

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JULY 5TH, 2026 // THE BOOK OF ACTS

EFFECTIVENESS (ACTS 16:1-5)

A DISCIPLE NAMED TIMOTHY

Paul and Silas traveled in reverse of Paul's last missionary journey, and they passed through Derbe and Lystra.

- There, they met Timothy, a Believer with what appears to be a unique family situation—his mother was a Jewish Christian, and his father was Greek.

A GOOD REPUTATION, WITH BAGGAGE

Timothy was well-known in the area, and other Believers in the region vouched for his character.

- His mother had taught him about Jewish history, but he had not observed accepted Jewish rites.
- Paul recognized Timothy as someone he could disciple, who could join him in his mission to share the gospel.

CIRCUMCISED BECAUSE OF THE JEWS

As an uncircumcised son of a mixed marriage, Timothy would have been regarded by Jews as technically an apostate Jew. So, he was circumcised.

- This was not done as a requirement for salvation or to recognize it as essential rite for every Jew.
- It was a choice that Timothy made.

FREEDOM STILL MEANS FREEDOM

The letter from Jerusalem made it clear that Gentiles would not be under the yoke of the law and that salvation was in Christ alone.

- The Church did not close the door to Jewish Christians; everything appropriate to that tradition could still be practiced, as long as it was understood to have cultural rather than salvational significance.

"THEY TRAVELED THROUGH THE TOWNS"

Paul, Silas and Timothy traveled from town to town, with the letter from Jerusalem and the good news of Jesus Christ.

- There is no mention of difficulties due to Timothy's past. He chose to sacrifice some of himself for the sake of the gospel, and because of that, he saw the church strengthened and new Believers follow Christ.

GUIDANCE (ACTS 16:6-15)

PLANS AND REROUTING

Armed with the letter from Jerusalem and the good news of Jesus, they were ready to go into new places.

- But the Holy Spirit kept them from teaching in Asia, Mysia, and Bithynia.
- **Sometimes, our good plans are not God's plans. Faithful followers still have to discern the difference between human purpose and divine purpose.**

"CROSS OVER TO MACEDONIA"

After the Spirit blocked their human initiative, He revealed why.

- They, joined by Luke, would go where the vision had revealed that people needed to hear the gospel preached.
- **Don't get lost waiting for the vision. Disciples make plans to share the gospel. If God changes our direction, we go where He sends us. We take our hearts and the message of Jesus with us...wherever we go!**

PHILIPPI IN MACEDONIA

There seems to be a rush in their travels as they pass through cities and ports to reach Philippi.

- Philippi was an important Roman colony and would have used Roman law for order.
- They stayed for several days and, of course, found their way to a group of Jews to share the news of the Messiah.

"THE WOMEN GATHERED THERE"

On the Sabbath day, they found a group of women who were praying by the river.

- There is no mention of a synagogue or men, possibly because there weren't enough men (10) to establish a synagogue.
- These women were still faithful to their Jewish faith and chose to meet, pray, and worship.
- **Motivation is more important than location.**

GOD-FEARING LYDIA

Lydia was a successful businesswoman from Thyatira, a city known for its purple dye.

- She was a God-fearer, a Gentile who was not a full Jewish proselyte but openly worshiped with the Jews.
- She was seeking truth, and God brought Paul into her life to share it with her.
- **God's providence includes people being where He has called them to be.**

SALVATION AND HOSPITALITY

Lydia actively listened, received, and responded to God's message.

- She boldly identified herself with Christ by sharing with her family and being baptized.
- This woman of means and influence then urged the missionaries to stay at her home.
- **This wasn't just hospitality; it was a desire for her and her family to receive more instruction and application.**
- **Do we desire this depth of discipleship?**

CONSEQUENCES (ACTS 16:16-24)

A SLAVE GIRL WHO HAD A SPIRIT

Luke shares of a time when they met another unique woman while on their way to prayer.

- This woman is unnamed. She was a slave and she too made money, but it belonged to someone else, and she was demonized.
- Unlike others we have studied with evil spirits, this woman had a "tolerable" spirit who brought valuable information.

SHE FOLLOWED PAUL AND CRIED OUT

At first, it seems she was simply telling the truth to the crowds. The demon may have recognized them as servants of the Most High God, but proclaiming there was "a" way of salvation was where the deception began.

- Many pagan gods offered "salvation" to their followers, and she meant to dilute Paul's message and add Jesus to their list of gods.

- **Only Christ offers THE way of salvation.**

"PAUL WAS GREATLY ANNOYED"

After days of the woman following the missionaries and crying out her catchphrase, Paul decided it was time to end it.

- She was saying these things under the influence of an evil spirit and possibly confusing his pagan audience.
- Paul commanded the spirit to come out of her, and it came out right away.
- We don't know if she believed, but she was set free from the evil spirit.

"THEIR HOPE OF PROFIT WAS GONE"

After a display of divine power as this woman was delivered from the control of an evil spirit, her owners didn't celebrate; they became enraged.

- Many people refuse to see beyond their financial success and turn from their profitable sin because following Jesus would cost them their goals in life.
- **We embrace the truth that a clear conscience, honest living, and honorable actions are life-changing byproducts of Spirit-filled lives.**

"THESE MEN ARE...DISTURBING OUR CITY"

It seems that Luke was spared arrest as Paul and Silas were taken to face the authorities.

- Their accusers failed to mention their business endeavors but declared that these Jewish men were promoting customs that were not legal for Romans to adopt or practice.
- **When the gospel begins to make an impact on people, it will transform relationships, ambitions, and values. It's not illegal (here), but it will stir up a community!**

THE VERBAL AND PHYSICAL ATTACK

The crowd joined in the attack against them.

- Worried about public perception, the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten with rods.
- This wasn't like the lashings Paul and Barnabas had endured; this was worse. Deep, penetrating, life-threatening wounds were inflicted by rods that were meant to teach non-Romans to never challenge the established government.

THE LAW WAS BROKEN

Paul and Silas had shared the gospel, then delivered a woman from the torture of demon-possession.

- The magistrates were the ones who broke the law. Without trial, they beat and imprisoned two Roman citizens.
- But innocence didn't matter, and they further tortured them by putting their feet in stocks.

JUSTICE

- Everyone has an idea of justice.
- **Few are satisfied with extremes.**
- **God has given governments the authority to pursue and deliver justice. And we have our own ideas of what is fair for good people and bad people. So, why do good people who do good things suffer injustice?**

COST

- Everything comes at a price.
- **We don't believe that doing the right thing should cost anything.**
- **How can we reconcile that attitude when we look at our perfect Savior giving His life for us on a cross? Our salvation cost us nothing. It is the most valuable thing we have in our existence. Do we really comprehend its value?**

MORE

- Salvation is more than we can imagine.
- **Forgiveness, acceptance, adoption, and relationship are just the beginning of what we have as followers of Christ.**
- **We can't afford our salvation, but God says we are worth it. Now, the question becomes "What would we do to share this gospel with someone else?" If the price is too high, what does that say about the value of the gospel?**