

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, 6-19-16 AM NOTES
"ADVENTURES IN EVANGELISM"
ACTS 16:6-34
21 in Series, "The Spirit, the Church, and the World"

Genesis 1:26-28 "Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.' God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them; and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.'"

Genesis 2:19-20a "Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field..."

Genesis 2:20b-25 "for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him. So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. The Lord God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. The man said, 'This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.' For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed."

I. Expect God's Guidance (vv. 6-12)

Matthew 28:20b "and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

II. Expect Open Hearts That God Has Prepared (vv. 13-15)

Romans 3:11 "There is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God."

John 6:44a "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him..."

Acts 18:10b "...I have many people in this city."

III. Expect Satanic Opposition (vv. 16-18)

Jesus would not accept the testimony of demons (Mark 1:23-25; Luke 4:41)

"We find in the Gospels that the Lord Jesus never appreciated nor accepted the testimony of demons. He had come to destroy the work of the devil. One of Satan's most terrible works manifests itself in demon possession. Testimony from such a source was an affront to the Lord. Jesus consistently silenced evil spirits who gave Him involuntary witness. He wanted no testimony from such a perverted and perjured source."
- John Phillips

IV. Expect God to Work through Adversity (vv. 19-40)

A. Persecution (vv. 19-24)

B. Praise (v. 25)

Philippians 4:4 "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!"

C. Providence (v. 26-34)

Providence – God's managing of all events to accomplish His purposes

First Baptist Church Powell 06 19 2016 AM
Sermon 21: Adventures in Evangelism
Series: The Spirit, the Church, and the World
Acts 16:6-34

God created us to be adventurous. Genesis 1:26-28:

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

That sounds like an adventurous task! Look especially at the words *rule* and *subdue*. We read in Genesis 2:19-20a: "Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field..." That sounds like an adventure.

Later in chapter 2 we see an even greater adventure. Genesis 2:20b-25:

for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him. So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. The Lord God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. The man said, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

The Hebrew phrase translated, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh" is much more emphatic than it comes out in most English translations. Literally, when Adam saw Eve, he said, "WOW! This is not like all the animals. This woman is compatible with me and we get to be one flesh." Marriage is an adventure. We were created to be adventurous. The fall into sin has warped that desire, but the desire itself is not sin.

For Christians what is the greatest adventure? In general, the greatest adventure is walking with God. Specifically, I believe that God meant for our greatest adventure to be making disciples of Jesus Christ – sharing the life changing, eternity changing Gospel with Hell bound sinners. Yet, the vast majority of Christians are bored and are missing this adventure because they are seeking adventure in all the wrong places. Why are we not consumed with making disciples? It is primarily because of fear. We want people to like us, accept us, and think highly of us. To tell them that they are heading down a path to eternal ruin may upset them and make them reject us. We often choose to let them perish rather than present the Gospel to them. We turn Christianity into a spectator activity rather than experience the adventure of making disciples of Jesus Christ. The result of that is that Christianity, as we have made it, is just plain boring. How incredibly sad that is. When church moves from boring to exciting is when we begin the adventure of Evangelism – leading the lost to Jesus and discipling them.

The most adventure focused book of the Bible is – the book of Acts – where we are going to follow Paul and Silas (who were accompanied by Timothy, and later joined by Luke) on a great evangelism

adventure. We will see what you can expect when you say “no” to your fear and self-centeredness and “yes” to obedience and the adventure of sharing Christ as a way of life.

I. Expect God’s Guidance (v 6-12)

A part of the adventure of evangelism is that we can expect God to direct us when we are totally available to Him. Already in Acts we have seen God direct *Ananias* to Saul of Tarsus, direct *Philip* to the Ethiopian eunuch, and direct *Peter* to Cornelius. As Paul and Silas move out on the second missionary journey, the Holy Spirit says “no” to their plans to move further west into the province of Asia. They redirected their route to the north, but when they tried to go into Bithynia, verse 7 says that “the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them.” The Bible doesn’t tell us how the Spirit redirected them, but He did. With no other way to go, they came down to Troas, a port on the Aegean Sea. There, God gave Paul direction through a vision. Acts 16:9-10: “A vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing and appealing to him, and saying, ‘Come over to Macedonia and help us.’ When he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.” Are you catching the adventure here? They are on a journey being directed by God into new lands, but not afraid because the same Jesus who is leading them is the one who said in Matthew 28:20b: “and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Macedonia is very important. This is the Gospel going into Europe for the first time. As we look back over the centuries to this moment, we are seeing one of the most important events of all time. Taking the Gospel to Europe changed the course of Western civilization.

The way that our lives become an adventure is to approach each day asking for and expecting God to guide us to someone who we can disciple, encourage, or share Christ with. Maybe you are thinking, “I don’t have any opportunities.” Could it be that the reason is that you are not expecting God to guide you to an open, seeking heart? You may be surprised at how God will use the person who is both available and expecting God to guide them.

