

In Acts, believers are empowered by the Holy Spirit to bear witness to the good news of Jesus Christ among both Jews and Gentiles, and in doing this they establish the church.

Key themes:

[1] The witness is worldwide—Judea, Samaria, the “end of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)

[2] The witness is inclusive of all kinds of people

[3] The witness is guided and preserved by God through many trials and persecutions

How does that look like in Acts 16?

[1] Paul and his missionaries were led to Macedonia by God-given vision and the Holy Spirit prevented them from preaching the Word in Asia and Bithynia.

[2] Lydia’s conversion (Acts 16:14–15), the deliverance of a fortune-telling slave girl (Acts 16:16–18) and Paul and Silas’ imprisonment in Philippi (Acts 16:16–28), the conversion of the jailer and his household (Acts 16:29–34)

Outline for
today’s
passage
Acts
16:11-40

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Acts 1:8

Apostle Paul second missionary journey



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Gospel spreads geographically

- 1.Preparation for Witness (Acts 1:1–2:13)
- 2.The Witness in Jerusalem (Acts 2:14–5:42)
- 3.The Witness beyond Jerusalem (Acts 6:1–12:25)
- 4.The Witness in Cyprus and Southern Galatia (Acts 13:1–14:28)
- 5.The Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:1–35)
- 6.The witness in Asia Minor – City of Derbe & Lystra and Galatia (province) (Acts 16:1-5)
- 7.The Witness in Greece (Philippi – city of Macedonia, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth) (Acts 16:11–18:22)
- 8.The Witness in Ephesus (Acts 18:23–21:16)
- 9.The Arrest in Jerusalem (Acts 21:17–23:35)
- 10.The Witness in Caesarea (Acts 24:1–26:32)
- 11.The Witness in Rome (Acts 27:1–28:31)

³⁴ Then Peter began to speak: “I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism ³⁵ but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right. (Acts 10:34-35)

Gospel reaches all kinds of people

Jews (Acts 14)
Gentiles (Acts 14)
Samaritans (Acts 5-25)
Sorcerer – magician, wizard (Acts 9-24)
Respectable gentile centurion (Acts 10:1-48)
Physically handicapped (Acts 3:1-10, 14:8-10)
Prominent Greek women and men (Acts 17:12)
a merchant woman (Acts 16:11-15)
a jailer and his family (Acts 16:30-34)
Greek philosophers, governors, and kings

How did Paul & Silas come to Lydia, female slave and jailer in today's passage?

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8



**Gospel spreads
geographically**



**Gospel reaches all
kinds of people**



**God's intervention
and vision**

In groups of 3

Who are the characters from Acts 16?

- What was their encounter with Paul and Silas
- Their occupation
- Their social status and religious background

Lydia

- Acts 16:13-15

Female slave &
her owners

- Acts 16:16-21

Jailer

- Acts 16:22-36

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Acts 1:8

Acts 16: 11-40

Who are the these characters?

Lydia

- Business woman-seller of purple; valued product
- Imply a higher than average status
- Worshipper of God & hospitable
- first convert in Europe

Female slave

- Double bondage
- Slave and possessed by demon

Jailer

- Responsible and law abiding
- Repentant

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The gospel witness is inclusive of all kinds of people:

Jews (Acts 14)

Gentiles (Acts 14)

Samaritans (Acts 5-25)

Sorcerer – magician, wizard (Acts 9-24)

Respectable gentile centurion (Acts 10:1-48)

Physically handicapped (Acts 3:1-10, 14:8-10)

pagan mountain people,

a prominent merchant woman (Acts 16:11-15)

a jailer and his family,

Greek philosophers, governors, and kings.

God reaches all; including a female merchant

¹³ On the **Sabbath** we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. ¹⁴ One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named **Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth**. She was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message. ¹⁵ When she and the members of her household were baptized, she **invited** us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us.

Who is Lydia

Lydia was also a worshiper of God ([Acts 16:14](#)), and, when Paul found her, she was honoring the Sabbath, which means she could possibly be a Jew.

