

"The Second Missionary Journey"

Part 4

Acts 15:41-18:22

Introduction: Last week in our study of Acts we were traveling with Paul, Silas, Timothy, and Luke as they had arrived at Philippi and on the Sabbath, they found a group of women having a prayer meeting by the river.

Notice Acts 16:13

It was at this meeting they met a lady by the name of Lydia. She was a wealthy lady who was a seller of purple. As the Paul and the others preached the Gospel the Lord opened her heart and allowed her to understand the Gospel. She put her faith in Jesus Christ and became a member of the body of Jesus Christ.

Notice Acts 16:14

This was where we stopped last week. We considered last week how Paul had seen a man in the vision calling him to Macedonia and this is what they found. They found a small group of women by the river side. This did not discourage the team because they were happy to preach the Gospel to whoever would listen.

This brings us to where we are tonight.

➤ **Persecution at Philippi**

Part 1

Notice Acts 16:15

Lydia was baptized and her household. I need to just point out here that it would have been only believers who were baptized. Some people would want to say that this baptism would have included infants through adults. But the passage says nothing about infants. Baptism is only for those who are believers. It is not for babies and toddlers. There is no passage in the Bible that supports infant baptism. The Bible is clear that baptism is for believers/people who understand the Gospel and put their faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ.

Acts 8:35-37

³⁵ *Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.*

³⁶ And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water: what doth hinder me to be baptized?

³⁷ And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Notice Acts 16:15 again.

We also see in this verse that Lydia "constrained" the missionaries to stay with her. She had a burning desire to learn more from Paul and those with him.

Application:

This desire should be in each of us who know Jesus Christ. But the truth is that there are believers who have little desire for learning the Bible. There is within each of us a battle between the two natures. The sin nature despises the things of God but the Divine nature /Holy Spirit longs to be fed with the Truth of the Bible. Many believers are living in a way that they quench the Spirit with sin or by following the desires of the flesh.

1 Thessalonians 5:19

¹⁹ Quench not the Spirit.

The idea of quenching is to extinguish a flame. The Holy Spirit wants to keep us burning for the things of the Lord but when we get in sin or go after the desires of the flesh, we quench the Spirit. Let us remember the Emmaus disciples.

Luke 24:28-32

²⁸ And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further.

²⁹ But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them.

³⁰ And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them.

³¹ And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight.

³² And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?

Notice Acts 16:16

As Paul and company went out for prayer, they were met by a young woman who was demon possessed. She was owned as a slave and through her ability to be a "fortune teller" those who owned her made money. This would have been a rather good income for these owners. Notice what Whitcomb says concerning some history in Macedonia.

"The word "damsel" (KJV) as it is used in the New Testament refers to a young female slave. This demon possessed girl had a "spirit of divination" or literally a "spirit of Python." A python is a powerful snake. A Greek legend said that in a mountain in southern Macedonia Apollo had a temple or shrine where people could come and worship him. He had a serpent or python who would protect him. One tradition says that Apollo killed the snake. People who were demon possessed were thought to have the spirit of this python in them. When a person had a "spirit of Python," it meant that they were controlled by an evil force. Some may have believed that Apollo himself spoke to them through this woman and gave predictions about the future. The mythology of the people was mixed with demonism. It was not a healthy combination."

Notice the words of Merrill Unger on this young woman.

"This young woman was essentially a spiritualistic medium in contact with the world of demons. She resembled the spiritualistic medium which King Saul resorted to at Endor (1 Sam. 28:7-25). She had actual powers of oracular utterance by virtue of evil supernaturalism, as both ancient and modern spiritualistic mediums possess. As a result of communication with the spirit world, this woman brought her masters (promoters) a great deal of financial gain by soothsaying—practicing divination. This was the art by which the medium was enabled to forecast the future by recourse to the superhuman knowledge possessed by evil spirits, working through the human agent."

Demons can work through a Medium and they can bring about great deception. Keep in mind that demons never die. So, they know the ancestors of people who seek a Medium. They can very easily mention something from the past about an individual that would then give the appearance that the Medium had actually contacted the deceased relative. They could also predict something in the future and if it is in their power they can cause it to come to pass. It is all about deception and destruction. They want to deceive people to keep them away from Jesus Christ so that one day their souls will be cast into the Lake of Fire.

