

Chains Be Broken

Acts 16:6-40 King James Version (KJV)

6 Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia,

7 After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.

8 And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas.

These leaders were Spirit Led.

Someone might have said, "We could build a great church in Asia."

But the Spirit said no – so they didn't go.

- So then they came to Mysia and again the Spirit said just would not let them go, so they didn't go.
- So then they went to Troas

So far they have no direction for their lives or their ministries.

- They try to go one way and the Spirit says no.
- Then they tried to go another way and again the Spirit said "no".

So they're searching.

- Trying to find some place to share the Gospel.
- Trying to find some place to let their Spiritual Leadership affect someone else's live.

Have you ever been there?

- Tried this – no
- Tried that – no
- Went here – no
- Went there – no
- Did this – no
- Did that – no

Have you ever felt like giving up on your ministry?

- Have you ever felt like maybe you weren't really called anyway?
- Have you ever felt like just throwing in the towel?

Natalie and I have had some Asia's in our ministry.

- We've had some Mysia's as well
- We've even had our Bithynia.

But Can I just say – Thank God for the "No's" in our ministry.

- They taught us some things.
- They helped us understand some things.

- They showed us what loving people and winning souls was really all about.

Do you know what I'm saying?

Then out of desperation

- Or exhaustion
- Or just plain stubbornness, they end up at Troas...
- And there at Troas God Gives them the vision.
- We don't read about revival at Troas
- We don't read about huge churches being born there
- But we do see that they found some vision there.

How many know that without a Vision the people perish.

- A lot of people would have given up at Asia
- Even more at Mysia.
- And even more people at Bithynia
- But thank God for those of us who keep going because we know that that there must be a Troas out there somewhere.
 - Some place to serve God.
 - Some place to here from His Spirit
 - Some place to connect and find His will for our lives.

Troas, I like Troas.

But there at Troas, the Spirit starts to give vision.

9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.

10 And after he had seen the vision, **immediately**

I like these guys.

- They didn't mess around.
- They had been waiting for God to use them.
- They were tired of the "No's" in their ministry.
- "Hey you guys wake up!"
- "God gave me a vision."
- "I know where we are supposed to go."
 - "I don't know why"
 - "I just know where."

See our vision has to start somewhere.

- We don't have to have all the info...
- Just the place to start.

I believe for all of us here today the where is Acacia.

- Some of us are still trying to figure out the “why” and that’s ok.
- As long as we have the “where”, we’ll be in a place where the Spirit of God can begin to speak to us.

...we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.

11 Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, (Small Macedonian Island) and the next day to Neapolis (An ancient Greek city of Thrace);

12 And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days.

So not much happens in Samothracia.

- And nothing much in Neapolis.

Ever been there?

- “Not Much”
- Have you ever tried to do something for God and were sure that you heard from Him but “Not Much” happens?

13 And on the sabbath (This is why I love Church) we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither.

14 And a certain woman (Now we have a “Who”) named **Lydia**,

(See, sometimes you know you’re in the right spot, but you’re just waiting on the right person.)

- The right kid in my student ministry.
- The right teacher in my Children’s ministry.
- The right musician.
- The right singer on the praise team.
- The right person in my Life Group.
- The right leader for a particular ministry.

- In business, it’s the right customer or the right client or the right connection that links you to the thing that’s bigger than you ever imagined possible.

a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira,

Look at this... this “Who” is someone who has some connections.

- She a business person
- She’s going to be able to help fund the ministry and the vision that God had given to Paul.

- That's pretty cool!
- Now instead of skinning camels for a living and worrying how he's going to pay his staff from day to day, Paul can focus on the Vision.
- He can get his eyes on and give his attention to the will of God for the place he is called to.

which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

15 And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.

16 And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us,

(Stop! Here it is! Now we know! Here's the "What".)

We were happy with the "Where".

- It was great to finally meet the "Who"
- **But now** we find out the "What"

And if the Asia didn't cause them to give up...

- If the Mysia didn't cause them to throw in the towel
- If the Bithynia didn't make them want to quit
 - The "What" is what scares the daylights out of people.
 - The "What" makes them want to just get out of there.
 - They didn't sign up for "What"
 - "They didn't tell me about demons when I sign up for this ministry."
 - "No one said there were going to be devils on this mission trip."

"It's been nice hanging out here pastor...

