

ACTS 16 PART II

The Spirit Sets You Free

18 And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. 19 I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.

Ro 6:18–19.

Digging Deeper

In the opening remarks of Romans, and often many other epistles, (Romans 1:1; Philippians 1:1; James 1:1; 2 Peter 1:1; Jude 1:1, NKJV) Paul describes himself as a “Bondservant” The Greek word here is, δοῦλος (Doulos) (a) (as adj.) **enslaved**, subject; (b) (as noun) a (male) **slave**. Translated here we see bond servant, which was a type of slave that after fulfilling his obligation, chooses to remain with his master as a slave. Many times because his master would genuinely care for him and it would be better for him and his family to remain in the care of the master. Slavery in ancient times was often not as brutal as or toxic as we think of it today, yet that toxicity does remain. For example here in Acts 16, there is a slave girl that is possessed by a demon that brings her masters much profit with her ability to “tell fortunes.” She was being used by her master, likely abused and not loved. She needed freedom from this possession and human oppression.

The human authors of scripture knew well and tried to emphasize a particular doctrine that often eludes us in the American Church, simply put, we **WILL BE A SLAVE** to something. We were designed by God to hear a spiritual voice and obey. As scripture shows, before Christ, we were slaves to sin. When we heard the voice of the enemy (see Gen 3) we were compelled to do what the demonic influence or oppression desired of us. We may often feel like it was our own desire we acted on, yet as we unravel the lies that imprison us, we often see that we are manipulated by spiritual forces of darkness. How do we choose to be slaves or bondservants of righteousness?

Discussion Questions

1. Christians can not be demonically possessed, but we can be oppressed. As we are fighting ‘against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.’ (Eph 6:12) Demon oppression takes many forms. How do we see these spiritual forces working against us and oppressing us today? (Think personally, in your community, and in the global Church)
2. The slave girl seen here was being used by her master to mislead people away from God and turn them to spiritual things that are real, but NOT of God. Our enemy seeks to gain power and profit from the ‘almost truth’. What are some ‘almost truths’ that infiltrate and work to subvert our spiritual lives? Where do we turn to for truth?
3. Paul after being annoyed by the slave girl for several days set her free from the demon's possession. As a result, he and his companions were arrested and beaten. He cared more for the heart of the girl than the safety of himself and his companions. How do we care for the heart of a person rather than their annoying traits?
4. How do we find joy in suffering for Christ? How does that joy become a witness to others?
5. How do we learn to listen to the voice of God vs the voice of the enemy? How do the terms slave vs bondservant help us understand our human nature and the choice we have in freedom?