

ACTS

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Acts chapter 16 as we continue our study through the Word of God.

Tonight we will begin looking at Paul's second missionary journey and prior to the start of this missionary journey, there was some conflict between Paul and Barnabas. Remember what we looked at last time in Acts chapter 15.

Starting in verse 36 of Acts chapter 15 Luke tells us, **“Then after some days Paul said to Barnabas, ‘Let us now go back and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they are doing.’ Now Barnabas was determined to take with them John called Mark. But Paul insisted that they should not take with them the one who had departed from them in Pamphylia, and had not gone with them to the work. Then the contention became so sharp that they parted from one another. And so Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus; but Paul chose Silas and departed, being commended by the brethren to the grace of God. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.”** Acts 15:36-41.

So we see these godly men have this dispute and what was not a good situation, God was going to use it for good.

We see that Barnabas and John Mark went to the area of Cyprus, so Paul and Silas went to Syria and Cilicia, entering Galatia from the opposite direction and thus, the start of Paul's second missionary journey primarily to Greece, covering Acts 16-18:22. The Gospel message is moving to the uttermost parts of the world just as Jesus said it would in Acts 1:8. Not by the power of man but the moving of the Holy Spirit upon these believers!

Keep in mind that Paul's second missionary journey began some five years after his first missionary journey, and the primary focus here is going to be the area of Greece and to get there he is going to pass through some of the areas he ministered in during his first missionary journey.

What I want you to notice in the verses we will be looking at this evening, is that Paul is following the Lord and yet, he meets some very difficult opposition along the way.

And this is important for us to understand and we will talk about it more as we read on, but just because you are following the Lord does not mean your life is going to be easy, that you will not face any opposition.

I realize that is what the church is teaching today but it is not Scriptural, as we will see tonight.

With that as our background, let's begin reading in Acts chapter 16, beginning in verse 1 as Paul begins his second missionary journey, along with Silas, and let's see what the Lord has for us this evening as we study through His Word.

ACTS 16

VERSES 1-2

After Paul and Silas strengthened the brethren in Syria and Cilicia, crossing the rugged Taurus Mountains, going through the Cilician Gates located north of Tarsus, they came to Derbe and Lystra.

Keep in mind that Paul was in Derbe (Acts 14:20-21) and Lystra (Acts 14:8-20) on his first missionary journey and he had great success there and he wanted to see how they were doing.

Also, keep in mind that Derbe and Lystra are in the Roman province of Galatia in Asia Minor or modern-day Turkey.

It was there in Lystra that Paul was stoned by the people for his faith and left for dead. But he got up and went back into the city. It is hard to keep a good man down!

But, besides that issue, there was fruit born there as I have said. And we see some of that fruit here in these verses.

Eunice, her son Timothy and his grandmother Lois were all saved.

Now, as Paul returns he finds Timothy maturing in the faith, he had a good reputation among the brethren and what an encouragement that must have been to Paul as he sees God working in the lives of these believers, maturing them in the faith!

Make no mistake about it, Timothy was going to be a tremendous help to Paul, eventually becoming his right-hand man!

And we see that Timothy was the son of a Jewish woman named Eunice, and she was a believer, as was his grandmother, Lois. (II Timothy 1:5)

Timothy's father was Greek, and some say, because of the imperfect tense that is used to describe him, that he was dead. It is a possibility!

At this point in his life, Timothy was a young man, probably in his late teens or early twenty's, but even at this young age, he was well spoken of by the brethren there in Lystra and Iconium.

VERSES 3-5

Remember that Paul is down one person and yet, here we see God raise up Timothy to replace John Mark. It is important to understand that there is no one who is serving the Lord that can't be replaced. If you think, "If I don't do this no one will!" Wrong, in God's timing He will raise up people to assist in the work of ministry. And what happens many times is that those who drop out end up losing out. I don't think John Mark lost out because the relationship between John Mark and Paul was restored. But many just drop out and fade away and that is never a good thing!

So as Timothy is going to travel with Paul and Silas, before they leave, Paul has Timothy circumcised! And Timothy was like, "I think I hear my mom calling!" No but this is interesting. Why did Paul do that to Timothy?

First of all, we need to understand that this was not done for his salvation, not at all. How do I know that?