- but I think I'll just head down to the "Nice" church where you don't have to fight with devils...
- Not a lot of work there
- Don't even need to pray there
- I'd like to keep helping the ministry here, but I didn't sign up for all this stuff that keeps trying to hinder the ministry here.
- Thanks for the meals
- Thanks for the friendship
- Thanks for caring about us... but "We're Gone!"

See, building a church isn't so hard if you have leadership who are committed to the "What"

- "Devil?"

- What devil...
- Come out in Jesus name”

which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying:

17 The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.

18 And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.

19 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,

21 And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans.

22 And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them.

See the “Where” isn’t going to get you a beating.

- The “Where” isn’t going to get the devil mad at you.
- You can hang out all you want in Philippi
- You won’t get any resistance at all being in Philippi
- But when you run into the “What...”

See, “What” is the real reason you are here.

- “What” is why he wanted you.
- “What” is why 100 other people could have been asked to come here, but God selected you.
- “What” is your destiny.
- “What” is your purpose.
- “What” is the whole reason for all those “No’s”!

I like how Paul handled his “What”

- “In the Name of Jesus Christ”.
- He didn’t mope around complaining about it.
- He called on that Name that is above every name.

See the whole reason it took Paul so long to find his “Where” and his “Who” was because there was a Demonic Spirit that had a hold on the Chief or capital city of Macedonia and it was hindering what the Holy Spirit was trying to accomplish in that whole region.

- People were praying, but nothing was happening because this spirit was going around deceiving people.

23 And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely:

24 Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.

25 And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.

- Did they complain? No
- Did they bicker? No
- They did the only thing they knew would work... they went to praying and worshipping.

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 every one's bands were loosed.

Got a "What" you can't handle? – Pray

- Got a "What" that keeps getting in your way – Worship
- Can't get past the junk the devil keeps putting in your path? Get ahold of the one who can change your circumstances.
- Get ahold of the one who can shut the devils mouth and tear down the walls that are keeping you from your destiny and your promise.

27 And the keeper of the prison, (Stop... Here's another Who...)

- Only this is the guy that keeps everyone bound up.
- This is the one that puts chains on people.
- This is the one who puts them in bondage.

...awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled.

28 But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here.

29 Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas,

30 And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?

(STOP – Here's another "What".)

- Right in the middle of that prison, Paul's "What" was to baptize and teach people about who Jesus was.
- See, the more you embrace the "Where" and the "Who" God will begin to give you the "What" in your ministry.

31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy

house.

32 And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.

33 And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.

34 And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.

Isn't it interesting that the first convert in Macedonia that we can see is the man who is used to bind other people up.

- I wonder if this was the man Paul saw in his vision.
- I wonder if this man that everyone was afraid of and who had put so much suffering on other people wasn't in fact the one praying that God would send someone to come save he and his family.

Hey, we don't know who is praying out there.

- We don't know what they are whispering to God on their pillows at night.
- I believe there are some "Who's" that God is going to use your ministries to reach.
- I believe there are some "Who's" that are wasting away in some spiritual prison who God is going to use to reach our communities.

35 And when it was day, the magistrates sent the serjeants, saying, Let those men go.

36 And the keeper of the prison told this saying to Paul, The magistrates have sent to let you go: now therefore depart, and go in peace.

37 But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out.

Think about this for a moment.

- Paul traveled for months to get here.
- He's been everywhere he thought God could use him and every one of those places was some kind of failure.

But after getting some vision from God, he ends up at his "Where".

- And his where just happens to be a prison in Philippi...
- So Paul says - "No Way"

I have found my "Where" and I'm not leaving.

I have found that place where God can use me the most.

- My Calling
- My Ministry
- Has seen nothing but confusion.
- This place, and then that place, and all kinds of "Nos" from God

- Demon possessed people
- Beatings from people I don't even know
- **But I've finally found "What" I'm here for.**

38 And the serjeants told these words unto the magistrates: and they feared, when they heard that they were Romans.

39 And they came and besought them, and brought them out, and desired them to depart out of the city.

40 And they went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed.

See God didn't want Paul leaving Philippi until the bondage that the spirit had on that city was completely broken.

- I believe we are here for a purpose.
- I believe each and every one of us here have found ourselves here at Acacia for a reason.
- It is "For such a time as this" that you are here.

Get ahold of a vision for your ministry before you leave here tonight.