

## A Slave Girl Set Free.

Acts 16:16-18.

Sunday morning, April 3, 2011.

The introduction of the gospel to Europe took initially place in the city of Philippi, in the province of Macedonia located North of Greece. The introduction of the gospel centers around three characters, singled out by Luke to relay to us some of the significant events that surrounded the introduction of the gospel to this first European city. The first character was Lydia, of her we spoke last week. Of the second one, the demon possessed slave girl, we will speak this week; and the third one will be the jailer in Philippi of which we hope to speak next week.

- A. The pagan society of that day was totally obsessed with the unknown. From rich to poor they spent fortunes just to get a little glimpse into the unknown. As such this girl, who was possessed by a spirit who foretold the future, was a gold mine for her owners.
- B. The girl met up with Paul and Silas, Timothy and Luke, as they went to prayer; no doubt the familiar spot along the riverside where they had met Lydia. She did so for many days (Sabbath days?) indicating that Paul and company spent a sizeable amount of time in this city.
- C. Paul was deeply distressed, or annoyed, or grieved, all which are valid translations. Why the grief or distress? Two reasons come to mind:
  1. The lamentable state of this slave girl.
    - Her station in life as a slave girl was not to be envied. Her owners cared little about her as the flow of the story shows; they only cared about their profits.
    - But worse still this girl's soul was in the clutches of the evil one who used her voice as he willed, making her a mere puppet of his whims.
    - Did not the Lord Jesus come into the world to set the prisoners free? Did not the Lord Jesus appeared to Paul to set him free of his deadly delusions with which the enemy of all righteousness had deluded him?
    - Paul must have thought and prayed about these things, for he let many days go by. Then he must have become convinced that the same Lord who had been merciful to him would also set this poor soul free from her bondage.
    - So, in the Name of Jesus Christ, Paul commands the demon to come out of this girl, and he does; he has no choice but to obey. "In the Name of Jesus Christ" is not used here as a magician's magic formula, (Paul here). Rather it is used to reveal the source of the power and authority before which heaven and earth, and even the realm of darkness must bow. "All power is given unto Me in heaven and on earth" said the Lord Jesus in Matt. 28:18.
  2. Paul is distressed and grieved furthermore that the gospel of Christ should be acclaimed and proclaimed by the powers of darkness. Even when Satan proclaims the truth, his agenda remains unchanged. It will always be one of deception and distortion leading to destruction. For this reason the Lord never allowed any common ground between the Kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness. Even when the demons professed Him to be the Christ as they were being cast out, the Lord Jesus would silence them and not allow them even to

say such things. Mark 1:24, 34.

Similarly, Paul later writes to the Corinthians: “What fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness; and what communion has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial; or what part has a believer with an unbeliever; and what agreement has the temple of God with idols? The answer is implied in each case; None!

It is for this reason that Paul will not use this poor girl’s testimony as a means for gospel proclamation, and so he silences her after due deliberation and prayer.

D. We are not told what happened to this slave girl once the demon was cast out, for the story continues with the aftermath this event had for the apostles.

- Was she cast out as a useless piece of trash by her owners now that any hope of profit by her was gone? Such a turn of events might have given her opportunity to join the band of disciples in Philippi as a free person, and so to serve the Lord.
- She may have continued in the estate of slavery, perhaps only doing menial work. Either way, those who have experienced the Lord’s saving work, by His word and Spirit, while living in the estate of slavery, are the Lord’s freedmen. And those who have experienced the same in the estate of being free men, have become the Lord’s slaves. 1 Corinthians 7:20-23.

Either way, our ownership and identity are first and foremost linked to the Lord Jesus Christ who bought us for Himself.

#### Applications:

1. Jesus is still the One who sets the prisoners free. No matter what the bondage, addiction, fear, delusion or deception may be, Jesus is bigger. At His command, demons of whatever sort still must flee and relinquish their prey. The year of Jubilee has come and the price has been paid. The prisoners who desire may go free. But where will they go? Who will care for them now? Is it not the Lord Jesus Christ who paid the price for them and ransomed them out of the estate of sin, death and misery? Is it not the Father’s house? “Lord where shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.” John 6:68. Flee still to Him; wait on Him; call on Him; soon you shall know the power of His word, and the warmth and joy of the Father’s house.
2. Remember that the Lord still does not allow for any common ground between the kingdom of darkness and the Kingdom of His light and grace. You can not serve two Masters. In this area the Prince of darkness continues to sow much deception in the hearts of the children of light. In all kinds of ways he would convince you that you can live for and in both kingdoms, and so the Christian and the church become worldly, and they lose the smile of the Lord’s presence and power and grace. In this regard it is all or nothing with the Lord. “My utmost for His highest.”
3. Remember that you have a twofold identity as a Christian:
  - You are the Lord’s freedmen. You have been bought with a price. You have been freed from condemnation; you have been freed from the powers of darkness for you have changed allegiances and kingdoms.
  - You have become the Lord’s slaves; His bond servants for He has purchased you for Himself. Have you embraced this your new estate in its twofold aspects. The Lord’s table is where we may renew our allegiances once again.