

Philippians #1: Finding Joy in a Broken World

[Supp. Material]

Message 1 – God’s Call

I. The Macedonian Call (Acts 16:6-12)

“They [Paul, Silas & Timothy] went through the region of Phrygia & Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. When they had come up to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them. 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 & saying, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” 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. So, setting sail from Troas, we made a direct voyage to Samothrace, & the following day to Neapolis, & from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia & a Roman colony. We remained in this city some days.” (Acts 16:6-12)

Note 1: *forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia.* (v. 6) From Antioch in Pisidia Paul & Timothy traveled far northward, & then westward. Natural human wisdom would have led them to think they should preach the gospel in all the cities that they passed through, but instead the Holy Spirit directed them on a 400-mile (644-km) journey by foot to Troas (v.8). They must have had a strong sense of the Spirit’s direct guidance & concluded He would guide others to preach the gospel in the northern regions of Asia & Bithynia ESV.

Note 2: *a vision...a man* (v. 9). Some kind of visible image of a man came in such a forceful way, accompanied by such a strong sense of God’s presence, that Paul concluded that God was guiding him. God also spoke to people in visions (Greek: *horama*) elsewhere, as recorded in both Acts & the rest of Scripture.

Note 3: The occurrence of the plural pronoun, *we* (v. 10) for the first time in the Acts narrative most likely indicates that at this point Luke, the author of Acts, joined the missionary group as they set out for Macedonia.

- A. Paul’s strategy (Acts 13:5, 14; 14:1)
- B. The Holy Spirit’s Directing (Acts 16:6-8)
- C. Special Circumstances (Acts 16:9-12)

II. The Riverside Call (Acts 16:13-15)

“On the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to the riverside, where we supposed there was a place of prayer, & we sat down & spoke to the women who had come together. One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what Paul said. After she was baptized, & her household as well, she urged us, saying, ‘If you’ve judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house & stay.’ And she prevailed upon us.” (Acts 16:13-15)

- A. Paul’s strategy (Acts 16:13)

Philippi seems to have had no significant Jewish population. The women who attended the [Jewish] prayer meeting may have been Gentile God-fearers & not Jews. Finding no synagogue in Philippi, Paul began his witness in the closest thing to one: a group of women gathered outside the city for prayer. One of them, Lydia, responded to the gospel & was baptized along with her household. ESV

- B. Lydia responds (Acts 16:14)

Lydia came from Thyatira (Rev. 2:18-29), a city of the province of Asia in the district of Lydia, for which she may have been named. “Lydia was a woman with a substantial business in luxury goods.” (Dunn) She is described as a ‘dealer in purple,’ rather than a ‘dyer in purple’ (a person who dyed cloth—a manual job.) As a *seller of purple goods*, she would have had some wealth. (Thyatira was famous for its expensive purple dyes.) Lydia has a house big enough to provide hospitality to the mission band & household servants. That presumably meant that she was unmarried or a widow.

[James D G Dunn, *Beginning from Jerusalem*, p. 671] *The Lord opened her heart*- a supernatural work of God, not the preacher’s wisdom or persuasiveness, ultimately draws people to Christ. ESV

- C. Evidence of salvation (Acts 16:15; “We know that we’ve passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers...” 1 Jn. 3:14a)

Message 2 – Finding Joy in a Broken World

I. A Broken World (Acts 16:16-34)

“As we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination & brought her owners much gain by fortune-telling. She followed Paul & us, crying out, ‘These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation.’ This she kept doing for many days. Paul, having become greatly annoyed, turned & said to the spirit, ‘I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.’ And it came out that very hour. But when her owners saw that their hope of gain was gone, they seized Paul & Silas & dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers. When they had brought them to the magistrates, they said, ‘These men are Jews, & they are disturbing our city. They advocate customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to accept or practice.’ The crowd joined in attacking them, & the magistrates tore the garments off them & gave orders to beat them with rods. When they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely. Having received this order, he put them into the inner prison & fastened their feet in the stocks.”

“About midnight Paul & Silas were praying & singing hymns to God, & the prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; immediately all the doors were opened, & everyone's bonds were unfastened. When the jailer woke & saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword & was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul cried with a loud voice, ‘Do not harm yourself; we are all here.’ The jailer called for lights & rushed in, & trembling with fear he fell down before Paul & Silas. Then he brought them out & said, ‘Sirs, what must I do to be saved?’ They said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, & you will be saved, you & your household.” And they spoke the word of the Lord to him & to all who were in his house. The jailer took them the same hour of the night & washed their wounds; & he was baptized at once, he & all his family. Then he brought them up into his house & set food before them. He rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God.” (Acts 16:16-34)

- A. Slavery, demon-possession, & exploitation (Acts 16:16)
- B. Abuse (Acts 16:19, 22-23a)
- C. Racism (*‘These men are Jews...’* Acts 16:20) The slave-owners did not pursue a civil charge against Paul due to the loss in the economic value of their ‘asset’—a fortune-telling slave-girl (who had now lost that ability due to the exorcism). Instead they ‘played the racist card!’ (Dunn)
- D. Injustice (Acts 16:23b)

Responding to the unruly *crowd*, the *magistrates* had Paul & Silas *stripped & gave orders to beat them with rods*. The magistrates in Roman cities were served by attendants who carried bundles of wooden rods as symbols of the magistrates’ authority & their right to inflict corporal punishment. Paul & Silas were severely beaten with these wooden rods (v. 23; cf. 2 Cor. 11:25). The entire process was a miscarriage of justice--there was no fair hearing to ascertain the facts or to allow Paul & Silas to speak in their own defense. In 1 Thess., Paul says he was “*shamefully treated at Philippi.*” ESV

- E. Natural disasters (Acts 16:26)
- F. Suicide/Self-harm (Acts 16:27)

II. Finding Joy Through It All (Acts 16:25-34)

- A. Praying & singing (“At midnight Paul & Silas were praying & singing hymns to God” Acts 16:25) Amid their suffering Paul & Silas experienced the strong presence of the Holy Spirit, filling their hearts with joy & praise. Joy for the honor of suffering for Jesus’ sake is a common theme in Acts.
- B. Speaking about Jesus (Acts 16:32)
- C. Evidence of salvation (Acts 16:33-34)
 - The jailer *washed their wounds*, Chrysostom (c. 347–407) comments, “He washed & was washed; he washed them from their stripes, & was himself washed from his sins” (*Homilies on Acts* 36.2).
 - The baptism of the Jailer & his household took place during the night. So presumably it was not conducted at the local river, but (more likely) in the prison courtyard (or a similar place). (Dunn)