

Readings

Scripture

⁶And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. ⁷And when they had come up to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them. ⁸So, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas. ⁹And 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.” ¹⁰And 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.

¹¹So, setting sail from Troas, we made a direct voyage to Samothrace, and the following day to Neapolis, ¹²and 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.

- Acts 16:6-12 (*English Standard Version*)

Reflection

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

- Philippians 4:4-9 (*English Standard Version*)

Jonathan Edwards explained how the human being makes contact with reality. We know things at two levels. We grasp things with conceptual knowledge in our heads. We also enter into things with the sense of the heart. It's the difference between reading a recipe for apple pie and actually putting a piece of hot apple pie à la mode into your mouth. God has made us to know him at both levels — with the thoughts of our minds and with a sense in our hearts. And it's the sense of the heart that gives us traction. When his assurances in the gospel melt into our hearts, we experience the power of hope.

- Raymond C. Ortlund Jr., *Isaiah: God Saves Sinners*

Sermon Outline

A Compelling Vision Along the Same Path
Acts 16:6-40

Acts of the Apostles
Brad Anderson

The Holy Spirit creates a roadway in the wilderness for the gospel...

(Isaiah 32:14-15; Acts 16:6-10)

How does the Holy Spirit make a roadway in the wilderness for the gospel?

Through the conversion of a successful businesswoman... (Acts 16:11-15)

Through the conversion of a marginalized slave girl... (Acts 16:16-24)

Through the conversion of an ordinary prison guard... (Acts 16:25-34)

Reflection Questions (taken in part from the Serendipity Study Bible for Groups)

- What was one thing you always wanted to try as a kid that your parents refused to let you do: Skydiving? Riding a motorcycle? Scuba Dive? Other?
- Note the change from “they” to “we” in verse 10: How does this relate to Luke 1:3-4? How is this closed door in verse 7 pivotal?
- What does the fact that there was no synagogue in Philippi mean with respect to the Jewish community there? How did that affect Paul's strategy for mission?
- How did the Lord open your heart to respond to the gospel? What people did he use as part of the process?
- If you were falsely accused, severely beaten, and thrown into a dark jail, would you still trust that God had called you to go to this place (Acts 16:9-10)? Why or why not? What does the response of Paul and Silas show about them? If you were the jailer, what would you think of Paul and Silas singing? Escaping? Remaining?
- Where do you have an “open door” for ministry now: In your home? School? Work place? Community? How will you step into it?