

**Acts**  
**“Jesus” The Sequel**  
**III.) Chp. 13-28 “Witnesses to the end of the earth”**  
*Chp. 15-18:21 Traditions and the road less traveled (2<sup>nd</sup> trip)*  
**16:16-40**  
**“A Concert of Incarceration”**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 16-18 A message for a medium**

**III.) Vs. 19-34 Praise from prisoners**

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**I.) Intro.**

Last week we began looking at the three-recorded conversions at the hands of Paul’s missionary team of Silas, Timothy, Luke and himself. These three conversions show how the Word of God answers the needs of every heart no matter who you are.

- **Lydia**: Was from Thyatira, in Asia Minor. She was **a wealthy woman** as her house was large enough to house the Church. Paul’s *appeal to her was on an intellectual level* as she had already come to see the truth of Judaism.
- **Slave girl**: She was most likely a Greek but was from the opposite end of the social spectrum, **a female slave that had nothing, not even her sanity**. Paul *appeals to her based upon her psychological need*.
- **Jailer**: He was probably a former Roman soldier, belonging to the **middle class**. Based upon his question of what he must do to be saved Paul *appeals to him on moral grounds*.

In the book of Philippians you will see what some of these folks were like 11 years after Acts chapter 16. Paul left Luke in Philippi as the rest of the team left but would stop by

for a visit on his third missionary trip in Acts 20. So by the time Paul writes his letter to the Philippians they had grown large enough to have elders and deacons as well as a missionary, (A fellow named Epaphroditus (*handsome*) to minister to him with a love offering). Old *Handsome* got sick and almost died so Paul sent him back with the letter called Philippians to encourage them. Paul writes in the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter of four things that enabled them to work together as a team as he says, “*fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.*”

1. *Like-minded*: **Same goals**
2. *Same love*: **Same passion**
3. *One accord*: **Same purpose**
4. *One mind*: **Same attitude**

Paul would write in Philippians, “*For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*” As we go through the text before us this morning we will see that illustrated.

## II.) Vs. 16-18 A message for a medium

Vs. 16 Luke gives us two important details about this slave girl.

1. She was “*possessed with a spirit of divination*”: Literally the Greek says, “*a spirit of a python*” In Greek mythology a Python was the name given to the serpent that kept guard at Delphi one of the two temples dedicated to Apollos. It was believed that Apollos was some how embodied in the snake and inspired prophecy. People would consult Apollos by putting questions to the priests who would then come back with vague answers in the voices of the female priests. **Interesting to me that this all centered on a possessed serpent embodying humans.**

2. She “*brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling*”: The Greeks as well as the Romans put a great amount of importance on foretelling the future. No commander would set out on a campaign or businessman start out on a new venture without first consulting with a person who they thought was clairvoyant. Because she was a slave she was making her owners quite wealthy.

This young slave girls was being pimped by her owners who exploited her condition for their own benefit.

Vs. 17 She started following Paul around and in the Greek the phrase “*cried out*” means to continually scream or shriek at the top of their lungs. Luke has recorded for us what she kept on screaming as she followed them:

- a. “*These men are the servants of the Most High God*”: She was saying that the missionary team were servants of choice to the “*Most High God*” a term that meant one thing to believers another to non-believers.

1. *To Jews it meant the God of the Bible*

2. *To the Greeks and Gentiles it meant that they served Zeus*

This is one of the many tactics of the enemy as he, “*confuse terms*”. Satan has been a master of confusion as he uses the same words but causes them to have different meanings to some then the way the Bible interprets them.

- b. “*Who proclaim to us the way of salvation*”: In the Greek there is no article here so literally she said that they were proclaiming “A” way of salvation. Salvation was a popular topic and again meant different things to different people. To the Jews it would mean deliverance from sin but to the Gentile it would have meant release from

the powers that govern the fate of man. Satan has been involved in “*confusing how a person is saved*” since the beginning. Notice as well that it was confused two ways:

1. It was “A” way: There are those that will broaden the basis for salvation while giving their particular way a higher status.
2. Through confusing of terms salvation comes to mean different things. Such as eliminating the biblical truth with regards to hell telling everyone that they are going to make it but if you become a part of their false teaching you will be superior to other or in a different stages of heaven.

Vs. 18 She kept this up for several days until Paul turned and spoke directly at the spirit that possessed her and in Jesus’ authority commanded it to come out of her, which it instantly did. Luke does not tell us that she was converted but it is implied in that the spirit did not come back.

Folk’s, God does not need any help from the enemy as far as attracting the world to Christ and just as Jesus had commanded that the demons keep silent so now Paul does.

Whenever the world is joined with the Church all that can happen is compromise in which the truth that the Church wishes to proclaim becomes confused.

### **III.) Vs. 19-34 Praise from prisoners**

Vs. 19-20 Notice that out of the four missionaries they only grab Paul and Silas. It appears that two things motivated this attack by the slave girl’s owners:

- a. Vs. 19 “*They saw that the hope of their profit was gone*”: **The loss of money.**

It never ceases to amaze me what people will do for money. Well did Paul say to Timothy, “*For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil.*”

- b. Vs. 20, 21 “*These men, being Jews, ... us, being Romans.*”: **Racial bigotry.**

The Roman Emperor Claudius had just issued an order expelling all Jews from Rome. This is why only the Jew’s Paul and Silas were taken and not The ½ Jew Timothy and Gentile Dr. Luke.

