

DEVOTED, DELIVERED AND DESPERATE - CHURCH MATERIAL (1-8-06)

(Revelation and Response)

Acts 16: 10-34

INTRO: What is the material and make-up of a church? If we look at the church in Philippi, we see the essence of how Christ builds a church. Notice in *Philippians 1:1* how Paul addresses the church. “To all the saints” (hagios= blameless, pure, sacred). John Juneman points out that our view of saints and Paul’s might have a different basis. We might think of those who have been saved a long time, really established in maturity and age perhaps. A close look at the make-up of this church would give a different picture. A couple of weeks ago we spoke on revelation and response. The Word, which is literally Jesus manifested out of the Scriptures, is a book of revelation and response from beginning to end. I am asking all of us today, what is our response to revelation into our lives? Is it “I’m okay, your okay?” Is it “that’s for the other person?” Is it “don’t judge me?”... or is it a response that causes me to seek Him to saturate my life even more? Am I in a position all of the time of wanting His life to spill all through mine in a way that makes Jesus present in my everyday world?

Saul to Paul: This response thing is for everyone, including Paul and his party in *verse 10*. Saul (Acts 9), had encountered Christ in a vision face to face, and was blinded, literally to all else. He became Paul the Apostle. Maybe Paul’s experience was more dramatic than your or my conversion, but no different in God’s purpose. He has had to knock a few of us off of our horse to get our attention, and then make us totally dependent on Him before He could really work in our lives. Paul maybe needed a dramatic event to shake him up, due to his entrenchment in ritualistic and rule ordered religion. But ritual and rules have never been a replacement for a life of complete and constant response to the revelation of the person of Christ. Now Paul is in the position of accepting, the prevention, lack of permission and leading of the Holy Spirit to rule his life. In verse 10, Paul says *immediately we sought* to go. *Directly* they sought. This word sought, zeteo is the same word for seeking after Christ, and Herod wanting the baby Jesus found. It means to *worship, plot or require*. It is an “I’ve got to have this idea.” Is there an obsession in my life to directly respond to His vision or revelation in my life? Paul was a servant now. You are after Him in worship or you are plotting your own way. Both of these are responses.

A Devoted Seeker: In *verses 13-15* we see the picture of a woman who is a seeker, who is sensitive, and is a servant. There was apparently no Temple in Philippi, and there were some who were so intent on worshipping God that they would meet for prayer down at the river. Ironically, it only mentions women. She was a business woman that worshiped God, and through that God opened her heart to hear Paul speak. That word opened (dianoigo) means to “open thoroughly” or “expound.” This is the same as that used with the two on the Emmaus road that had their eyes opened by Jesus as they walked along. The word is used eight (8) times and it is always a revelation type word. She attended to the Word and responded with her family to the Lord. She was desperate to drink in more as the passage shows us. She compelled and urged them to stay in her home so that she could saturate herself with this new revelation. How long have you worshiped God, and yet perhaps not responded when the Holy Spirit directed truth into your life? I want that constant hunger for His truth in my life to baptize me, and cause me to be in His presence. *Lydia, was a servant now, and a servant that was sourced by the Word.*

A Delivered Soothsayer: In *verses 16-19* there is a *huge contrast* between this young lady and Lydia. One is opened up by God Himself, and one is a slave to her gift. A slave versus a servant. How discerning we must be like Paul. What was she doing wrong? She declared them, Paul and Silas, “the servants of the most high God” and even declared they were there to “show salvation” to the people. This woman was said to have a “spirit of divination” and “soothsaying or fortune telling”. Now in their culture this word is used to describe *ventriloquists*. The picture of speaking but no control. In the Septuagint, the Old Testament passages call it *familiar spirits*. Also, the background of soothsayer is “*raving through inspiration or utter spells under the pretense of foretelling.*” What troubles me is that she was being used,

and was really a slave. Notice that she did this fortune telling for many days before Paul said anything. There is a timing thing in discerning at times to be sure that you are operating out of God and not your own opinions. Isn't it disturbing to think that I could be speaking truth in the pulpit, yet be a slave to a source other than Him. That the motive might be some profit instead of the real flow of Christ in me. How without being sourced by Christ would Paul ever know the difference between the fake and the real? How are we going to know the difference in our own lives, in our own body, if we do not have the discernment of the Holy Spirit? What a tragedy that you could have the right sound coming out of the wrong source! We need to be delivered from things that look right and sound right but aren't right in our lives. Saying the right words, but not sourced by Him. Saying the right words but with my own agenda. Bringing promotion and profit to myself instead of glorifying Him. Revelation to Paul, brought a response to God, and a slave became free.

A Desperate Supervisor: *In verses 20-34* we see one result of obedience to God. Trouble!! That's what it looks like, but that isn't the outcome. The outcome almost never looks like the trial itself. Paul and Silas get thrown into the hole for costing some fellows a good business. Now they are singing and praising God in prison. *Suddenly, the earth rocks along with them, their bands fall off, and they are free. Praise does that you know.* Praise frees you. It shakes off the circumstances, and causes everyone to see the God of your problem instead of your problem. The keeper of the prison is ready to take his life, he is hopeless, but, I said

BUT (vs.28), Paul stepped in. It's that response thing again. "Don't run Paul, there is a purpose in this." How crazy to stay there, how crazy is our God sometimes. Response saves a man from suicide. He moves *from suicide to salvation to being a servant.* You see there was the response of the jailer too. "What must I do to be saved?" Revelation demands response. They spoke the Word to him and he responded to it. He salved their wounds, fed them, and he rejoiced along with his whole family.

Summary: This Philippi church was built on one thing. Constant responding of people to Christ. Paul and Silas, Lydia, the Damsel (fortune teller), and the jailor. Three different types of people, three different professions and backgrounds. Same response, hear the Word, and attend to it and let it attend to you. You have no such choice as doing nothing. You respond to the Word, one way or the other. Yes or no.

When the author walks onto the stage, the play is over. God is going to invade, all right; but what is the good of saying you are on His side then, when you see the whole natural universe melting away like a dream and something else comes crashing in? This time it will be God without disguise; something so overwhelming that it will strike either irresistible love or irresistible horror into every creature. It will be too late then to choose your side. That will not be the time for choosing; It will be the time when we discover which side we really have chosen, whether we realized it before or not. Now, today, this moment, is our chance to choose the right side.

C.S. Lewis.

Revelation demands a response, and a response to Him brings devotion, deliverance, and the death of desperation.