The first reason is simple. Paul had just been to the Jerusalem council meeting that was dealing with the Law and Paul was in agreement with Peter that Gentiles do not need to be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses, something the Jews themselves could never do, keep the Law!

Secondly, in Galatians 2:3-5 we are told, **"Yet not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised. And this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage), to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you."**

As Paul spoke to the leadership there in Jerusalem, things went well, they received his words and the evidence is that they did not compel or force Titus, a believing Gentile, to be circumcised because circumcision doesn't save, the Law doesn't save, only Jesus saves!

You see, the Judaizers snuck in, they spied out the liberty that Paul had in Christ, the things that Paul and his companions were doing, and they were going to use it against them, but it didn't work! No door was opened for them to spread their lies!

Some may argue that these Judaizers were saved, but I don't believe that they were for Law and Grace don't mix.

In fact, that phrase "**false brethren**" or PSEUDADELPHOS (psyoo-dad'-el'fos) in the Greek, means "*pretended associate*" and has been translated "*sham Christians*" (NEB) and "*pseudo-Christians*" (Phillips).

Think of the cults that are out there and what they believe for salvation and everyone that I can think of has a work-based salvation mentality because Christ is not enough, He is not sufficient, He is not God! Only Christianity is not works centered but focused on the finished work of Jesus for us!

So there is no way that Paul thought circumcision was needed for salvation or he would have had a knife in every town he went to ready to circumcise the new believers, and we know that he didn't!

Then what is going on here? It is simple. Keep in mind that Timothy's mother was Jewish but his father, possibly dead at this time, as I have said, was Greek.

Now for Timothy to not offend the Jews, he was circumcised, not for salvation, but for fellowship, for ministering the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Bruce put it this way, “By Jewish law Timothy was a Jew, because he was the son of Jewish mother, but because he was uncircumcised he was technically an apostate Jew. If Paul wished to maintain his links with the synagogue, he could not be seen to countenance apostasy.”

Thus, Timothy would be able to have full access to the synagogues because of this.

Now some would argue that Paul was becoming legalistic here, I don't see that, he just was applying the principle he laid out in I Corinthians 9:19-23, where Paul said, **“For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more; and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law; to those who are without law, as without law(not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law; to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. Now this I do for the gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with you.”**

For what reason did Paul do this? Not because of the Law or for the Law but for the Gospel's sake! May we use our liberty in Christ that way!

Now look at verse 4 again of Acts chapter 16. We are told, **“And as they went through the cities they delivered to them the decrees to keep which were determined by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem.”**

What “**decrees**” is Luke talking about? The decrees back in Acts chapter 15 from the meeting discussing if Gentiles needed to be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses to be saved. And the conclusion that they came too was simple, they did not have to keep the Law of Moses and be circumcised to be saved.

As I have said, the Jews could not even do that. And thus, the conclusion was that the Jews are saved just as the Gentiles are saved, by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone! And the letter, spoken of in Acts 15:23-29 was what Paul was bringing to the Gentile churches as well as the Jewish believers so that they could see that the Law cannot save, Jesus does!

And the result of this great news was not only encouragement for the believers, but the church was growing!

Think about that. There were no skits, no plays, no trying to manipulate the people, no fog machine, no light show, just speaking forth the Words of God and the people were strengthened and the churches grew in numbers and in depth!

It is as Acts chapter 2 tells us, “**And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. . . . So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.**” Acts 2:42-43, 46-47.

Make no mistake about it, we do not have to rely on a man-centered approach or manipulative methods to grow a church, God grows a church!

VERSES 6-7

These men spent some time in Galatia strengthening the believers and seeing people come to saving faith.

Now it was time to move on and they are heading mostly west and a little south, probably towards Ephesus, an important city. They are moving towards the Roman province of Asia. But the Holy Spirit stops them.

Keep in mind that Lystra and Derbe were in the Roman province of Galatia also, but in south central Asia Minor.

We don't know how the Holy Spirit stopped them, and some people like to speculate, but there was some kind of roadblock and they knew the Lord did not want them to go there.

Then they tried to go Northwest to Bithynia, but once again the Holy Spirit stopped them from going there!

But why in the world would the Holy Spirit stop them from going to preach the Gospel in this area? Didn't they need to hear the Gospel message?