II. Expect Open Hearts That God Has Prepared (v 13-15)

In most all of the places where Paul went to share the Gospel, he would start by going to the Jewish synagogue where he would find Jews who at least knew something about God and the Scriptures and were aware of a coming Messiah. Philippi, however, was a pagan city, and evidently there weren’t enough Jewish men to have a synagogue. The law was very specific and said that there must be ten adult Jewish men in order to have a synagogue. If there were not ten men, the law allowed for the Jewish people to meet by a river and have a prayer meeting. Paul sets out on this Philippian adventure by looking for the prayer meetings where they would no doubt have the opportunity to share the Gospel.

On the Sabbath, Paul, Silas, Timothy, and now Luke who had joined them (notice “we” in verse 13) set out on the adventure of finding people prepared by God for the hearing of the Gospel. Sure enough, they found a group of women gathered for prayer outside the city gate by a riverside. It is ironic that Paul is accused by some feminists as being chauvinist and anti-women because of his teaching on the role of women, but the first people he shared the Gospel with in Europe were women.

One of the things we see as we observe how Paul operates on these missionary journeys is that he *expected* to see God work. Do you daily leave your home expecting God to use you? Are you living in expectancy that there are some people God has prepared for you to share with? Many Christians and churches have lost the adventure because they are not expecting God to do anything while they try to run programs by means of the flesh. Someone said that many churches today are operating in such a way that if the Holy Spirit were suddenly removed from their programming, nobody would notice that anything had happened. Ouch! Paul expected to encounter hearts open to the Gospel because he believed that God would prepare them.

As Paul began sharing with these women, it became obvious that the person God had prepared was a woman named Lydia from Thyatira. Verse 14 tells us that Lydia was “a worshipper of God.” This indicates that she had a heart that was seeking to know God. Lydia had already realized that the pagan gods were not worthy of worship and was drawn to the true God, but did not yet truly know him. No one seeks after God unless God first draws them to Himself. Romans 3:11: “There is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God.” God was at work in Lydia. Jesus said in John 6:44a: “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him...”

When you commit to share the Gospel as a way of life, you will regularly find the “Lydias” out there. It is God who is at work to draw them to Himself. You don’t draw them with your deep knowledge of Scripture, your irresistible personality, or your ability to answer all of the hard questions. This ought to give us great encouragement and faith. Whether you go into West Africa to an unreached people group or South Asia or Western Heights or the people you work with or live close to, we should go expecting that God has prepared some hearts.

When the Apostle Paul later became discouraged in the wicked city of Corinth, God comforted him with this very truth in Acts 18:10b: “...I have many people in this city.” The Lord was not referring to those who were already believers; He was talking about those like Lydia that He had moved in their heart to cause them to long to know Him. Notice that it was Paul who shared the Gospel with Lydia, but who did the converting, the saving work? It was God. Acts 16:14b: “...and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul.”

Verse 15 is one of a multitude of verses that show us that baptism is for believers. The place of Lydia’s baptism was no doubt in the river beside which she was praying. Her “household” certainly would have included any believing children and likely any employees and extended family. Her faith didn’t save her household. It was because her household called upon the name of the Lord and were saved by grace alone through faith alone just like Lydia was.

What an adventure! We pray for God to open hearts and to draw people unto Himself and with faith filled burning hearts we go into the world where we work, the school we attend, the neighborhood we live in and we expect that God has gone before us to open hearts just like He opened Lydia’s heart.

III. Expect Satanic Opposition (v 16-18)

We have a powerful enemy who hates the Gospel, hates to see people come to Christ, and hates for Christians to get serious about making disciples. Don’t be shocked when opposition comes. As Paul and those with him were continuing their strategy of first going to those who had some hunger for God, they encountered a young slave girl who was demon possessed. The evil men who owned this slave girl had put themselves in league with the demon possessing her and were making a large amount of money by charging people for having this young woman supposedly tell them about their future. Notice in verse 17 what she was saying to Paul and those with him. Acts 16:17b: “These men are bond-servants of the Most High God, who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation.” Was she stating truth or a lie? She was stating truth. Why did Paul put a stop to this? He was following the example of Jesus. Jesus would not accept the testimony of Demons (Mark 1:23-25; Luke 4:41). John Phillips gives us what I believe is the reason for this rejection of demonic testimony by Jesus and then Paul.

We find in the Gospels that the Lord Jesus never appreciated nor accepted the testimony of demons. He had come to destroy the work of the devil. One of Satan’s most terrible works manifests itself in demon possession. Testimony from such a source was an affront to the Lord. Jesus consistently silenced evil spirits who gave Him involuntary witness. He wanted no testimony from such a perverted and perjured source.

