Acts 16:12-18

Title: Looks Can Be Deceiving

Vs.11

No more roadblocks.

The Lord’s timing is perfect. He knew when Paul was ready for Macedonia and when Macedonia was ready for Paul.

Vs.12

“Macedonia”

extended land

Psalm 31:8

And hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy: thou hast set my feet in a large room.

Psalm 18:35-36

35 Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy right hand hath holden me up, and thy gentleness hath made me great. 36 Thou hast enlarged my steps under me, that my feet did not slip.

Without further direction Paul did what made the most sense for the purpose the Lord had called him to.

Paul wanted to make the most of the opportunities God had given him.

Where was the “man of Macedonia”?

Where was the great need that was communicated to Paul in the vision?

We wait with expectancy, not discouragement.

Vs.13

Ten jewish men were required to have a synagogue.

Paul never forsook the consistent routine of fellowship. He never used the lack of the “perfect setting” as an excuse to avoid fellowship.

Paul went to where he expected to find the greatest reception to his message.

Matthew 7:6

Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

Paul’s humility allowed him to reach those that others would have viewed as second rate.

James 4:6

But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

Humility wins souls.

Vs.14

“Lydia”

travail

“Thyatira”

“odor of affliction”

This was not an instance of “irresistible grace”. Lydia was not “predestined” to a salvation that was being forced upon her. Her heart was opened by the Lord only AFTER she heard the Word of God.

Romans 8:28-30

28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. 29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

Ephesians 1:3-6

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: 4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: 5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

Any theology that makes God unreasonable is not worth a single TULIP petal.

Hebrews 4:12

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

The gospel is the key to unlocking any heart! …whether that unlocked heart will take advantage of the freedom offered is another matter.

“Heard”

the faculty and ability to hear

“Attended”

to bring near, brought the ship to land

Lydia… A heart opened by God.

- WORSHIPED… God with what information she had

- HEARD… the greater truth of the gospel

- RESPONDED… in faith when God opened her heart

- INFLUENCED… her whole house

- SERVED… the further work of God

Paul’s primary role in the kingdom was to “speak”. God was building around Paul a ministry support team, not for the sake of Paul, but for the sake of the gospel.

- Timothy would eventually become a pastor and lead the church in Ephesus.

- Luke would eventually write more of the New Testament than any other person.

- Silas became the first bishop of Corinth according to church tradition.

Vs.15

Never underestimate the effect one changed life can have upon an entire household.

Praise God for those who do not just support the ministry, but persistently support the ministry.

The Lord had opened Lydia’s heart, but Lydia opened her life.

Lydia, a women in travail from a city of affliction had found new life and new purpose in the service of the God who opens hearts.

Vs.16

The enemy doesn’t like preaching but he cannot abide praying.

The most effective work you will ever do for the kingdom will be unseen, because that work will be eternal (unseen), not temporal (seen).

The enemy has no respect for age, gender, family ties, reputation, decency, or morality.

John 10:10

The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

The enemy will steal your joy, kill your peace, and destroy your hope.

Vs.17

Correct message… incorrect messenger.

The Lord does not need the enemy’s help to promote His work.

The enemy may “appear” as an angel of light, but there will always be a shadow.

2 Corinthians 11:14-15

14 And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. 15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

The message was true but the emphasis was not.

The enemy will NEVER emphasize Jesus. He will emphasize spiritual gifts, gifted men, “servants of the most high God”, church buildings and ministries, but never Jesus.

1 Corinthians 12:3

Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.

Vs.18

Paul was not going to be distracted from his work by the enemy’s trickery. Not every spiritual battle is ours to fight.

Nehemiah 6:2-3

2 That Sanballat and Geshem sent unto me, saying, Come, let us meet together in some one of the villages in the plain of Ono. But they thought to do me mischief. 3 And I sent messengers unto them, saying, I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?

“As Pilgrim enters the Valley of the Shadow of Death, on the right hand of the Valley, there is a deep ditch into which the blind have led the blind throughout history. On the left hand is a bottomless pit into which King David once fell. The path between them is quite narrow, and it’s so dark that Christian can hardly see a step in front of him. In the middle of the Valley stands the entrance to Hell itself, with fire, smoke, and horrible noises issuing from it. Christian’s sword does him no good here, and he falls back on the weapon of fervent prayer. Even when fiends seem to draw near, a Scripture quotation drives them back.”

Luke 9:62

And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

“Being Grieved”

to manage with pains, accomplish with great labor

Paul engaged the enemy:

- only when the work of God became hindered

- only for the purpose of deliverance

- only in the authority and name of Jesus

- without fear or doubt

- without a show or display

When dealing with spiritual deliverance, scripture never places the outcome in doubt. The process may vary, but the outcome is sure.

1 John 4:3-4

3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. 4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

A Tale of Two Women:

- Both were “spiritually” minded

- Both were women of influence

- Both had powerful associates

- Both followed Paul

- Both spoke “truth”

- Both had their lives changed through Paul’s ministry

…But only one was under the influence of the “Holy” Spirit

1 Corinthians 12:3

Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.

Matthew 7:15-16

15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. 16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

Ephesians 6:10-12

10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles (methods of deceit) of the devil. 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

2 Corinthians 10:3-4

3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds.