

A Church for the Hurting Part 3

Acts 5

12 And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon's Porch. 13 Yet none of the rest dared join them, but the people esteemed them highly. 14 And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, 15 so that they brought the sick out into the streets and laid *them* on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them. 16 Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed.

Culture of the Early Church

- Miracles & Healings
- Prayer
- Learning God's Word
- Fellowship
- Many people coming to the Lord

Acts 16 - Paul on his visit to Philippi

16 Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that **a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination** met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling. 17 This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, "These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation." 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." And he came out that very hour. 19 But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged *them* into the marketplace to the authorities.

Vs. 16

Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that **a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination** met us,

Her bondage was used for someone else's benefit...

It says: **“slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination”**

This is an interesting passage, because this is one of the few places in scripture where the spirit is described.

Divination: pythōn

It's the only place the word is used in all of the Bible.

By the very nature of what it is, we can empathize with what the young girl was really a slave too.

How a constrictor works as a predator

until 2015, the accepted opinion for how a constrictor kills its prey was suffocation. It was believed like this; as a constrictor's prey breathes out, it makes its own ribcage a bit smaller. At that exact moment the python would tighten up its grip another notch. After several such tightenings, the prey couldn't get any air into its lungs and would shortly die of suffocation.

But there were a few inconsistencies with the suffocation theory. For example, there was the case of a Malaysian man who had been killed by a python doing its 'constrictor' thing, and was being swallowed, head first.

This was the background to the research by Dr Scott M Boback and his colleagues. They wanted to put the crushers to the test.

In doing so they implanted a whole bunch of measuring devices, using modern technology into a rat. They then offered "robo-rat" to their tame and hungry boa constrictor. As per normal, the snake struck the rat's and immediately coiled its body around the rodent.

As the rat's blood pressure and heart rate data flooded onto their computer screen, they were astonished to see that within six seconds, the blood

pressure dropped down to half. If the rat had been conscious, it would have become unconscious from a lack of blood to the brain.

Within 60 seconds, the heart rate dropped from over 400 beats per minute to about half.

Long story short the effects of the constrictor was not simply suffocation but a cutting off of blood flow causing a drop in blood pressure. Along with the slowing of the heart and lack of blood flow to the brain.

Not only does the squeeze of a Python effect the ability to breath but it also effects:

The Blood

The Heart

The Brain

What's interesting about the Blood:

The life is in the blood...

Leviticus 17:11

11 For the life of the flesh *is* in the blood...

Hebrews 9:22

and without shedding of blood there is no remission.

Ephesians 2

1 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins,

4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.

What's interesting about the Heart:

Proverbs 4:23

Above all else, guard your heart,
for everything you do flows from it.

Jesus said to his disciples - about the end times before the coming of the Son of Man.

Matthew 24:12

“Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold”

What’s interesting about the Brain:

Last week we shared about the man from the Gadarenes who had a legion of demons. After Jesus delivered him they found the man sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind.

2 Timothy 1:7

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

1 Peter 4:7

Therefore be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray.

- That day Paul and Silas were used of the Lord to bring Deliverance to a hurting girl.

Vs. 18

But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.” And he came out that very hour.

Not only are demons no good, but they’re also annoying...

- That day she got set free...
- At that moment, her role in the world changed.
- Her identity as a fortune teller changed to something different.
- She was free from the spirit that was squeezing the life out of her.
- That is all possible because of Jesus.

Closing:

Often times when we think of healing, we think of physical healing for the body and that is true, and we believe God for it today...

But there is also a healing for the soul...

The Prophet Jeremiah laments over the spiritual condition of Israel and with a broken heart poses a question in Jeremiah 8:22

“Is there no balm in Gilead,
Is there no physician there?”

- The balm of Gilead was regarded as a special balm, with a special aroma and used for healing purposes...

The Prophet Jeremiah applies this to the spiritual condition of Israel...

- They are away from God and sick with sin...
- They are a wayward, prideful people and in need of remedy...
- The question is; is there no healing for the soul?
is there no healing for their spiritual condition of Israel?

The answer to the question came many years after with the birth of Jesus...

- The Answer from Heaven is Yes!
- Jesus is the balm Jeremiah asked for...
- Jesus is good for the healing of the heart and soul and spirit and deliverance from bondage...

An old song went like this:

There is a balm in Gilead
To make the wounded whole;
There is a balm in Gilead
To heal the sin sick soul.

Prayer:

Lord raise up the Church in this hour to be a Balm in Gilead
Filled with the Precious Holy Spirit
Washed in the Precious Blood of Jesus
Walking in the Power of God
Bringing Hope to people who are bound by a python spirit