

October 6, 2019 19077-A #1
Introduction to Philippians: Acts 16

I. The grief and sorrow of the world is at times overwhelming. This is why Jesus said that in this world we would have tribulation. Jn.16:33. There is a book in the NT which points the way to joy, integrity, and Christian living. Philippians. Let's start with the birth of the church.

II. The birth of a great church. Acts 16

A. Started by a missionary team (Paul usually traveled with a team).

1. Founded in AD 50 on 2nd missionary journey. It's about 10 years old at this writing. (Maps)
 - a) **Paul.** about 50 years old, theologian, expositor, evangelist, apostle.
 - b) **Silas.** (Sylvanus).
 - (1) Roman citizen, probably a Hellenistic Jew,
 - (2) Influential member of the Jerusalem church, selected to go with Paul and Barnabas to Antioch after the Jerusalem council with the instructions for the Gentile converts.
 - (3) Chosen by Paul to replace Barnabas after Paul and Barnabas had a falling out over whether to take John Mark on the 2nd journey. No doubt a very sturdy character to go with Paul.
 - c) **Timothy.** "honoring God".
 - (1) Young man from Lystra (Galatia), the son of a Jewish woman and a Greek man, raised in the Jewish faith and taught to trust the Scripture and expect Messiah,
 - (2) Not circumcised until Paul drafted him into missionary work. Probably quite a bit younger than Paul, he was like a son to the apostle. Phil. 2:20
 - (3) He stayed to set the Ephesian church on track (I&II Timothy) when Paul went to Jerusalem, rejoined the apostle later and was on hand at the writing of Philippians.
 - d) **Luke.**
 - (1) Probably a Gentile (not mentioned among those of Jewish origin).
 - (2) Skilled writer and historian (Luke/ Acts = 30 % of material in NT, more than Paul or John! Luke wrote more of the NT than anybody.

B. At an unlikely time: Following a time of some confusion. 6-10.

1. The team had been turned away from two other "logical" fields.
 - a) Ever have a series of rejections before some clear direction?
2. *Guidance will come in time. Sometimes the waiting is excruciating, though.*
 - a) *But note that the normal way was just to try what seemed logical at the time. Asia, Bithynia.*

C. In an unlikely way: a vision for help. 9

1. Unique in terms of guidance here. Normally guidance was a "common sense" or "providential" thing.

D. In an unlikely place. a Roman military colony. 11-13

1. A gathering (seemingly) outside, was there no synagogue?
2. In a city that worshipped Caesar. Philippi was sort of a mini-Rome.
3. A leading city, but not the capital, of Macedonia (Bulgaria).
4. Located on the Via Ignatia (the Hwy. 5 of the day, on the way to Rome)

E. Among an unlikely group of converts. 13 -15

1. Started with a women's prayer group.
 - a) Lydia, first Christian in Europe, a "God-fearer" business woman.
2. May have included an ex-demonized slave girl.
 - a) We don't know if she became a Christian, but it makes sense.
3. Progressed with a Gentile Jailer and his household.
 - a) How would the others have responded to this?

F. Amidst spiritual warfare. 16-18

1. Pythian (python) spirit = spirit of divination.
2. The girl was yelling, and drawing attention.
3. Demons are there, but Paul doesn't deal with them right away.
4. He only casts them out when they get in the way.

G. In the heat of persecution. 19-34

1. Profit motive behind the persecution.

III. How could the Philippian church come into being this way?

- A. Because the Spirit is at work before we are. 6,7
 - 1. Holy Spirit = Spirit of Jesus (only here)
 - 2. Guiding us to where the Lord wants us.
 - 3. Providentially and specifically guiding
- B. Bringing people under the power of the gospel through us. Rom.1:16-17
 - 1. The gospel is more powerful than we are.
 - 2. The Spirit (the Lord) opened her heart.
- C. In order to save the Lost from all walks of life. (Lk.19:10)
 - 1. Gentiles, Jews, Men, Women, Jailers, Slaves, Business people...

IV. Two thoughts on walking with the Lord in a fallen world.

- A. **A meaningful life is not found by avoiding adversity, but by pursuing God. (Phil.3:14)**
 - 1. You don't know what is going to happen next and you can't plan for every conceivable problem. Life is difficult anyway, adversity cannot be avoided
 - a) *So, you might as well encounter your difficulties in the process of serving the Lord.*
- B. **A meaningful ministry is not focused on itself, but on the gospel. I Cor. 2:1-5**
 - 1. We plant the gospel and nourish the gospel and the church grows around it. Personal testimony backed up by spiritual integrity is more powerful than media blitz or glossy covers.
 - a) Personal genuine passion for the Lord is better than polished, practiced acting.
 - 2. Anybody can do this! You don't need special training, just an awareness of the real gospel.