Of course they did, but here's the thing. It was not God's timing yet for them to go there. And we need to understand that God has a perfect plan with perfect timing and thus, the Holy Spirit stops them, and they listen! May we do the same!

Paul was to go to the area of Greece, as we will see, bringing the salvation message to Europe, the Good News of Jesus Christ!

One writer put it like this, "Asia needed the Gospel, but this was not God's time. Need did not constitute their call. They had just come from the east; they had been forbidden to go south or north, but they did not presume that the Lord was leading them to the west - they waited His specific directions. Logic alone is not the basis for a call." (Charles Ryrie)

Let me show you what I mean.

David Livingstone wanted to go to China, but God sent him to Africa.

William Carey wanted to go to Polynesia, but God sent him to India.

Adoniram Judson went to India, but God guided him to Burma.

God guides us along the way, to just the right place.

So, as we will see, they are in Troas waiting upon God for direction but always ready to take steps of faith.

And let me say this. Some see that Paul was wrong, that he was getting ahead of the Lord and should not have been trying to go there. He should have just stayed put until the Lord directed him.

I don't agree with that. Paul was moving, and God was guiding, and I will tell you this, it is much easier to move a rolling stone than a stationary one. And Paul was moving, and God was guiding him to where He wanted him to be. May we be on the move for the Lord!

Look at what takes place next!

VERSES 8-10

As they are in Troas, which was located on the Aegean Sea, God revealed to Paul that the Word of God needed to go to Macedonia, which is in northern Greece today. The Gospel was now spreading to Europe!

And keep in mind that the Holy Spirit is still guiding them. Yes, they tried to go southwest, to Mysia, but they were stopped.

Then they tried to go northwest to Bithynia, and they were stopped again.

And now they are going to go farther west, across the Aegean Sea to Greece.

And like I have said, they didn't just sit around, but were on the move and the Holy Spirit was directing them.

Let me ask you this. What were they bringing to the people of Europe? The same thing they brought to the people in Asia, the Gospel of Jesus Christ. You see, the greatest help we can bring anyone is the life-changing gospel of Jesus Christ. It is good for us to bring other help along with the gospel, but without the gospel, little real help is given. Thus, today we see Christians bringing all kinds of physical help to people, but they are leaving out the most important thing, ***THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST!*** May we never do that!

And did you notice that as soon as the Holy Spirit called them, they "**immediately**" packed their bags and they were off!

Why were they in such a hurry? Because there was a need out there, people were dying in their sins, and the only cleansing for them was the blood of Christ applied to their lives, receiving Jesus as Lord and Savior and the free gift of eternal life that is found in Him!

That is a great perspective to have, seeing people who are lost in their sins and being open to His direction because He is still calling people to go and spread the Good News, even today!

Now there is one other point that we may miss here, and we see that in verse 10. Let me explain. We see the shift from "**they came down to Troas,**" in verse 8 to "**we sought to go to Macedonia**" here in verse 10.

Keep in mind that Luke is writing this book and thus, it would seem that Paul picked up this physician named Luke in Troas and took him along on their journey to Greece, maybe as his personal physician.

That means that God wanted Paul and his team to go to Troas and pick up a doctor named Luke. Because God said “no” to Paul these two times, we have a gospel and a Book of Acts written by Doctor Luke. Therefore, from here on Luke records the events as an eyewitness.

VERSES 11-12

They are crossing the Aegean Sea from the continent of Asia to the continent of Europe. And they come to the mainland in Neapolis, which was a port city and from there they traveled some 10 miles to Philippi, a Roman colony.

R. Kent Hughes makes these interesting remarks about the time it took them to get there. He wrote, “That they ‘sailed straight for Samothrace’ is quite revealing, because this is a nautical expression that means the wind was at their backs. So perfect were the winds that they sailed 156 miles in just two days, whereas returning the other way at a later time (Acts 20:6) it took five days. They were surely conscious that God’s forces of nature were propelling them forward with the message of Grace.” (R. Kent Hughes, Acts – The Church Afire, p. 211)

VERSES 13-15

In all of Philippi it seems there were not even 10 adult Jewish men, as Bruce said, “Had there been ten Jewish men, they would have sufficed to constitute a synagogue. No number of women would compensate for the absence of even one man necessary to make up the quorum of ten.”

