

ACTS CH 16

Acts 16 – Transformation

We all change over time, are transformed - but for Christians, transformation is a work of the spirit

Remember when you first became a Christian? What were the difficulties you faced? Do you remember?

Was it friends, alcohol, drugs, girlfriend's, boyfriends, cigarettes? What were the challenges to you faced in your growth journey?

The theme in Acts 16:16 is all about transformation - moving from known to the unknown

This passage highlights how the Gospel not only changes individual lives but also confronts and transforms spiritual, social, and economic systems.

The story so far;

- This is Paul's 2nd missionary journey
- Chap 15; Jerusalem council - do gentile converts have to follow Jewish law?
- Paul is now in the middle of his 2nd missionary journey, but there's been a fight between Paul & Barnabus, so now it's just Paul and Silas

We're going to spend our time in Acts 16:16- 24

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.

What we know is;

- She had a spirit of divination or Pythian spirit - associated with the Oracle of Delphi & this enabled her to tell the future (had skills similar to the oracle - important role in Greek society, leaders made decisions based on her counsel)
- She was an independent contractor - she was owned, but people who used her gifts, exploited her - she's both economically and spiritually oppressed
- She seems to do a lot of heavy lifting for Paul! In that she declares where they are from and under whose power they are operating
- This goes on for days, not hours - days, this wasn't just an annoyance, it was attempted sabotage, Paul shows some remarkable restraint.

There are three things that the gospel challenges and transforms

Discernment

The Gospel empowers believers with discernment and authority in Christ to confront and overcome spiritual forces.

Despite the truth in her words, Paul recognizes the spirit behind them and, after many days, he commands the spirit to leave her in the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 16:18). Instantly, the girl is set free from her spiritual bondage.

The same empowerment is available to all believers today. Through the Gospel, we are equipped with



discernment to recognize spiritual battles and the authority in Christ to overcome them, ensuring that the light of Jesus radiates through us, transforming the world around us.

The Power of Jesus' Name

The authority and power in the name of Jesus bring deliverance and freedom from spiritual oppression.

The same authority and power in Jesus' name are available to believers today. When we invoke His name, we call upon the authority of the risen Christ, who has triumphed over all powers of darkness. This authority enables us to confront and overcome spiritual oppression, bringing freedom and restoration to those in bondage. Through the Gospel, we witness the breaking of chains and the healing of lives, reflecting the restoring power of Jesus, and the gospel.

Economic and Social transformation

The Gospel challenges and disrupts unjust systems, bringing liberation to the oppressed and affirming human dignity. This reflects the comprehensive transformation the Gospel brings, addressing not just spiritual needs but also social and economic injustices.

The Gospel's transformative power extends beyond individual salvation to societal change. It calls believers to confront injustice, champion the rights of the oppressed, and affirm human dignity. By liberating the slave girl, Paul and Silas exemplify how the Gospel brings holistic transformation, addressing both spiritual and socio-economic dimensions of oppression. This comprehensive impact of the Gospel continues to inspire believers today to seek justice and promote dignity for all people.

So what do we do now?

Go deep; being able to know where God is at work, and how to pray is important - own that! Engage in regular prayer and study to deepen your understanding of spiritual authority and discernment. Seek to grow in your ability to recognize and confront spiritual forces in your life and the lives of others, using the authority given through Christ.

Injustice is real: It's something that I think we're reasonably well insulated from, but injustice in this country is real - we have an obligation to stand and speak for those who cannot, I know this may be a touchy subject, but this is the essence of the gospel - Jesus came to free those who are in chains, and we are the hands and feet.

Human wholeness is the aim: This is about human wholeness right? It's okay to not be okay, but it's not okay to stay that way - is a phrase I've heard before! This place right here is a place where broken people can be restored & renewed.

We serve a God who seeks to see the world transformed by his grace and power – you and I have a role to play in this!

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REFLECTION + DISCUSSION

1. What's your story of transformation? How did God bring wholeness to your life?
2. What are some of the issues that you struggled with early in your faith, that you no longer struggle with now? How did that change?
3. How good are you at discerning what God is doing around you? Do you wish you could grow in this area?
4. How do you think we should use this authority that we have been given to participate in God's transformation of the world around us?
5. What should we do with this challenge to be part of the economic and social transformation of the world around us? Do you find it hard to see injustice?
6. What's one thing that you'll take away from this message, and act on?



CENTRAL BAPTIST

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