Notice Acts 16:17-18

This woman followed Paul and company many days and continued to cry out and announce who they were. After a while Paul was grieved with her and he cast the demon out. We see in this another technique of Satan. He will speak the Truth when it fits his plan. The purpose for having this young woman speak the Truth was to make it look like she was part

of the missionary group so that people would believe her also and she could then do harm to the cause of Jesus Christ. With her agreeing with these men it would give the appearance she was traveling with them. Notice the story told by Ray Comfort.

"For two years I was heckled almost daily by a woman named Petra. She dressed in black, carried a wooden staff, and said she was a prophet to the nation. As in the days of Noah, only eight would be saved. She maintained that she was one of them, and that she determined who the other seven would be. She also claimed that my spirit visited her spirit, in the night (it did not!). The problem was that she would "Amen" much of what I preached, adding her thoughts at the points I made. She would do this at the top of her very loud voice. It must have appeared to newcomers to the crowd that we were a team, preaching the same thing. This is why I was delighted when (every now and then) she would get angry with something I said and let out a string of cuss words, revealing to the crowd that we were not on the same side."

Notice Acts 16:18 again.

When the demon came out of her, she became an ordinary slave to her masters. The ability to make a profit from her was gone. She was now no different than any other slave girl.

Notice Acts 16:19

These men had no concern for the woman they were only concerned about their finances.

Application:

This is so true of many people today also. They will stand up for what is right until it costs them financially. They may not come right out and say it but the bottom line is they are controlled by their wallets. They have a love for money.

Mark 5:12-17

¹² *And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them.*

¹³ *And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand;) and were choked in the sea.*

¹⁴ *And they that fed the swine fled, and told it in the city, and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that was done.*

¹⁵ And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.

¹⁶ And they that saw it told them how it befell to him that was possessed with the devil, and also concerning the swine.

¹⁷ And they began to pray him to depart out of their coasts.

Someone has said that "The most sensitive part of civilized man is his pocket!"

1 Timothy 6:5-12

⁵ Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.

⁶ But godliness with contentment is great gain.

⁷ For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

⁸ And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.

⁹ But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

¹⁰ For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

¹¹ But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.

Getting back to our text, Paul and Silas were taken to the marketplace before the rulers.

Notice Acts 16:20-21

Here we find the accusation brought against Paul and Silas. They were presented as Jews who were insurrectionists. In Philippi Jews were a small minority and this is most likely why there was no synagogue. They were accused of plotting against the government and the Roman Empire. They accused them of teaching customs that were contrary to the Roman government. These accusations were completely false but the owners of the demon possessed woman could not come right and tell the truth because that would have been something that would have made the crowds view them in a different way. To say that they had cast a demon would have shown that there was a Power with them that was greater than the demonic world. So, they needed an accusation that would cause the people to turn

on them and just the fact that they were Jews set the stage for the hatred. There was antisemitism in the city of Philippi already. The bottom line was the owners were angry because of their loss of income. They had no concern for the woman nor did they have concern for the government at this time.

Notice Acts 16:22-24

The clothing was torn from Paul and Silas and they were beaten with rods. Some say they were willow rods. Whatever they were they were painful. We cannot even begin to imagine how painful this was. Their backs were beaten until the flesh was torn to ribbons and then locked in stocks. In his life Paul experienced this several times.

2 Corinthians 11:24-25

²⁴ Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.

²⁵ Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;

Conclusion:

We will return back to this scene next week but as we end tonight, I just want to point out that there is no questioning God goodness from either of these men. They accepted the beating and would go on.

When I read this I am reminded of the ignorance in the churches of our nation today. There are many people who believe that because we are Americans we will not suffer. They also are quick to declare that when times become difficult then the Lord must surely come soon. I will say what I have said many times, we have never been tested as a church in America, so do not be surprised if the antisemitism we see today turns into antichristianity as time moves on. Jesus could return today but He may not return for another 100 years.