

THE LIFE OF THE APOSTLE PAUL

MINISTRY NOTES

- A. Philippi was the first European city in which Paul preached the Gospel.
- B. Luke devoted more space to Paul's ministry in Philippi than at any other city on his missionary journeys.
- C. Lydia was the first convert and a house church began in her home.
- D. Paul and Silas were accused of disturbing the peace. They were beaten and placed into prison.

AT PHILIPPI (PART 2): ACTS 16:25-40

- A. The deliverance of the Jailer (25-34)
 - 1. God opened the doors of the prison (25-26)
 - a. Paul and Silas were singing hymns to God (25), *About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them,*
 - 1) Our worship is especially noticed by others when it seems out of place.
 - 2) Tertullian, *Nothing the limb feels in the stocks when the mind is in heaven.*
 - 3) Psalm 42:8, *By day the LORD commands his steadfast love, and at night his song is with me, a prayer to the God of my life.*
 - b. There was an earthquake that cause the doors to open and the prisoners' bonds to unfasten (26), *and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's bonds were unfastened.*
 - 1) The other prisoners must have connected the supernatural events to the worship of Paul and Silas.
 - 2) Paul and Silas certainly had a platform for proclaiming the Gospel.
 - 3) This supernatural event is similar to the prison deliverance of Peter, Acts 5:18-20, *they arrested the apostles and put them in the public prison. But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, "Go and stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this Life."*
 - 2. The jailer thought the prisoners had escaped (27-28)
 - a. He drew his sword to kill himself (27), *When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped.*
 - 1) The jailer assumed the prisoners had escaped because the prison doors were open.
 - 2) He was accountable for the prisoners with his own life, Code of Justinian 9.4.4, *In Roman law a guard who allowed his prisoner to escape was liable to the same penalty the prisoner would have suffered.*
 - 3) Richard Lenski, *This is the pagan wisdom of the world: when everything seems lost, cap it with suicide, a quick death...It is the devil's own trick to rush a man into self-destruction.*
 - b. Paul told him that all the prisoners were still there (28), *But Paul cried with a loud voice, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here."*
 - 1) The prisoners had not escaped because they had not tried to escape.
 - 2) They did not try to escape because God was not only in control of the earthquake but He was in control of the chains of their hearts that still held them there.
 - 3) God had not planned for a prison break but for a breakthrough in the hearts of men.
 - 4) The love of Paul and Silas for the jailer was what broke through to his heart with God's grace.
 - 3. Paul proclaimed the Gospel to the jailer (29-32)
 - a. The jailer brought Paul and Silas out of their cell and asked what he must do to be saved (29-30), *And the jailer called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"*
 - 1) The jailer may have been asking how he could be delivered from the situation he was in.
 - 2) Maybe, he was fearful of these powerful magicians he had abused and what they intended to do to him.

