



Sermon, Sunday September 19, 2021 “The Christian’s attitude to crisis”

SCRIPTURE Acts 16:16-34 ¹⁶ One day, as we were going to the place of prayer, we met a slave-girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners a great deal of money by fortune-telling. ¹⁷ While she followed Paul and us, she would cry out, “These men are slaves of the Most High God, who proclaim to you a way of salvation.” ¹⁸ She kept doing this for many days. But Paul, very much annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, “I order you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.” And it came out that very hour. ¹⁹ But when her owners saw that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the authorities. ²⁰ When they had brought them before the magistrates, they said, “These men are disturbing our city; they are Jews ²¹ and are advocating customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to adopt or observe.” ²² The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates had them stripped of their clothing and ordered them to be beaten with rods. ²³ After they had given them a severe flogging, they threw them into prison and ordered the jailer to keep them securely. ²⁴ Following these instructions, he put them in the innermost cell and fastened their feet in the stocks. ²⁵ About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. ²⁶ Suddenly there was an earthquake, so violent that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone’s chains were unfastened. ²⁷ When the jailer woke up and saw the prison doors wide open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, since he supposed that the prisoners had escaped. ²⁸ But Paul shouted in a loud voice, “Do not harm yourself, for we are all here.” ²⁹ The jailer called for lights, and rushing in, he fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. ³⁰ Then he brought them outside and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” ³¹ They answered, “Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.” ³² They spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. ³³ At the same hour of the night he took them and washed their wounds; then he and his entire family were baptized without delay. ³⁴ He brought them up into the house and set food before them; and he and his entire household rejoiced that he had become a believer in God.

Introduction: Apostle Paul's Mission in Philippi

Many people are very sensitive about their own interests. That's why we get angry when other people cause economic damage. In today's text, we see the owner of a slave girl who suffered financial loss, and the Apostle Paul's companions who were imprisoned for this incident.

However, their attitude towards their difficulties was different than others. Through today's text, we can learn a lesson on how to deal with life's hardships.

Today's text shows Paul's second missionary journey in Philippi. Unlike other missionary areas, Philippi did not have a synagogue, so Paul had to preach the gospel to the Gentiles.

The Apostle Paul's mission in Philippi was successful. He met loyal helpers like Lydia, and the first church in Europe was founded. However, not all missionary journeys went smoothly. Today's text speaks of the difficulties that Paul encountered through his meeting with a demon-possessed slave girl.

Apostle Paul and his companions experienced the interruption of the demon-possessed slave girl whenever they preached the Gospel. So Paul healed the demon-possessed slave girl. However, the slave girl's masters, who used to earn money through fortune-telling through the slave girl, who were also



demon-possessed, could no longer make money through the slave girl. So, the apostle Paul and his companions were accused by the slave's masters.

Afterwards, the Apostles Paul and Silas were imprisoned, but with the help of the Lord, they had an opportunity to escape. However, Paul and his companions remained in prison and preached the Gospel to the jailer. Through this, the jailer was saved. In fact, the Apostle Paul's missionary journey to Philippi consisted of a series of hardships, but through the walk of the Lord, it bore good fruit.

Body: Meeting of the Apostle Paul's party and the demon-possessed slave girl

In today's text, Paul, Timothy, Silas, and Luke were on their way to the place of prayer. However, they met a demon-possessed slave girl. The demon-possessed slave girl interrupted Paul's missionary work by shouting, "**These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved.**" Paul casts out demons from the slave girl. And Paul and Silas were imprisoned for this despite there being no apparent crime, because the slave girl's masters accused Paul and Silas. So what are the lessons from this event?

1) Christians must have good motives.

In fact, the cry of the demon-possessed slave girl toward the Apostle Paul and his companions was true. However, the important thing is the intention of the slave girl who said those things. Paul had compassion on the spirit of the demon-possessed slave girl, so he cast out the demon and saved the slave girl. However, Satan tried to lead Paul and his companions into a difficult situation by using the slave girl. Satan also used the mind of the slave girl's master, who had lost the means of earning money, to accuse Paul's companions. As a result of this event Paul and Silas were imprisoned. A fatal crisis came to the Apostle Paul's missionary work in Philippi.

However, the preaching of the Gospel is accomplished by the Lord Himself. However, the important thing here is that Paul and Silas set their hearts on doing the Lord's will. Paul and Silas did their best to save souls, love and serve their neighbors. The Lord uses those who have this kind of heart to accomplish the things He has planned.

Last September 11th was the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. In the newspaper, I read the story of GunSoo Yoon, a Korean-American who ran a grocery store 800 meters (0.5 mile) from the World Trade Center during the 911 attacks. He saw a firefighter covered in dust walking out of the World Trade Center. GunSoo Yoon, who felt pity for the firefighter, brought water to the firefighter and provided him with a place to rest. Since then, his shop has become a haven for firefighters working on accidents, and he's given away \$30,000 worth of items for free. Afterwards, Mr. Yoon's good deeds became known to people and there were many helping hands to help him. And he has said that people still remember the help at that time and come to the store. This story shows how small good deeds can make our community a warm place. Please remember that a small heart to honor and serve our neighbors, enriches the community. The Lord longs for us all to truly love one another's soul. So, what other lessons can we learn from today's story?

2) Christians must bear social responsibility.

The incident of healing a demon-possessed slave girl put Paul and his companions in prison. But because of the Lord's wonderful miracle, they have the opportunity to get out of prison. The jailer guarding Paul and Silas, fearing responsibility for the missing prisoners, tried to commit suicide. However, Paul and Silas did not leave the prison and rescued the jailer who was about to commit suicide. Through this, the jailer received Jesus and was saved. He also became a member of the first church in Europe, the church at Philippi.



Through today's text, we can see what Paul and his companions did without change. Paul and Silas proclaimed that there is power in the name of Jesus. Also, they proclaimed to the world the name of Jesus Christ, who is the true life, not one of many gods.

A Christian should be able to testify that there is hope and life in the name of Jesus Christ in any crisis or difficulty. That is the Christian identity. When we have this identity, we can take on our responsibilities as members of society.

Today's text shows how easily the influence of material and money can break us. This spiritual attack is also against the Lord's Church. People use power to defend their material interests and prevent the name of Jesus Christ from being proclaimed.

So, we have to live by making decisions every day, "Should we rely on mammon or on the name of Jesus Christ?"

In fact, it is natural to have hardships in life. In contrast, our happiness is rather temporary. That is why we need the courage to face difficulties even when they come toward us. However, when difficulties come, we are easily agitated and often misbehave. Therefore, if we are not easily offended or excited when we experience difficulties and are able to bear them wisely, we are better able to maintain our daily happiness.

The Apostle Paul was able to resolutely cope with the crises and hardships he faced in the immediate field of missionary work. It was because his motive to conform to the will of the Lord was clear and the vocation to the gospel had a clear identity that they took responsibility for the community with it.

Conclusion: The Christian's Privilege

Now let's summarize today's sermon. I wonder what our daily life is like. Are we outraged that our economic interests are being violated? Or is it the resentment that our rights have been unfairly violated? Let's not get too easily excited and angry. Instead, let's control our hearts by thinking of the Lord who has given us goodness in our hearts. And let's think about where our hope and life come from. Then we will find the path from a heart of anger and excitement to a heart of peace. Let us not forget that the Gospel of Christ is a privilege enjoyed by Christians and a responsibility toward the world.

