the Lord?!
 - I wanna go this way, I wanna go that way, I wanna do this, I wanna do that!
 - And as long as I am holding His hand and walking with Him...I give Him the ability to pull me away from those things, and say "nope"
 - And I have to realize, "Oh yea...that's why His 'no' is so important"

- I can't wait until I get to Heaven and realize all of the things that the Lord kept me from or protected me from that I don't even realize!
- It makes sense why the Bible calls us to a child like faith—not a childish faith
 - But a faith that is always learning, that depends on our Father for everything that we need to survive
 - Because the more I hold His hand, stay by His side, and listen to His voice...the more I realize how Good He is, how Faithful He is, how reliable He is and how He wants nothing but the absolute best for me....and loves me enough to tell me “no”, when I need it.