Therefore, because there was no synagogue, Paul went to a river, probably the Gangites River about a mile and one-half west of town, and found some women gathered together to worship God there.

I Truly believe it was the prayers of these women that brought the Gospel to Europe. They were praying to God, seeking Him and God reveals Himself to them through the witnessing of Paul!

And as Paul comes to this river he meets Lydia, a seller of luxurious garments, purple in color. Keep in mind they had only 2 kinds of dye in Thyatira. One for the rich and one for the rest. They used to extract the expensive purple dye one drop at a time from a little shell fish called a Murex. Thus, it was a very costly procedure and so only the wealthy could afford to buy fabrics dyed with this purple dye.

Then they had a cheap “Walmart” version for the other folks who wanted to look like the rich; it was made from the “madder root.”

And this woman, Lydia, was a seeker of God and God prepared her heart to receive the gift of God, salvation through Jesus Christ as Paul gives to her this Good News!

She was saved and then she was baptized as an outward expression of what had already taken place in her heart!

Today we see so many liberation movements; the Women’s Liberation Movement, the Sexual Liberation Movement, the Drug Liberation Movement, the Gay Liberation Movement and the list can go on-and-on.

These things don’t help people, they may rearrange a person’s social status, but their hearts are still unchanged towards God. And I truly believe that they end up hurting people because these movements are apart from God and we know that the heart of man is wicked. And look at what has happened to our nation as we have moved away from God. In seeking freedom, people have placed their lives and the nation they live in, in **BONDAGE!**

And here comes Paul, not to bring some kind of social reform, but liberation, a freedom from sin and death that can only be found in Jesus Christ!

Jesus said in John 8:32, “**And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.**”

That freedom doesn't come through human effort but by the transforming power of Jesus Christ in one's life – that is true freedom, and may we not preach any social Gospel, but Christ crucified, the Gospel message which is the power of God unto Salvation! That is the freedom that Christ has given to us and may we give that same freedom to others!

Now, what happens when God's Word and the work of God are on the move as we see here in Philippi? The enemy is going to step in and try to stop the work, destroy the work, to make the work of no effect upon the lives of the people. And we will see that as we read on!

VERSES 16-17

We just saw Lydia, who was set-free by Jesus, but now we see this slave girl who is enslaved by Satan! And Boice gives us some insight into what was going on with this girl who was demon possessed. He wrote, “It actually says, ‘She had a spirit of Pythona.’ That does not mean much to most of us, which is why it is not translated literally. But ‘pythona’ was a certain kind of snake – a python. It is used here because the python was associated with the god Apollo. . . . not far from Philippi, in this very area of Europe, there was a shrine to the Pythian Apollo.”

(Boice)

Now here is the reality folks. You are either controlled by God or Satan and the choice is yours!

This girl was demon-possessed, and she was able to tell the future, which brought her owners lots of money; she was a good investment you might say.

Now as some read this they think, “How simplistic they were, taken in by these things! Giving money to someone to tell your future, we are more sophisticated than that!”

Really, then why in the world do the psychic hotlines, tarot cards, horoscopes and the like make so much money today? Because people want to know their future and they will resort to these occult practices to try to find out their future.

And I can tell you your future because God has given us insight to it. If you repent of your sins and ask Jesus to be Lord and Savior of your life you will enter into eternity with Him! If you reject Him then you will spend eternity in the Lake of Fire apart from Him.

And it is interesting to see the words she spoke here were true. She was speaking about Paul and the work he was doing.

Now some may not see this as wrong, she was proclaiming the truth, right? That is true, she was proclaiming the truth but please understand that God does not need Satan or his workers to proclaim His Word.

You see, Satan likes to infiltrate the church because he speaks some truth mixed with some lies, some error and he leads people to Hell by doing it! Read the story of Adam and Eve in Genesis chapter 3, some of what Satan said to Eve was true and some was a lie and it was the lie that deceived Eve and caused both Adam and Eve to transgress God’s command.

We need to wise up, for Satan only speaks the truth when it benefits his plan and his purpose, but he is ultimately going to deceive, to destroy and he will do whatever it takes to do that.

