

“Joy in Adversity”
Acts 16:16-25
(Preached at Trinity, January 31, 2007)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Paul continually sought God's leadership in his journeys. We've seen over and over that he was a man of prayer. After enlisting Timothy he traveled Phrygia and the region of Galatia and then to Mysia but was forbidden to go to Asia or Bithynia. After traveling to Troas Paul received a vision to travel to Macedonia.
2. It was at Philippi, the chief city of Macedonia, that Lydia heard the Gospel and was saved. Paul and his companions stayed at her house for a season. It was during this period that provides the context for our current passage.
3. Beginning with **Verse 10** there is a change from third person to first person. Most likely Luke had begun to accompany Paul on his travels. Luke is writing as an eyewitness to these events.
4. It was customary for the early Christians to gather for prayer during each day. Each day as they went for prayer they were followed by a certain lady possessed by a spirit of divination. She practiced sooth saying by the power of Satan and many were convinced of her ability to foresee the future. They were willing to pay for her services which brought a tidy profit to her masters.
5. As they traveled through the streets day after day she followed behind them saying, **Acts 16:17** – “These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.”
6. This seemed a rather strange thing for her to say. Her sooth saying abilities were of Satan. Would Satan speak words affirming that which was bringing his kingdom to ruin?
 - A. The demon may have been forced by the power of God to recite the truth concerning Christ such as in **Mark 1**
Mark 1:24 – “Let *us* alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.”
 - B. More probable, Satan was using this as an opportunity to increase his own deception.
 1. First, by declaring what they were speaking she was pretending to have supernatural knowledge of their work and thus increasing her own credibility.
 2. Second, by speaking words of truth she as disguising herself as being a part of them. She could then do them immeasurable harm.
 3. Satan was once again appearing as an angel of light.
2 Corinthians 11:13-14 – “For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. ¹⁴ And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.”

4. Satan is never ashamed to cloak himself in religion if it suits his purposes. He is not ashamed to speak the truth if it can help him cloak his deception.
7. Paul soon tired of Satan's trickery and cast the demon out of her ending once and for all the fortune telling of this slave girl. This also ended the lucrative source of income for her masters.
8. The masters quickly seized Paul and Silas and brought them before the magistrates.
Acts 16:19-20 – "And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew *them* into the marketplace unto the rulers, ²⁰ And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city,"
9. Paul and Silas were stripped and beat with rods and then thrown into prison. Apparently the beating was very severe, enough to break the flesh leaving them bruised and bleeding. Notice their wounds had to be cleansed.
Acts 16:33 – "And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed *their* stripes. . ."
10. The thing I want to direct your attention to is the demeanor of Paul and Silas. They had suffered a terrible beating and then had their feet shackled in irons and cast into prison.
 - A. Sitting in the darkness of the prison most men would have been filled with feelings of anger and resentment. Most would lament the pain of their wounds and the discomfort of their condition. All attention would be upon their present circumstance.
 - B. Not so with Paul and Silas. Their attention was not on themselves but upon the glory of Christ.
Acts 16:25 – "And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God. . ."