Vs. 21-23a Officially a Roman citizen could not practice any foreign religion that was not sanctioned by them but they allowed it as long as it did not break any other law. These folks carefully concealed the real reason, which was economic and instead make it a charge against what they proclaimed and who they were. The “rod” was actually a bundle of sticks tied together and Luke says that many stripes were laid upon them and the Romans did not have a set amount of strikes that could be administered like the Jews. This is no doubt one of the three beatings that Paul mentions in 2 Cor. 11:23-25.

Vs. 23b-24 They are placed in the inner most part of the prison, in the stocks which was a wooden device that held the legs apart kind of like the splits, then chained them to the walls of the prison. Here are two missionaries following the Lord’s call to go to Philippi and they free up a demon possessed girl only to find themselves illegally beaten and imprisoned.

Vs. 25-26 Luke tells us that it was midnight and instead of the normal groans in the pitch-black cell there was a worship service! ***If this was me I probably would be really bummed and if I would be singing it would have been the “Blues” but they are singing praise to Him.*** How radical is this? Here are two fellows who are beaten severally bloodied, dirty, in a dark, cold and damp cell. Their legs are spread apart so that they can not have any comfort as they are forced to stand. And what comes out of their mouths is not cursing or pity but praise to God.

- **Saints, what does it take for you to stop praising God?**
- **What will it take to rob you of joy?**
- **Do you find that the only time you can praise God is during pleasant circumstances?**

Hey, family of God anyone can be happy when things are going your way but joy, true joy can only come from keeping your eyes on the author and finisher of our faith.

Remember, **“God does not create JOY by new surroundings, He creates new surroundings by JOY!”** What was their secret?

- **They just looked at the Lord and not their circumstances.**
- **They used what they knew to be true about God to interpret the circumstance.**

**“Praising God does not have anything to do with your circumstances, it has everything to do with your relationship.”** Paul would say, “Rejoice always!” Then in Hebrews 13:5-6 we are told to **“Be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” So we may boldly say: “The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?”** **So the next time you are having a horrible day start singing a praise song to the Lord.**

Vs. 26 The cool thing here is that you never know who might join you in the chorus. In Job 37:5 he says, **“God thunders marvelously with His voice.”** Now what happens when it thunders? Well the earth shakes! So **God joins Paul and Silas in the praise which sets them free!** Did you get that? It was praising the Lord that liberated them from their circumstances. Verse 25 tells us that the other prisoners were listening to the concert that night. Folks, **“People of the world are always watching to see what will SHAKE us up**

**and when the things that normally wipe them out causes us to sing to the Lord it shakes them up!**” Now this means that we don’t have to have it all together to be

effective, in fact what makes the world want to know about our God is when everything is against us and we are still singing.

Vs. 27-28 Under Roman law if any prisoner escaped no matter what the circumstances the guard had to take his punishment upon himself. So facing the thought of all those prisoners escaping the jailer just decides to do kill himself and Paul sees this as an opportunity to minister grace towards the one who denied their freedom.

Vs. 29-32 The jailer who had not cared for them hours before now has been awakened as light has come upon his heart. In terror he falls down at the very feet he had placed to hold them securely. Man how wild must this of been for the rest of the prisoners to see this scene. This fellow brings them into the courtyard to ask them the most important question any human sole could ever ask, **“What must I do to be saved?”** Paul gives the simple **two-fold answer:**

- a. First, **“believe on the Lord Jesus Christ”**: That is the only answer to the question of **how you can be saved**; it is the answer of **WHO** that saves us! That is what Jesus said in speaking to Zacchaeus concerning his salvation **“the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”**
- b. Next, **“and you will be saved”**: The second part of this answers his question by saying that a person is saved by trusting in what Jesus did!

Some have thought that the jailer’s house was saved based upon his decision for Christ but in the next verse Luke explains what he meant by this remark. The same way that the

jailer was saved would be that way his household would be saved; by trusting the in the person and work of Christ.

Vs. 33-34 Next the jailer washed their stripes and then he and his family were baptized. No doubt they were baptized in the same pool that Paul and Silas were cleansed in. So by washing them of their wounds he was showing all that he was washed from his sins. Now in this section we can see **four signs of true salvation in the actions of the jailer:**

1. **TRUE LOVE** “*He took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes*”: The first sign that he had really encountered true love was the manifestation of that same love towards others.
2. **TRUE OBEDIENCE** “*immediately he and all his family were baptized*”: They publicly identify themselves with a Jewish peasant in Christ. People watched them get placed under in the same water and by the same two that he had just cleansed. What an act of obedience!
3. **TRUE SERVICE** “*he had brought them into his house, he set food before them*”: He was not just getting his salvation insurance, no he was called to serve and only a few minutes old he is already doing so.
4. **TRUE JOY** “*he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household*”: He had no doubt heard of Paul and Silas praising God now he and his family are rejoicing for the same reasons.

#### IV.) Vs. 35-40 Prisoners for protection

Vs. 35-39 This is a funny scene because the next day as the magistrates decided that a sever beating a night in the stocks was enough and they come to release them but Paul and Silas have none of it. Why? Well because they realize that if they let them get away

with treating them that way it will go hard on these young Christians. So they tell them that what they had done had been illegal under Roman law. This was no small thing as it could have cost the magistrates their jobs and the city its status as a Roman colony. When they say they are free to go they tell them no way not until you come and get us out! So the leaders of the city come and beg the two they had just beaten to leave the city. Vs. 40 Paul was not just an evangelist he went back to this newborn church with at least these three converts and makes sure that he encourages them. Seeing Paul there in front of the three folks he had just led to the Lord must have been incredible. They had witnessed in Paul the secret of their newfound relationship, "*It's all about Jesus!*"