

THE BIRTH OF THE CHURCH AT PHILIPPI ACTS 16

Text:

Introduction:

1. CALLING

A. Paul's Desire (16:6-7)

Acts 16:6-7

⁶Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, ⁷After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.

Paul desired to go to Asia and preach the Gospel.

Asia needed the Gospel, but this was not God's time.

Asia was an important region and God would establish churches there but for now Paul was forbidden to speak there.

We must be willing to lay down our will and plans for the direction that the Holy Spirit brings.

Certainly we as pastor and churches see great needs in many places for churches to be planted and strengthened, but we must follow the spirits leading.

B. God's Design (16:9-12)

Acts 16:9-12

⁹ And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. ¹⁰ And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them. ¹¹ Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis; ¹² And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days.

A. Was Certain that God Had Called and Led Him to Macedonia

B. Left Immediately Again Not Spending Time on Deputation, and Raising Support

C. The Place That They Began was In Philippi; Which Was Chief City of the Part of Macedonia.

There is certainly something to consider here as we consider the method that Paul used when arriving at Macedonia.

He began in the chief city.

This city was mainly made up of Romans.

It seems that this was the method that Paul employed most in his missionary journeys.

As we consider the founding or the birth of the church at Philippi we note secondly

2. CONVERSIONS

It's interesting what Paul did on this Sabbath.

Usually Paul would find the synagogue and preach.

However Paul didn't go to the synagogue but went out of the city by a river where a prayer meeting was taking place.

It was at this riverside prayer meeting the first conversion took place.

Acts 16:14-15

¹⁴ And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. ¹⁵ And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.

This first conversion was the result of the Macedonian Call and preaching.

The third conversion was the result of the arrest of Paul and Silas which we will say more about in a moment.

Before we do consider the third conversion I think we need to consider how their arrest came about and consider the second conversion.

It was the result of:

3. CONTENTION (16:16-24)

We must never assume that because we are in the place that God has placed us and we are trying to do the right thing that we'll not face contention.

Note Acts 16:16-24

Acts 16:16-24

¹⁶ And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying: ¹⁷ The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation. ¹⁸ And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour. ¹⁹ And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the marketplace unto the rulers, ²⁰ And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, ²¹ And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans. ²² And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them. ²³ And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely: ²⁴ Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.

Note:

The spirit of divination is a fortune telling type of person.

Having any dealing with this type of person was prohibited under the Law of Moses.

Deuteronomy 18:9-12

⁹ When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. ¹⁰ There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, ¹¹ Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. ¹² For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee.

It's interesting – the message that she was delivering was essentially true, however it was not good that she be identified with their ministry.

We too should be careful who we identify with.

Sadly she was being used by men to bring them much gain by her soothsaying.

Paul being grieved commanded in the Lord's name for the wicked spirt to come out of this young lady, which resulted in her no longer having the ability to make a profit for her masters.

Acts 16:18-19

¹⁸ And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour. ¹⁹ And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the marketplace unto the rulers,

As a result of her conversion, her masters caught Paul and Silas and brought them to the rulers and accused them of stirring up trouble.

Acts 16:20-21

²⁰ And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, ²¹ And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans.

As a result we see the multitude rose up against them.

Acts 16:22-24

²² And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them. ²³ And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely: ²⁴ Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.

You would have thought the multitude would have been happy that this young lady had been set free and led to the Lord.

But then demanded that Paul and Silas be thrown into jail.

This event led to the third conversion.

Acts 16:25-34

²⁵ And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. 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 every one's bands were loosed. ²⁷ And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. ²⁸ But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. ²⁹ Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, ³⁰ And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? ³¹ And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. ³² And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. ³³ And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. ³⁴ And when he had brought them into his

house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.

This is an amazing event that we see took place.

While Paul & Silas were in prison after being beat they are praying and singing unto God while the prisoners listened on.

Then God sent an earthquake and the foundations were shaken, and all the doors were opened, and everyone's bands were loosed.

Note:

What would do if you were in the situation that Paul and Silas were in?

Probably most of us would have thought that God opened the doors for us to escape.

But Paul and Silas did right, and because of their doing right this jailor's physical life was spared and his eternal destiny along with his family was changed.

These converts led to the establishment of the:

4. CHURCH

As a result of the calling and obedience, and the conversion of those in Philippi, the church and Philippi was born.

Notice some of the characteristics that this church was known for.

- Suffering Church

Philippians 1:28-29

²⁸ And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God. ²⁹ For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;

It's amazing to me that the birth of this church was to some degree born out of suffering – the suffering of Paul and Silas in prison.

Not only was it a suffering church but also it was an:

- Obedient Church

Philippians 2:12-15

¹² Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and

trembling. ¹³ For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. ¹⁴ Do all things without murmurings and disputings: ¹⁵ That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;

We can never expect God's blessings without a willingness to obey.

As the song writer stated Trust and Obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.

Not only was it a suffering church and an obedient church but also it was a:

- Generous Church

Philippians 4:10-16

¹⁰ But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity. ¹¹ Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. ¹² I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. ¹³ I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. ¹⁴ Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction. ¹⁵

Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. ¹⁶ For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity.

Observe:

Paul's remembrance of them; He remembered them with joy and with prayer.

Paul was thankful for them.

This was the first church to be planted in Europe.

This is the only church that I'm aware of in the New Testament that is used as an example for other churches to follow.

2 Corinthians 8:1-5

¹ Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; ² How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. ³ For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves; ⁴ Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. ⁵ And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord,

and unto us by the will of God.

2 Corinthians 9:1-5

¹ For as touching the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you: ² For I know the forwardness of your mind, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal hath provoked very many. ³ Yet have I sent the brethren, lest our boasting of you should be in vain in this behalf; that, as I said, ye may be ready: ⁴ Lest haply if they of Macedonia come with me, and find you unprepared, we (that we say not, ye) should be ashamed in this same confident boasting. ⁵ Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren, that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your bounty, whereof ye had notice before, that the same might be ready, as a matter of bounty, and not as of covetousness.

Close:

Let me make a few observation as we close.

- The obedience of Paul help in seeing this church established.
- God often reroutes us and also ensures that those who need to hear the truth will be in the right place at the right time as it was with Lydia.

- God can bring great fruit out of difficulty.
- The membership was made up of converts.
- The converts which became members in this church were from every walk of life.
- We also gain a context of for biblical joy. It doesn't come from pleasant circumstances, it comes from our hearts being rooted in the purposes and plan of God regardless of the circumstances.

This church was a church that was an example of how to stand fast.

Lord willing over the next several weeks we will look at this church and how they stood fast in the Lord.

- Are we willing to obey or be rerouted in order for someone to hear the truth?
- Do we look for the good even in the midst of difficulty?
- Understand it's not always who we would assume would be the greatest church member that God uses like He did the demon possessed girl.

- Always do right even if the opportunity to do wrong presents itself like Paul and Silas did in prison.