
SERMON NOTES AND SCRIPTURE

KEY THOUGHT: It is in the power of the Gospel where hearts are opened, freedom is won, and hope is restored.

1. The rich woman whose heart is opened.

Acts 16:11-15 (NIV)

11 From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, and the next day we went on to Neapolis. 12 From there we traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days.

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.

2. The enslaved girl whose freedom is won.

Acts 16:16-24 (NIV)

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."

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.

3. The brutal jailer whose hope is restored.

Acts 16:25-34 (NIV)

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. – Acts 16:25–27

28 But Paul shouted, “Don’t harm yourself! We are all here!”

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.

1. The good news is for all people, for all time.

2. God can turn misery into ministry.

3. Changed action follows a changed life.

GROUP DISCUSSION

Which person in this narrative can you relate with most closely? How so?

Which person do you see your own salvation story to be most like?

Can you see others in your life that have similar stories to these three?

Why do you think these three stories are included in the book of Acts?

How have you seen the power of God change your life? Others?

What does this passage reveal about the heart of God?