

“Opportunities & Opposition”

October 15, 2017

NOTE: The Gospels & the Book of Acts must flow together.

The “Gospel” is translated frequently as “good news”—a word having its roots in the Roman world of NT times, kings broadcast “**bold reports of dramatic changes in a kingdoms—victories, restorations, and freedoms that drastically transformed their way of life.**” There is no “good news” better than the “Gospel of Jesus!”

“Acts” speaks of “**intentional, absorbing devotion expressed in unstoppable exploits.**” (Anything but “going through the motions”)

Acts 16:11-40

CORE: The ministry of 1st generation believers was filled with SIGNS & WONDERS—and OPPORTUNITIES & OPPOSITION.

1. SIGNS & WONDERS

“Wonders”- Lit.- *“That which overwhelms the senses, extraordinary events causing the observer to stand in marvel or awe.”*

“Signs”- Lit.- *“That which arrests one’s attention and calls for response”*

Together, “signs & wonders” impact your emotions, your mind, & your will.

2. OPPORTUNITIES & OPPOSITION

“A great door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many who oppose me.” 1 Corinthians 16:9 NIV

NOTE: You see this trend throughout the Book of Acts, however...

- **Oppositions** are temporary obstacles
- **Opportunities** have everlasting results

(NOTE: Foremost example is Saul—a demonized terrorist who “breathed murderous threats” executes & imprisons believers—is radically transformed—and becomes a “spiritual father” who goes about “strengthening” the believers!)

3. PHILIPPI STORY

OPPORTUNITY:

- v. 11- Paul faced **closed doors** for ministry; Troas to Neopolis (150 miles)
- Paul’s dream (16:6-10) of “a man of Macedonia begging him” to “Come!”

- “Lydia”- significant businesswomen; CEO & specialist in textile industry
- “A place of prayer”- a synagogue
- “Purple”- expensive, rare, and a symbol of great wealth/royalty
- “The Lord opened her heart to respond”- divine enablement; co-laboring
- “She invited us”- broke cultural barriers, yet Paul did not go alone

OPPOSITION:

- “A slave girl...had a spirit”- Lit.- *“a python spirit”*
 - Tries to squeeze the life from someone; make weary
 - Works to keep them from the place of prayer via distractions
 - Then, works to humiliate & silence (NOTE: *Closely affiliated with Belial- Deut. 13:13; 2 Cor. 6:15- “worthless; devalue”*)

OPPORTUNITY:

- “In the name of Messiah Jesus”- not vague reference to “Most High God”
- “At that moment”- immediate results

OPPOSITION:

- “Dragged them” then accused them of “throwing the city into an uproar” then “stripped and beaten” and “severely flogged” into “the marketplace” (*i.e., The Forum; size of large football stadium*)
- The purpose was SHAMING. (*“abused in Philippi”- 1 Thess. 2:2*)
- “Feet in stocks”- further injuries to immobilize
- “Praying & singing”- NOTE: The “heat” reveals the “heart”

OPPORTUNITY:

- “Don’t harm yourself”- *forgiveness to the one who “harmed” them*
- Move with HS in brining salvation to Jailer & his household...then boldly seek a greater opportunity with the magistrates—free and ministering to “the brothers” at “Lydia’s house”

CLOSING THOUGHTS:

Phil. 3:17- “Follow my example” (NOTE: They are not “the elite”—but examples)

“Let the RADICALS arise!” (devoted to affecting the fundamental nature of something; i.e., at the roots)

- RADICAL PRAYERS- (Acts 4:30)
- RADICAL PURITY- “Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander” (Ephesians 4:31)
- RADICAL VISION- to influence & transform the whole world!