

Acts 16:16-40 “The Philippian Jailer” 9/8/2024

Intro & Review:

You'll remember that last week we started on Paul's second missionary journey. We looked at the Macedonian call and the conversion of Lydia, the first recorded convert on the European continent.

Today, we see the first time that Paul will be imprisoned for the gospel.

Again, I'll remind you of the structure of Acts into 4 parts of 3. Part 1 was three sermons, Part 2 was 3 conversions, part 3 is 3 journeys, and part 4 will be 3 trials. We are in part 3, the 3 missionary journeys. This is the second journey. That said, we certainly have some spicy topics included in today's text.

I. Cheerful Suffering for the Gospel (v16-26)

Preaching and believing the gospel will cost money -v16-25

You'll notice that people didn't seem to mind what Paul was saying until; after casting out the demon from the girl, their means of income was threatened. People are usually fine with you saying what they deem as benign talk even if they don't agree. But, if you stop their flow of income, that's another situation entirely. "Preach Jesus if you want but don't get in my business," they say. You can have your morality but don't threaten my ill-gotten gain. The cartels and pornographers are unthreatened until you hit them where it counts. Start converting their people and they lose their means of income. Then, they are upset. It's no different today than it was then, at least in this sense.

However, let us look at this from another perspective. Much of the time, people are unwilling to preach the gospel or believe the gospel because it demands that they submit themselves, all of themselves, including their finances, to the King of the world. So much of the time, sin can be found by following the money. Paul will later say that "money is the root of all kinds of evil." -1Tim 6:10. Jesus said, "you cannot serve God and money." -Matthew 6:24 "Whoever loves money never has enough, whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with their income, this too is meaningless." Ecclesiastes 5:10

Jesus demands ultimate obedience and submission. "Why do you say to me Lord, Lord, and not do what I say." -Luke 6:46.

However, it's not just about slavish obedience. There is also an attitude change. Jolly suffering. Being happy during persecution. V25 This seems so foreign to many people. Why are Paul and Silus praying and singing? Because their hearts are full of joy, even in suffering.

Stop complaining about your circumstances. **Stop envying other people's circumstances and stop envying sympathy.**

Complaining is a very serious sin. In the OT, God cursed the people for complaining about His provision. Exodus 16:8; Numbers 11:1-4; 14:27; 15:24; 16:2; 21:4-6

Complaining is not trusting God's providence. It is being a usurper of His kingdom. You are saying that you know better than the King.

Philippians 2:14-16: **Do all things without grumbling or disputing,** ¹⁵ so that you will be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, ¹⁶ holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to boast because I did not run in vain nor labor in vain. ¹⁷ But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all. ¹⁸ And you also, **rejoice** in the same way and **share** your joy with me.

Embrace suffering for the gospel. It is worth it. Stop complaining. **Be joyful** about the providence of God.

Why do you complain of waters going over your soul, and that the smoke of the terrors of a wrathful Lord almost suffocate you, and bring you to death's brink? I know that the fault is in your eyes, not in Him. It is not the rock that flees and moves, but the green sailor. If your sense and apprehension are made judge of His love, there is a graven image made presently, even a changed god, and a foe god who was once a Friend God.

—*Samuel Rutherford, One of the Westminster Divines*

Give obscene grace to people.

Know what to say when they ask why you're doing what you're doing. If they are not asking why you're doing what you're doing, perhaps you're doing it wrong or not doing the right thing. Obscene means, overt, scandalous generosity, shocking, unusual. This could mean money but could also mean effort and time. Be gracious as God has been with you.

Word and deed. Faith and action. Gospel and generosity. Not either/or. Both/and.

II. Households v31-34

When the jailer is converted, his HOUSHOLD is impacted. The word “oikos” is mentioned three times and implied another time v31-34. The word translated “household” means those living under his authority.

God’s three arenas of authority: household (family), church, and government.