Remember the warning that Paul gave to us in II Corinthians 11:13-15, **“For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.”**

Don't go by feelings, don't go by what your friends are telling you, don't go by what your pastor is saying. Check everything out with the Word of God and if it is contrary to the Word of God, you dismiss it! You do not embrace it!

Now, what do you think Paul did as this demon-possessed slave girl followed them around, speaking the truths of God? Let's read on and see!

VERSE 18

Isn't that interesting. Paul refused to allow these demons to speak forth the things of God. In fact, we are told that Paul was **“annoyed”** or **“distressed”** by this, and by the authority of Jesus Christ he freed her from her demonic possession, she was released from their power by Jesus!

How wonderful, right? I bet the people rejoiced, they threw a party for Paul, right? Not exactly. Let's read on and see what happened!

VERSES 19-24

Once the owners of this girl found out they were outraged because she made them money and now, nothing! Therefore, they bring Paul and Silas into the **“marketplace”** or “agora” which was the town square, the municipal center of the city where court was held.

And we hear that and we are outraged and yet, doesn't the church do the same thing today? Maybe you are taken back by that but think about it.

Are pastors, church leaders more interested in making a profit off of God, bringing the big tithers into the church than feeding the sheep that God has entrusted to them? Are they not more interested in possessions than they are of people? So, many times, there is not much difference in what we see here in Acts and what the church is involved in, I am sad to say!

Now let me ask you this question. Why were Paul and Silas arrested and not Luke and Timothy?

Because Paul and Silas were Jews and Luke was a Gentile and Timothy was considered, in their eyes as a Gentile. And we need to keep in mind that "Anti-Jewish sentiment lay very near the surface in pagan antiquity." (Bruce) The objection that these men were Jews is even more interesting knowing the Jewish community in Philippi was small.

Also, they were teaching that Jesus is Lord and the Romans bowed their knee to Caesar, which they refused to do.

And now, because Paul took away the profit of these men, they stirred the people up against Paul and Silas.

And the next step was that they severely beat Paul and Silas and threw them in what we might call a maximum-security prison.

Not only that, but their feet were placed in stocks, which Bruce comments on by saying, "These stocks had more than two holes for legs, which could thus be forced apart in such a way as to cause the utmost discomfort and cramping pain."

That just does not seem right, does it? I mean, let's think about this for a minute.

Who directed them to Philippi? The Lord did!

Then why in the world did all these things happen to them?

Because there is and there will be persecution for all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus!

Also, we must not forget that what seems like a mess, what seems hopeless, what seems like it is totally unfair, God has a plan, He is still in control!

It is as Paul said in Romans 8:28, “**And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.**”

We need to remember that and apply that to our lives, especially when we don't understand what is going on, as Paul and Silas may have wondered as they were locked in this awful prison!

And think about this. They were beaten, and they were led away to this prison, limping and bleeding. Then placed into the dungeon and pushed into a dark, rat, lice and diseased cell. The prisoners were forced to exist in their own filth, with their legs slammed into and stretched in the stocks causing them excruciating pain.

How did Paul and Silas respond to this unfair treatment? Let's read on and see.

VERSE 25

Are you shocked by their response? We shouldn't be. You see, this truly shows us that joy and worship for God are not situational responses when things are going well, but instead are the deep attitudes of the heart founded on immovable truths.

Charles Spurgeon said, “Any fool can sing in the day. It is easy to sing when we can read the notes by daylight; but the skillful singer is he who can sing when there is not a ray of light to read by. . . . Songs in the night come only from God; they are not in the power of men.”

I will be honest with you, I am not always singing when I go through tough times. What happens to me at times is I get down, frustrated, but Paul and Silas are praying and singing to the Lord, probably singing some of the Psalms. What a lesson for us to learn and apply to our lives!

Remember what James said, **“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.”** James 1:2-4.

That is exactly what we see here with Paul and Silas!

Now why is this so important for us to do?

Yes, we grow, mature in the faith as we surrender to God and rest in Him.

And yes, if we allow these things to fester inside of us they will make us bitter not better.

Bitter towards God and towards others!

And another important point is that people are watching us as we go through these various trials in our lives. Never forget that.

You see, in this dungeon, in this prison were many more prisoners who probably never heard singing like that inside those filthy walls! They never heard about Jesus!

