

**Acts:** *The Spirit, the Church and the Spread of God's Word*

## **How the Gospel Changes Lives**

**Acts 16:11-34**

*Grace Fellowship Church, Pastor Brad Bigney, Nov. 3, 2019*

### **I. God's Not Looking for a Certain 'Type' of Person – So Neither Should We**

Dr. Luke highlights three radically different people—Lydia, a slave girl, and a jailer—to show us how the Gospel is for everyone.

#### **A. Jesus Can Fill the Emptiness of Successful People Who Are Still Looking for More (Lydia)**

Lydia was wealthy but still empty and looking for more, like so many people today all over the world.

**Acts 16:13** “And on the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made; and we sat down and spoke to the women who met there.”

Paul was not preaching, but simply having a discussion. God used this small group Bible study to open Lydia's heart.

**Acts 16:14** “...The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul.”

*ESV* “...the Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said”

*NIV* “...the Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message”

**2 Corinthians 4:3-4** “But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.”

God lifted her blindness and shattered her resistance as He made the Good News of Jesus attractive to her.

**Takeaway: God might use you in a spiritual conversation or a Bible study with someone**

#### **B. Jesus Can Rescue Oppressed People Who Are Looking for Freedom and Love (Slave Girl)**

This slave girl didn't just need forgiveness...she needed a new Master—someone to break through her bondage and slavery. She is troubled, in pain, and filled with spiritual turmoil.

**Acts 16:18** "...I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out that very hour."

Paul spoke the powerful name of Jesus into her life! His very name has power and authority and sends the spiritual forces of darkness running for cover.

**Takeaway: God might want to use you to speak the powerful name of Jesus into someone's life**

Speak the truth of the Gospel and the name of Jesus to your loved ones...then cry out to God in prayer to do what only He can do.

**2 Timothy 2:25-26** "In humility correcting those who are in opposition. If God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will."

### **C. Jesus Can Save the Disinterested Person Who's Never Seen Christian Joy in the Face of Suffering Up Close (Jailer)**

The jailer's life is not a big success like Lydia's, or a big mess like the slave girl's...he's just a blue-collar, regular guy doing his job.

**Acts 14:22** "...We must though many tribulations enter the kingdom of God."

**Acts 16:25** "But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them."

Paul and Silas still had joy because it was rooted in something deeper than circumstances—and that moved the jailer to be interested in what they had.

**Acts 16:30** "And he brought them out and said, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?'

Their suffering well led to an opportunity to speak the word of the Lord to him.

**Takeaway: God might use you to suffer in a way that stirs people around you to ask questions**

## **II. God Can Use Us in Spite of Our Weakness and Lack of Compassion**

**Acts 16:18** "And this she did for many days. But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, 'I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.'"

God allows us to see this sinful, dark side of Paul's heart so that we would know that He uses sinful, less-than-perfect people to accomplish His purposes!