The household is the building block of society. The nuclear family foundation of western civilization. It’s one of the reasons that LBJ and his so called “great society” sought to dismantle the family, starting with the black families. It was an inherently racist move. The destruction of the family is rightly seen as a key tactic of those wishing to implement a socialistic/communistic rule. Also take note that Patriarchy is embedded in this idea of households. That is another reason for the women’s liberation movement, by “empowering” women they destroy the family and create lonely cat women, lesbians, and have their own version of prostitution called OnlyFans. Quick question... are women better off today than they were 50 years ago? The rise of the Trad Wife movement and others are starting to take note of the fact that women have now been more enslaved by men through casual sex and exploitation than ever before. Men see no need to marry. And, with the Trans movement, now, men even take over what it means to be a woman! It’s insanity. Demonic absurdity. This is all on purpose. The destruction of the nuclear family has been a tactic by the godless agenda disguised as liberation but only delivering enslavement.

Notice what happened and what is said. V31 says that the Jailer is to believe in the Lord Jesus (as opposed to Lord Caesar) and the result would be that he would be saved, him and his household! V33 says that they baptized him and all his people (household). V34 says that the reason they baptized them all was because “he had believed in God.” Who believed in God? The household? All the individuals there? No. It says that the head of the household believed, and they were all baptized. This is the second time in the same chapter that we see this occurrence. 16:15 Lydia and her household were baptized. This is the norm in the New Testament.

Baptists will try in vain to force a reading of the text where the people of the family make a profession of faith, but it is not there. That reading is not accurate to the text or to church history. It simply is not there. To force that into the text is just that, an exercise in eisegesis instead of exegesis. Instead of deriving their theology from the text, they assume a position and read it back into the text. While we agree on a great number of things, this is simply a bridge too far. It is an overreach and faulty hermeneutic that should be avoided.

Baptism:

Sign and seal of the covenant.

Replaces circumcision in the OT (Col 2:11-12).

Baptism is for everyone in a family. When the head of the household is a believer, they all receive the sign and seal of the covenant of baptism. Imagine a contemporary occasion for this. A man, a jailer, is converted. If we are to parallel the story in Acts, what happens next? Does he get baptized? Yes! Does he do it alone? No. His wife, his children, and anyone under his direct authority in his house, servants, etc. also get baptized. Why? Because salvation has come to this household. Now, the children will be raised in the fear and admonition of the Lord. This is the New Testament pattern.

References:

The Household and the War for the Cosmos -by CR Wiley

Baptism book on the table.

III. An Appeal to the government. V35-40

Paul is not afraid to use all means allowable to preach the gospel. On one hand, he doesn't complain about the beatings and imprisonment to God. He does, however, complain about the mistreatment that he endured as a Roman citizen. Notice *WHO* he complains to. He expects the government to do what they are supposed to do.

1Cor 9:19-23 (especially v22) "I have become all things to all men so that by all means, I might save some."

He is calling the government to account on their dereliction of duty. They were careless and impetuous in their approach to him submitting to the crowds instead of obeying their own law.

There is much that could be said about this, but for now, I will refer you to Calvin's book 4 of the Institutes as a fine exposition about the role of the government and a primer to Protestant political theology.

As a quick sidebar, let it be said that those who want to opt out of politics in the church, neglect a topic that the Bible indeed talks about. It seems popular today for many in the church to embrace libertarianism and just say that they want the government to leave everyone alone. Libertarians, and their pragmatic theory are overly simplistic and ignorant of

both the Bible's teachings on politics and the development of Protestant Political Theology that in essence formed our country.

Paul appeals to the government to protect him as a citizen. There are numerous implications about this incident, but suffice it to say for the moment, that it is indeed something to be researched and talked about.

Some good references include American Reformer, Devenant Institute, New Christendom Press.

Conclusion and **Application:**

1. Accept suffering as part of the cost of bringing the gospel to people.
2. Adopt the household model of cultural ordering and impact.
3. Utilize all tools for the proclamation of the gospel including the government.

Questions:

1. What is your attitude towards suffering?
2. What are you doing in both word and deed to preach the gospel?
3. What is your role in the household God has placed you in? How are you living that out?
4. What rights as citizens can you leverage for the gospel?

Closing Prayer:

Indeed, Lord, let us rejoice in You, our God and the circumstances you've put us in. Let us be faithful subjects who proclaim the gospel, build our households and communities and establish Your rule here. Would You show Yourself faithful and send Your Spirit to save people. Use us and make us useable. And now, as we take the Lord's supper, we remember the death of the Lord Jesus, that He gave His life as a ransom for many. In His name we pray, Amen.