- 3) Possibly, he heard their message of salvation and the demonized girl's declaration that they served the Most High God.
 - 4) Regardless, Paul and Silas would proclaim to him the way to eternal life.
- b. They said that he and his household would be saved by believing in the Lord Jesus (31-32), ***And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house.***
- 1) The basis for saving faith is belief in the finished work of Jesus Christ.
 - 2) *Lord* identified Jesus as the One Who has all authority and alone grants salvation.
 - a) Some believe salvation comes after complete submission to His authority.
 - b) Reception of salvation is based on faith in Christ but submission is the response of a saved life.
 - c) I fear people put a stumbling block to faith by demanding what only God can enable.
 - d) Justification is by faith alone in Christ with sanctification the responsibility of those who are saved to participate with the Holy Spirit in living in Christlike obedience.
 - 3) The jailer's household was saved not based on his commitment but each one's individual commitment.
 - a) The message of salvation was explained not only to the jailer but to all of his household.
 - b) Kenneth Gangel, *The promise of salvation depended upon the individual response of everyone who heard the message.*
4. The jailer and his family responded to the Gospel message (33-34)
- a. The jailer washed their wounds (33a), ***And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds;***
 - 1) The jailer's actions gave testimony to what had happened to him, the washing of his spiritual wounds by the work of Jesus Christ.
 - 2) Richard Lenski, *This was the first work of the man's faith. Pagan cruelty and callousness is changed into Christian mercy and tenderness. Behold what the gospel does!*
 - b. The jailer and his family were baptized (33b), ***and he was baptized at once, he and all his family.***
 - 1) The jailer and his family made public profession of their faith in Christ.
 - 2) Baptism is a beautiful portrayal of what happens when one comes to faith, sins are washed away.
 - c. They fed Paul and Silas while rejoicing in their salvation (34), ***Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God.***
 - 1) The Gospel of Jesus Christ breaks down walls of sin and separation.
 - 2) The jailer was having fellowship in his home with prisoners who had been locked up in his jail.
 - 3) Because the jailer was reconciled to God, he could be reconciled with former enemies.
 - 4) Richard Lenski, *A little while before this black despair had him by the throat with suicide the only escape, now "he exulted," was jubilant, with salvation in his possession. That is what the gospel does; this was a glorious exhibition of its power.*
- B. The release of Paul and Silas (35-40)
1. The magistrates ordered the release of Paul and Silas (35-36), ***But when it was day, the magistrates sent the police, saying, "Let those men go." And the jailer reported these words to Paul, saying, "The magistrates have sent to let you go. Therefore come out now and go in peace."***
 - a. Why did the magistrates choose to release Paul and Silas?
 - 1) Some think they realized they were guided by the mob instead of justice, or that they only intended to keep them overnight, assuming the beating and jailing would be enough to keep them from disturbing the peace again.
 - 2) It could have been they were informed that the real reason for the riot was that the slave-girl had been delivered from demon possession.
 - 3) Others believe it was because they tied the earthquake to Paul and Silas and their reputed relationship to the Most High God, or that the jailer made them aware of the miraculous events at the jail.

- b. The jailer informed them of their release.
 - 1) He wished them well and encouraged them to go in peace.
 - 2) The jailer thought that was the end of the case.
- 2. Paul demanded that the magistrates come and release them (37-39)
 - a. Paul and Silas were Roman citizens who had been beaten and imprisoned without a trial (37), ***But Paul said to them, "They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men who are Roman citizens, and have thrown us into prison; and do they now throw us out secretly? No! Let them come themselves and take us out."***
 - 1) Paul informed the police that he and Silas were Roman citizens.
 - 2) He reminded them of their mistreatment which was illegal because they were uncondemned Roman citizens.
 - 3) Paul demanded that the magistrates be the ones to release them.
 - a) This was not for their benefit but for the progress of the Gospel.
 - b) Those who had come to faith would now be associated with those who had not been trouble-makers but ones who had been falsely accused.
 - b. The police took that information to the magistrates who then went to the jail (38-39), ***The police reported these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid when they heard that they were Roman citizens. So they came and apologized to them. And they took them out and asked them to leave the city.***
 - 1) The police took Paul's statement back to the magistrates.
 - 2) The magistrates responded with fear, *they became terrified.*
 - a) Roman officials who mistreated Roman citizens were subject to severe discipline.
 - b) Cicero, *It is a transgression of the law to bind a Roman citizen; it is wickedness to scourge him. Unheard, no man can be condemned.*
 - 3) The magistrates went to the prison and released Paul and Silas.
 - a) They apologized to them.
 - b) They asked them to leave the city.
 - 1] They hoped to get them out of town before there were repercussions for them.
 - 2] Also, they wanted them to leave because of ill-feelings still lingering toward Paul and Silas from those who were part of the mob violence.
- 3. Paul and Silas met with believers at Lydia's house and then departed (40), ***So they went out of the prison and visited Lydia. And when they had seen the brothers, they encouraged them and departed.***
 - a. They went to Lydia's house to minister to the believers.
 - 1) This group formed the core of the church at Philippi which was a source of joy to Paul.
 - 2) Philippians 1:3, *I thank my God in all my remembrance of you,*
 - b. They departed.
 - 1) Luke starts using *they* again. It appears that Luke and Timothy stayed on at Philippi.
 - 2) Paul had difficulty and success in Philippi but he was ready to continue his ministry in Macedonia.

<i>CONCLUSION</i>

- A. The joy of a Christian is not based on circumstances but a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
- B. Unbelievers are watching how Christians live in the middle of difficulties.
- C. Christians are to have no association with demonic forces.
- D. God works all things together for good for His children.
- E. Christians are to exhibit God's love to others through word and deed.