Lydia was a worshiper of God but, like Cornelius in [Acts 10](#), had not yet heard the gospel. God rerouted Paul and friends and also ensured that Lydia would be in the right place at the right time to encounter Paul and hear the good news of Jesus. And, as Lydia heard the gospel, God opened her heart so that she received the life-giving message. In this story, so full of divine intervention, we see the sovereignty of God in salvation; as Jesus said, "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them" ([John 6:44](#)).

We also see the immediate bond that a new believer has with other believers in Christ—Lydia showed hospitality to those who brought the good news, and she wouldn't take "no" for an answer.

Acts 16 – Paul encounters the female slave

¹⁶ Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a female slave who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling. ¹⁷ She followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, “These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved.” ¹⁸ She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so annoyed that he turned around and said to the spirit, “In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!” At that moment the spirit left her.

¹⁹ When her owners realized that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities. ²⁰ They brought them before the magistrates and said, “These men are Jews, and are throwing our city into an uproar ²¹ by advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice.”

Who is this female slave?

Why did Apostle Paul cast out the demon?

God reaches all including the slave girl

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Who is this female slave?

Double bondage

- A female slave
- Possessed by demon
- Ability to fortune-tell inspired by demons with supernatural insight into the lives of others.

Why did Apostle Paul cast out the demon?

- The slave girl makes no mention of Jesus Christ and is only drawing unnecessary attention to the Apostles, inviting only trouble and enemies.
- The Apostles do not need alliance with demons testimony

Paul and Silas faces trial

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How did opponents usually accuse the apostles?

- Paul and Silas were singled out for being Jewish and falsely accused Apostles of inciting customs unlawful for Romans citizens

>>Acts 17:6-7 “These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here, ⁷ and Jason has welcomed them into his house. They are all defying Caesar’s decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus.”

Acts outline

²² The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten with rods. ²³ After they had been **severely flogged**, they were thrown into prison, and the **jailer was commanded** to guard them carefully. ²⁴ When he received these orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

²⁵ About midnight Paul and Silas were **praying and singing hymns** to God, and the **other** prisoners were listening to them. ²⁶ Suddenly there was such a **violent earthquake** that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everyone's chains came loose. ²⁷ The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to **kill himself** because he thought the prisoners had escaped. ²⁸ But Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!"

Why did he draw his sword with the intention of ending his life by his own hand.

- The jailer likely anticipated execution by Roman authorities for failing his duty



God reaches all including the jailer

²⁹ The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. ³⁰ He then brought them out and asked, “**Sirs, what must I do to be saved?**”

³¹ They replied, “**Believe** in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.” ³² Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house.

³³ At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his household were baptized. ³⁴ The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole household.

Why do you think the jailer asked “What must I do to be saved?”

(It is the core essence of the story)

- fear of the earthquake as a sign of judgment
- by Apostles' singing
- Paul and Silas did not escape
- “servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved” from slave girl
- The experience of the earthquake opened the jailer’s eyes to see his personal need of salvation. The jailer received not only a physical shock but a spiritual and emotional one, His conscience was shaken.

How did the jailer respond to the gospel of Christ?

- The jailer believed and in that moment he became a new man in Christ.. His first repenting act was to wash and tend the wounds of the prisoners, whom he had cruelly mistreated and who had repaid him by telling him God’s great plan of salvation.

Reflection & Application

- Paul and Silas were found praying and singing hymns to God in prison without a fair trial. It would have been easy for Paul and Silas to escape thinking God provided another miraculous jailbreak. The lives of others were more important than their own personal freedom and comfort
What can we learnt from Paul & Sila's responses to trials and challenges?
- God led Paul and his companion to Macedonia with a vision, and provide evangelistic opportunities to different kinds of people (merchant, female slave and jailer).
Are we also attentive to God's leading when He closes/open doors to different youth and outreach opportunities?
- Paul to claim his rights as a Roman citizen. The Lord can use this to accomplish His purpose. *Can you think of a situation where it would be beneficial for you as a believer to claim your legal status and civil rights?*