

SERMON: WORSHIPPING WHILE WOUNDED

Acts 16: 22-25

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

Introduction

One of the most beautiful things about God's Holy Word is that it is both timeless and timely. It is timeless because it holds truths that will never change and when applied properly benefits every age, era, and generation. It is timely because if you read it with the guidance of the Holy Spirit and with the correct interpretation, it will meet you at your present point of need.

This narrative is familiar to most of us. Every time I study this passage, I get new revelations. This is true of any passage of Scripture. Sometimes I read Scripture as a pastor, sometimes I try to read it as a theologian in the original languages, sometimes as a husband, sometimes as a father or grandfather, sometimes as a layperson who just wants to get some practical applications for day-to-day living, sometimes as a person who has made a mistake and needs to apologize. This time I am reading this passage as a wimp who has a low- very low- threshold of pain.

Paul encountered a young lady possessed with the spirit of divination. She could accurately tell fortunes. Some believe the evil one had commandeered, confiscated, and corrupted a gift that was supposed to be a blessing to others. After she harassed Paul and his associates for a number of days, Paul turned to her and commanded the spirit to come out of her. He made the command in the Name of Jesus. When the demon who had control of her gift exited the damsel, it created such a mighty stir with the local people that the apostolic team was beaten inhumanly and thrown into jail. By freeing this young lady Paul had destroyed the fortune-telling business. The whole city's economy was built around her fortune-telling skills.

Don't miss this: They beat Paul and Silas unmercifully. They tore off their clothes so that they could give them a "good" whooping. Just use your sanctified imagination, if it is not

to depressing. It had to have been brutal and caused severe wounds on their backs. Yet they had the spiritual audacity to worship in a jail while wounded. They prayed and sang praises.

We all get wounded at one time or another. Sometimes the wounds are physical. Sometimes they are emotional. Sometimes they come from neglect or thoughtlessness. Sometimes they come from maliciousness. Sometimes they come from systems. Sometimes they come from individuals. Sometimes they come from known enemies. Sometimes they come from people whom we thought would have never hurt us. The question to all of us: Can we worship God while wounded? Let's see what we can learn from Paul and Silas who worshipped in a jail while wounded.

Exposition

1. Focus On God's Power Instead Of The Problem.

(The Spies In Numbers Chapter 13 Only Saw The Problem.)

2. Pray More Than You Complain.

(Make Your Petitions To God With A Thankful Heart.)

(No Matter How Bad It Is, It Could Be Worse.)

3. Let Nothing Hinder Your Worship.

(Not The Place-Not Your Circumstances.)

(There Is Never A Time When God Does Not Deserve Your Worship.)

Closing Thoughts

I will say what I have said many times before. There are only two times when you praise God. They are when you "feel like it" and when you "don't feel like it." If you praise Him when you don't feel like it, in a short while, you will feel like it. I ask again: "Can you worship God while wounded?" The answer is yes, because I know the character and consecration of the Antioch-Lithonia members. Give God Glory! Give God All The Glory!

Related Scripture

Acts 16:1-40

Job 1:20

End Notes

1. One of the perennial theological questions about this Scripture is why did Paul wait so long before he drove the demon out of the young lady. Many believe it was the leading of the Holy Spirit. If he had driven the demon out earlier, they would have been jailed and would not have been able to complete their missionary work in Philippi.

2. This young lady was “talented but tainted,” until Paul drove the demon out. Gifted people must be constantly on their guard to make sure the evil one does not commandeer their talent and use it against God’s intent and purpose. We must use our free will to stay in His perfect will. Just think what would have happened, if Hitler had used his charisma for good rather than for evil.

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