Prayers and praise were going before the Lord and these other prisoners were listening and I am sure they could not believe what they were hearing.

And notice what takes place as these prayers and praises unto God ascended upward!

VERSES 26-29

Please understand that this was not good-luck for Paul and Silas, this was the hand of God upon their lives and in what transpired!

You see, as they were praying and singing unto the Lord an earthquake shook the ground. And you need to understand that this was not a normal earthquake.

You see, as the earth shook, their chains fell off their feet and the prison doors were opened for all to escape.

Isn't that interesting. All their chains came off, not just the chains that were on Paul and Silas.

So, as the earth moved under this sleeping jailer's feet, he was now awakened!

And to his horror, as he looked in to the jail, he saw the doors all opened, and he thought all of **HIS** prisoners escaped!

Because of that he is ready to kill himself! And that seems strange to us today but understand, if you let a prisoner escape you would have to carry out their sentence.

Therefore, he thinks **ALL** the prisoners escaped and I am sure a few had committed capital crimes, so he felt that ending his life like this was better than to allow those in charge of him to control his death sentence!

He has no hope, at least in anything that he could do regarding this situation.

And let me say this. That is the world today folks. There is not much hope and what on earth are people going to do?

I pray that they do as this man did, come to saving faith in Jesus Christ. Let's read on and you will see what I mean!

VERSES 30-34

Now let's think about this for a minute. This man could have been the one who beat Paul and Silas.

And if he was, this is even more amazing. Look at the love and grace they extend to this jailer.

Secondly, not only were Paul and Silas still in the prison, but so were the rest of the prisoners, they did not escape, even though they could have easily done so!

That tells me that the words and actions of Paul and Silas affected their lives and I believe they were all gathered around Paul and Silas wanting to hear about this Jesus who can forgive sins.

Thus, this jailer looks in and he sees all this, he too wants to know what he needs to do to be saved. And maybe, prior to this, as he was sitting there he was listening to Paul and Silas pray to the Lord, maybe even for him. He listened to them praise the Lord and then drifted to sleep.

And now that he is awake, he can't believe what he sees. The words and actions of Paul and Silas lined up to what they believed!

When people look at your life, your faith, do they desire to have what you have? They should! Do our words and deeds line up to what we say we believe? They should!

Make no mistake about it, our lives should be like a magnet drawing people to Jesus, for that is what we see here with Paul and Silas!

And that \$100,000 question “**Sirs, what must I do to be saved?**” is answered by Paul and Silas.

And they told this man, “Join the church, get baptized, and keep the sacraments.” *NO!* Paul told him to simply believe and he would be saved.

Remember what Jesus said in John 6:28-29, “**Then they said to Him, ‘What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?’ Jesus answered and said to them, ‘This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.’**”

And Paul tells us in Titus 3:5, that we are saved, “**not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.**”

We are saved not by doing but by ***BELIEVING!***

Thus, they told this jailer that he must believe on Jesus, and the Greek word for “**believe**” is PISTIS which speaks of trusting, relying upon and clinging to Jesus!

You see, they were saved because they trusted in the Lord, they trusted in Jesus!

Also, look at the transformation of this man who probably beat Paul and Silas but now he is cleaning their wounds that he inflicted upon them and he is feeding them!

The love of God touched his heart and is now manifested in his actions.

And look at the joy; he went from suicide to salvation, despair to devotion, hopelessness to Hallelujah!

That is what God can do, even in a situation that may seem hopeless, may seem unfair, look at the good that came from this!

Now let me also say this. When it says that he “**believed in God with all his household**” it does not mean that it was a kind of proxy salvation. That since this man was saved so was his household.

Not at all! Each person must make that decision for themselves, no one can make it for them! They must also ***BELIEVE!***

Another point here is that some read this phrase and they come to the conclusion that infants were saved. That is not what the text says!

Listen carefully to what Luke tells us in Acts 16:32, “**Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house.**”

Also, in Acts 16:34 we are told, **“Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household.”**

Two points here. Infants can't understand the Word of God being taught to them and they can't believe. They are too young! I hope that is clear. Don't read into the text something that is not there!

And this is so important. When this man asked, **“Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”** And Paul said, **“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.”** It is all about Jesus and yet, I think the Gospel message is being lost today. There is no repentance of sin, there is no believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no changed life at all! And the problem is that many are not coming to saving faith because they are not hearing the Gospel.

