

A Worship Study Guide for Individuals, Groups, and Families for the week of September 20, 2020

Background of Paul's Letter to the Philippians

- Thracian city defeated by Philip of Macedon, Philippi's namesake & father of Alexander the Great, in 300B.C. Philip mined the city's gold to pay his army.
- Annexed by the Romans in 168 B.C.
- Antony & Octavian (leaders of the Roman Caesarean forces) defeat Brutus & Cassius (leaders of the Roman Republican forces) at the Battle of Philippi in 42 B.C.; In honor of his victory, Antony makes Philippi a Roman colony. The citizens of Philippi enjoy all the privileges of Roman citizenship, and the city grows.
- Paul visits c. 50 A.D. on Second Missionary Journey (Acts 16:12-40) & was imprisoned there. Lydia and the Jailer's family are among the first converts.
- Writes Philippians c. 61 A.D. from prison (1:12-14) to thank the Philippians for their financial support of him (1:5; 4:10-19). However, he takes to opportunity to address several other issues including reports of the church's suffering (1:29), the danger of division (1:27; 2:2; 4:2), and the tainted teaching of Judaizers (3:1-11).

Philippi's Popular Reputation

- Important city in the Roman Empire; a colony with the feel of a "mini-Rome"
- Cosmopolitan: Made up of Thracians, Greeks, Romans & Jews
- Many retired military from the frontier days of Philippi were given land in this city
- Wealthy, Privileged & Loyal to Rome

Some Themes

- The Unity of the Church Under the Lord Jesus Christ
- Opposition to the Church
- The Coming Day of the Lord

Believe in the Lord Jesus

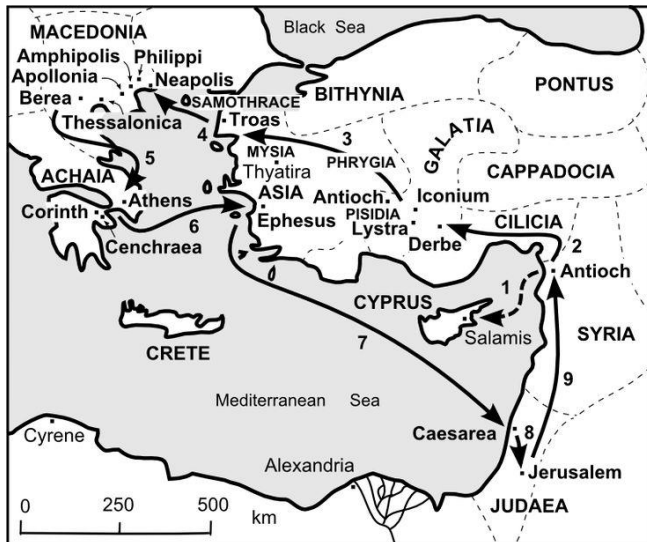
This week, Pastor Steve Shelby preached from [Acts 16:11-40](#). You can hear or watch today's sermon [here](#).

- God plants churches
- The founding of any church has impacts on the way it progresses
- Paul and his co-workers were led to Philippi by the Spirit ([Acts 16:6-10](#)): *"And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. And when they had come up to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them. So, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing there, urging him and saying, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us.' And when Paul had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them."*
- There are three primary encounters:
 - Lydia and the Godfearers (household)
 - The Fortune-telling slave girl
 - The Jailer (household)
- We must never forget that the Gospel is the power of God for salvation
- The message of the Cross can reach anyone at any time
- It is the renewing force for life, even in the face of dead works, demonic and cultural oppression, and government resistance

Questions for Further Study: Acts 16:11-40

¹¹ So, setting sail from Troas, we made a direct voyage to Samothrace, and the following day to Neapolis, ¹² and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city some days.

- **Luke records the beginnings of Paul's Second Missionary Journey c.50AD, accompanied by Silas, Timothy & Luke (the "we" of v.11). Trace these moves on the map (modern day Syria, Turkey & Greece) to become familiar with Paul's route.**



¹³ And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to the riverside, where we supposed there was a place of prayer, and we sat down and spoke to the women who had come together. ¹⁴ One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul. ¹⁵ And after she was baptized, and her household as well, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." And she prevailed upon us.

- **What are we told about Lydia? How did she come to faith? What signs are we given that Lydia was a true believer in the Lord?**
- **What does it look like to have a heart opened by God?**

¹⁶ As we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by fortune-telling. ¹⁷ She followed Paul and us, crying out, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation." ¹⁸ And this she kept doing for many days. Paul, having become greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And it came out that very hour.

¹⁹ But when her owners saw that their hope of gain was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers.

- **Contrast the pre-Christian spiritual state of the slave-girl with that of Lydia.**
- **Contrast the ministry of Paul to Lydia with that of Paul to the slave-girl. What is Luke trying to show us?**
- **Why do you think the owners of the slave girl were unable to see God's work?**

²⁰ And when they had brought them to the magistrates, they said, "These men are Jews, and they are disturbing our city. ²¹ They advocate customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to accept or practice." ²² The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates tore the garments off them and gave orders to beat them with rods. ²³ And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely. ²⁴ Having received this order, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

²⁵ About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, 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 everyone's bonds were unfastened. ²⁷ When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. ²⁸ But Paul cried with a loud voice, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here." ²⁹ And the jailer called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas. ³⁰ Then he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" ³¹ And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." ³² And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. ³³ And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at

once, he and all his family. ³⁴ Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God.

³⁵ But when it was day, the magistrates sent the police, saying, "Let those men go." ³⁶ And the jailer reported these words to Paul, saying, "The magistrates have sent to let you go. Therefore come out now and go in peace." ³⁷ But Paul said to them, "They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men who are Roman citizens, and have thrown us into prison; and do they now throw us out secretly? No! Let them come themselves and take us out." ³⁸ The police reported these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid when they heard that they were Roman citizens. ³⁹ So they came and apologized to them. And they took them out and asked them to leave the city. ⁴⁰ So they went out of the prison and visited Lydia. And when they had seen the brothers, they encouraged them and departed.

- **What led the jailer to believe?**

- **Compare his pre-Christian spiritual condition with that of Lydia and the slave girl.**

- **How does Paul lead him to Christ?**

- **Why does Paul insist on a public apology (v.37)?**

- **Surely there were many conversions at Philippi. Why do you think Luke chose three such disparate people to profile for his readers?**