

Title: MULTIPLYING FLOURISHING CONGREGATIONS
Text: ACTS 16-20

Teacher: KEVIN HARLAN

A Remarkable Story

Supernatural Empowerment (Acts 16:9-10)

Significant Places (Acts 16-20)

Strategic People (Acts 16:11-40)

Stubborn Commitment (Acts 18:11, 19:10)

The Story Continues

Believing the Story

Entering the Story

Creating a Greater Story

CONVERSATION STARTER

- When you were young, what were some of your favorite stories? Why did you enjoy them? What elements make for a great story?
- Read Acts 16:6-15. What ways do you see God at work in this passage? Why do you think the Spirit held Paul and his companions from preaching in Asia and Bithynia? How are God's guidance and human planning interwoven in this account? In what ways was Paul's interaction in Philippi strategic?
- Read Acts 18:1-17. What types of experiences might have led Paul to call it quits in Corinth? Who were the supporting characters in Paul's story, and how might they have encouraged him in his ministry? Is it surprising for you to read that Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half? Why or why not? What crucial role does time play in multiplying congregations?
- Read the excerpt below. Do you agree with Miller that "if what we choose to do with our lives won't make a story meaningful, it won't make a life meaningful either"? In what ways does the real Voice direct us toward better stories? What are the implications of being the writer of our own story rather than listening to the Voice of "the writer outside ourselves"?
- What have been some of the critical scenes in your story? Why is it important that your story intersect with the broader community's story? In what ways have you seen God active in writing Christ Community's story?

EXCERPT FROM: *A Million Miles and a Thousand Years*

BY: Donald Miller

If you watched a movie about a guy who wanted a Volvo and worked for years to get it, you wouldn't cry at the end when he drove off the lot, testing the windshield wipers. You wouldn't tell your friends you saw a beautiful movie or go home and put a record on to think about the story you'd seen. The truth is, you wouldn't remember that movie about a guy who wanted a Volvo.

But we spend years actually living those stories, and expect our lives to feel meaningful. The truth is, if what we choose to do with our lives won't make a story meaningful, it won't make a life meaningful either...

I believe there is a writer outside ourselves, plotting a better story for us, interacting with us, even, and whispering a better story into our consciousness...The real Voice is stiller and smaller and seems to know, without confusion, the difference between right and wrong and the subtle delineation between the beautiful and profane. It's not an agitated Voice, but ever patient as though it approves a million false starts. The Voice I am talking about is a deep water of calming wisdom that says, Hold your tongue; don't talk about that person that way; forgive the friend you haven't talked to; don't look at that woman as a possession; I want to show you the sunset; look and see how short life is and how your troubles are not worth worrying about...