Bishop John Taylor Smith was the honorary chaplain to Queen Victoria and the chaplain general of the British Army during World War I. And Bishop Smith use to ask all the candidates for the chaplaincy just one question and it was a good one. We are told,

“Now, I want you to show me how you would deal with a man. We will suppose I am a soldier who has been wounded on the field of battle. I have three minutes to live and I am afraid to die, because I do not know Christ. Tell me, how may I be saved and die with the assurance that all is well?”

If the applicant began to beat about the bush and talk about the true Church and ordinances and so on, the good Bishop would say, “That will not do. I have only three minutes to live. Tell me what I must do.” And as long as Bishop Smith was Chaplain General, unless a candidate could answer that question, he could not become a chaplain in the Army.

That should be true of pastors today! Now why is that important? Because your eternal destiny rests upon this and if you don't get this right you will be damned to Hell!

It is that important and yet the Devil and his demons have influenced so many pastors, leaders, teachers into believing this is not an important issue or it is a secondary issue.

VERSES 35-37

This is interesting to me. Paul and Silas left the prison (in the protective custody of the jailer) to minister to the jailer's household. Yet they returned to the prison willingly to spare the jailer certain death.

In the morning we see that the city officials wanted to let Paul and Silas go, they really had no charges against them. So, they sent word to release them.

And as word comes to Paul about their release, he throws out his trump card. He tells the jailer to go and tell the magistrates that both he and Silas are Roman citizens and thus, these Philippian magistrates could have been in big trouble with Rome for treating a Roman citizen that way.

Paul puts these guys on the spot saying, "If they want us to go free, let them come themselves and free us!"

Why didn't Paul and Silas just leave? Maybe by their getting out of town like this it would have been more difficult for the young church there. Many would wonder who these guys were, what were they doing here, and Paul wanted to leave a strong witness to this young church in Philippi!

Let me throw this out at you to think about. If God was going to allow Paul and Silas to get out of jail the next day, why in the world did God cause an earthquake that night?

Because the praying and singing didn't move the Philippian jailer, so He caused an earthquake that got his attention. He moved the ground under his feet, and he was moved to salvation, the jailer and his family!

These words of Paul that are going to be told to the city officials are going to be tough for them because they could be in big trouble. Look at what happens next.

VERSES 38-39

These Philippian magistrates wanted this problem to go away so they come and ask them, Paul and Silas to leave town, to go away!

It is always sad when a community or a people ask God or His representatives to leave their community, their town, or not share Jesus any more. The Person who can help them the most they are turning from, ***JESUS!***

Why do they do that? Because they don't want the light of God to expose their darkness, their sin. They are more comfortable living with others that are living in darkness! But in the end, everlasting darkness for them!

VERSE 40

As Paul and Silas leave the jail, they spend some time at the house of Lydia, encouraging these new believers to continue on in the faith and then they departed and next time we will pick up our study with Paul and Silas coming to Thessalonica.

Also, it may be that Luke stayed there in Philippi for a time. Notice that in verse 40 of Acts 16 we see Luke tell us, "**So they went out . . . and when they had seen the brethren, they encouraged them and departed.**" It no longer says, "**we.**"

But, in Acts 20:5-6 we are told, **“These men, going ahead, waited for us at Troas. But we sailed away from Philippi after the Days of Unleavened Bread, and in five days joined them at Troas, where we stayed seven days.”**

I think Luke rejoined them as they came through Philippi here in Acts chapter 20.

Let me close with these thoughts, some lessons we learned here this evening.

May we have that same spirit as Paul, willing to go wherever God calls us and willing to endure all that may come our way.

And when God calls, we go.

And when it is difficult, we stick with it, we press on.

And in the end, we will see the fruit of our labors, the work that God was doing not only in us but through us.

It is as the great missionary David Livingstone said, “I am prepared to go anywhere, so long as it is forward.”

May that be our heart also, never satisfied to be stationary or move backwards, but always forging ahead with the Good News of Jesus Christ!

As Paul said in Ephesians 4:1-3, **“I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”**

Let us go forward and see the salvation that the Lord will bring to the people of this world!