[John Phillips, *Exploring Acts, Volume Two*, page 97]

In addition, if Paul had allowed this demon to give testimony that was true, it would have been assumed that the woman was one of them and she would have been in a position to wreak havoc in the church that Paul would plant in Philippi. Paul, with apostolic authority over demons, cast the demon out of the young woman. The text does not tell us what happened to her after being freed from this possessing evil spirit, but it is likely that she came to Christ as did most everyone in Scripture who was set free from demonic possession by the power of Christ.

In this fallen world, we should never be surprised by opposition in every endeavor to lead people to Christ. It may be anything from interruptions as you talk with someone, a phone ringing, other people butting in, to demonic hindrance. Just keep persevering and trust God to deal with the interruption.

IV. Expect God to Work through Adversity (v 19-40)

The evil men who owned this slave girl had a lot of influence with the government leaders in Philippi. Furious over losing their source of income, they used Roman law to have Paul and Silas arrested.

A. Persecution (v 19-24)

The authorities thought they had a pretty good case against Paul and Silas since they were Jewish and they were promoting a religion not approved by Rome. Motivated by their racial hatred of Jews and their religious hatred of Christianity, the leaders of the city acted hastily without investigation and had Paul and Silas beaten and imprisoned without any opportunity to defend themselves. Verse 22 says that they were stripped of their robes and “beaten with rods.” We must not skip lightly over this. They were beaten with several long wooden rods that were tied together. The size of each rod was about as thick as a man’s thumb. We see in verse 23 that they were beaten with “many blows.” With their backs a bloody mess and with every nerve screaming with pain, they were then locked up in jail. The jailer took them into the inner prison, the most secure part, and not only were they locked up; their feet were put in stocks. This meant that they could not lie down because their badly lacerated backs would be directly on the dirty floor. Their legs were spread wide in the stocks so that there was no way they could get comfortable and avoid the constant muscle cramps. That definitely qualifies for persecution. How would you respond to treatment like that? Think about it: you’ve been lied about, beaten, thrown into what we would probably call a dungeon, and your feet are locked in stocks. Every time you inhale the pain from your cracked ribs takes your breath, your bruised kidneys cause constant pain, your back aches from the uncomfortable position in the stocks, and rats are likely running over your outstretched legs in the dark inner prison. What do you do?

B. Praise (v 25)

The other prisoners and the jailer were no doubt stunned by this response to persecution. What an amazing testimony of the comforting, enabling, sustaining grace of God! Spirit filled rejoicing is not tied to our circumstances; it is tied to the Lord. To these Philippians Paul would later write in Philippians 4:4: “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!”

When you decide to live out the adventure of evangelism, not everyone will be happy. You may be rejected, called on the carpet by the Vice President of the company, or lose friends because you embarrass them. Rejoice in the Lord! That rejoicing happens only by His enabling grace.

C. Providence (v 26-34)

In the providence of God (God’s managing all events to accomplish His purposes), there was an earthquake that was of just the exact magnitude to open the prison doors and unfasten each prisoner’s chains. It is like God said “amen” to their worship and praise with an earthquake!

The downside of being a Roman Jailer is that if you lost a prisoner for any reason, you were executed. Seeing the doors open, he thought the prisoners had all escaped and so he started to take his own life. Paul stopped him and told him that every prisoner was still there. The tables were really turned! The jailer was

aware of the message Paul and Silas had been preaching and he likely took the earthquake as a sign that they were speaking the truth. He wanted what Paul and Barnabas had! Like Lydia at the river, God had drawn this jailer to Himself and opened his heart. Because of his knowledge of the truth and his humbled repentant heart, his called for response was simple – “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.” Included in “Believe” is to believe Jesus is who He says He is (God in human flesh), believe that He did what they said He did (a penal substitutionary death for our sins), and then surrendering to His lordship and believing in the sense of putting your complete confidence in Christ and His complete sacrifice at Calvary’s cross. After the jailer believed, his whole family believed. As we saw with Lydia and her household, they all followed their new birth with believer’s baptism. This unnamed jailer went from being moments from suicide to being a new creation in Christ and a partaker in the eternal life of Christ. What an adventure in evangelism!

Conclusion

We don’t have time to go over these last verses, but a summary is that the city officials discovered that they were in big trouble because they had illegally beaten and jailed Romans without a trial. Paul sought to hold them accountable in order that this new church would not have to deal with so much from the governing officials. What we have here is the beginning of the Philippian church that the letter of Philippians was written to several years after this.

Are you ready for an adventure? Are you willing to press on in spite of fear to obey Jesus’ command to make disciples? You may be saying, “I need to know where to start. I’ve never had a class.” If you have Christ, you can share now and get a class later! We offer them often. Start with using Gospel tracts. Anyone can do that. Be available and expect God to use you and you will be amazed at what will happen.

Unless otherwise stated all Scripture quotations taken from the NASB.