

January 6, 2019

TIME OF REFLECTION

“The gospel is not a set of techniques for making people Christians. Nor is it a set of systematic theological reflections.... The gospel is the announcement that Jesus is Lord— Lord of the world, Lord of the cosmos, Lord of the earth, of the ozone layer, of whales and waterfalls, and of trees and tortoises. And as soon as we get this right we destroy in a stroke the disastrous dichotomy that has existed in people’s minds.”

~N. T. Wright, noted New Testament scholar and theologian

“The church... is not meant to call men and women out of the world into a safe religious enclave but to call them out in order to send them back as agents of God’s kingship.”

~Lesslie Newbigin (1909-1998), British theologian and missionary

“The needs of the world are much deeper than political freedom and security, much deeper than social injustice and economic development, much deeper than democracy and progress. The deeper needs of the world belong to the sphere of the mind, the heart, and the spirit, a sphere to be penetrated with the light and grace of Jesus Christ.”

~Dr. Charles Malik (1906-1987), Lebanese thinker and diplomat,
President of the 13th session of the United Nations General Assembly,
leading author of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
and former Dartmouth College professor

“[The]...three individuals...singled out by Luke...whose lives were influenced for good by the gospel at Philippi...differ so much one from another that he might be thought to have selected them deliberately...to show how the saving power of the name of Jesus was shown in the most diverse types of men and women.”

~F.F. Bruce (1910-1990), Scottish-born Biblical Scholar on Acts 16

“Christianity’s success is to be found in its absolute inclusiveness. More than any other of its [ancient] competitor religions it attracted all races and classes.... Christianity...gloried in its appeal to Jew, Gentile, African, and Barbarian.... There was no other religion that took in all groups and all strata of society.”

~Kenneth Scott Latourette (1884-1986), American historian at Yale University

“The church is the earthly center from which the full lordship of Christ becomes visible.”

~Oscar Cullmann (1902-1999), Basel and Paris-based theologian

Worship through the Word

SERMON – “The Gospel Breaks Out in Philippi” – *Pastor Don Willeman*

SERMON PASSAGE – *Acts 16:16-40 (ESV), Philippians 1:18-21 (NASB)*

Acts 16

¹⁶ As we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by fortune-telling. ¹⁷ She followed Paul and us, crying out, “These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation.” ¹⁸ And this she kept doing for many days. Paul, having become greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.” And it came out that very hour.

¹⁹ But when her owners saw that their hope of gain was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers. ²⁰ And when they had brought them to the magistrates, they said, “These men are Jews, and they are disturbing our city. ²¹ They advocate customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to accept or practice.” ²² The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates tore the garments off them and gave orders to beat them with rods. ²³ And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely. ²⁴ Having received this order, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

²⁵ About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, ²⁶ and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's bonds were unfastened. ²⁷ When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. ²⁸ But Paul cried with a loud voice, “Do not harm yourself, for we are all here.” ²⁹ And the jailer called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas. ³⁰ Then he

brought them out and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” ³¹ And they said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.” ³² And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. ³³ And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family. ³⁴ Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God.

³⁵ But when it was day, the magistrates sent the police, saying, “Let those men go.” ³⁶ And the jailer reported these words to Paul, saying, “The magistrates have sent to let you go. Therefore come out now and go in peace.” ³⁷ But Paul said to them, “They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men who are Roman citizens, and have thrown us into prison; and do they now throw us out secretly? No! Let them come themselves and take us out.” ³⁸ The police reported these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid when they heard that they were Roman citizens. ³⁹ So they came and apologized to them. And they took them out and asked them to leave the city. ⁴⁰ So they went out of the prison and visited Lydia. And when they had seen the brothers, they encouraged them and departed.

Philippians 1

¹⁸ What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice, ¹⁹ for I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayers and the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, ²⁰ according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I will not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. ²¹ For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.