



VILLAGE BIBLE CHURCH
SUGAR GROVE CAMPUS

UNSTOPPABLE: God's Work in the World

A Tale of Two Women – Acts 16:11–18

Tim Badal | October 28, 2018



We're continuing our series in Acts that we've entitled "Unstoppable: God's Work in the World." Today we're looking at what I'm calling "A Tale of Two Women" from Acts 16. Last week we saw that while we've been learning about this unstoppable ministry God was doing in the early church, there were some things that did seem to stop the spread of the gospel. Yet God proved His faithfulness to overcome them.

The first obstacle was that of interpersonal relationship issues between Paul and Barnabas. They got into an argument about whether to take John Mark on the second missionary journey, because he had deserted them during the first journey. As a result, Paul and Barnabas parted ways, each with their own team. You might have thought this break-up of such a dynamic ministry duo would have meant an end to the ministry of the church, but in fact, it did not. God used their conflict to allow two teams to go out. Barnabas and John Mark headed toward Cyprus with the gospel, while Paul took Silas and eventually Timothy to go through Asia Minor, strengthening and encouraging the churches there.

We also saw how closed doors might have seemed to be a way of stopping the advance of the gospel. At the end of our passage last week, Paul seemed to be running into closed doors. As a result, they weren't sure where they should be going next. But while it might have seemed to be a hindrance to the cause of Christ, we learned that through a vision, God opened an unexpected door. They left Asia Minor—which is modern-day Turkey—and headed across the Aegean Sea to reach out to a new group of people in Macedonia.

This was the first time the gospel would be brought into what is now Europe. We know looking back through history that this journey ignited a fire that for 2,000 years has not been extinguished. We'll see how this unstoppable spread of the gospel began in today's story found in Acts 16:11–18. Here's what it tells us:

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. 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.

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.

In the historic novel *A Tale of Two Cities*, Charles Dickens starts this incredible story this way: "It was the best of times; it was the worst of times. It was the age of wisdom; it was the age of foolishness. It was the epoch of belief; it was the epoch of incredulity. It was the season of light; it was the season of darkness. It was the spring of hope; it was the winter of despair."

Many of you, even if you've never read the book, know of the first line: "It was the best of times; it was the worst of times." If someone were to say, "What does Charles Dickens mean by that," you, like so many, might not be able to respond. I want to give you a little more of the story to explain that.

A Tale of Two Cities is about two familiar cities: Paris and London. He was writing about the time in history right before the French Revolution. He speaks of contrast in his opening lines. He compares the best of times with the worst of times. It was a time of wisdom and a time of foolishness. It was a spring of hope and a winter of despair. All of these speak of the contrast these two cities found themselves in at that point in history.

London was experiencing some of the greatest movement in its history. Technology and the industrial revolution were taking hold. On the other hand, Paris was in political upheaval. Crime and debauchery were rampant in what was once a leading city. Yet in Dickens' story, while it was the best of times in London and the worst of times in Paris, both cities needed a transformation. Many in London didn't think they needed any change. "It's great, right where we are." In Paris, people were saying, "Absolutely—the winds of change are necessary."

We're not here to talk about a tale of two cities—I want to talk about a tale of two ladies. We have the story of Lydia and the story of a slave girl who was demon possessed. One woman had everything going for her. It was all good and positive. Lydia was a wealthy, successful woman. Her heart was drawing her closer and closer to God. On the other hand, the life of the slave girl was falling apart. She was a slave whose masters told her what she could and couldn't do. She was being used day in and day out. When the men of God came into Philippi, she found herself mocking them.

Two women—one at the top of the world, the other represented the dregs of society. Yet just as Dickens said, both of them needed a transformation. They needed to be changed by the gospel of Jesus Christ. As we'll see, the gospel reaches all kinds of people everywhere, regardless of their background, social standing or how the world views them. Not only did Jesus love them and seek these women out, He also saved them from their sins, because both of them were changed through the proclamation of Christ as Savior.

We also need to be a people who view the world this way. We should not see the world as being filled with Lydias and slave girls, as if they are different classes of people. Rather, we should see the world as being filled with sinners in need of saving. We need to go out like that missionary team did and share the good news of Jesus Christ, calling all people to bow their knee to Him so they might be saved.

Before we look more closely at the story of these women, let's review where Paul and Silas have been. In Acts 16:11 we're told they set sail from Troas. Why would they do that? Troas is a port city on the border of Asia Minor. These men had already traveled a long way. In Acts 15, Paul and Barnabas had been in Jerusalem for the Jerusalem Council. Then they went back to Antioch of Syria, where Paul and Barnabas were leaders in the church.

It was in Antioch where they got into an argument. They were preparing to go and strengthen the churches in Asia they had started during their first missionary journey. As a result of their disagreements, Barnabas took John Mark and headed to the island of Cyprus, whereas Paul went with Silas back into Asia, stopping first in Tarsus, which was Paul's home town.

Then traveling west, they next went to Derbe and Lystra. In Lystra they met and added to their team young Timothy, who was from Derbe. Next, they traveled to Antioch of Pisidia, then finally they headed all the way to Troas. While they were in Lystra and Derbe, Paul had a vision that someone from Macedonia—which is over on the other side of the Aegean Sea—said, "*Come over to Macedonia and help us.*"

So that's what they do. Acts 16:11 says, "*So, setting sail from Troas, we made a direct voyage to Samothrace.*" This was an island in the Aegean Sea. We're not exactly sure why they stopped there, since it wasn't that much farther to their next stop in Neapolis. From there they went inland to the city of Philippi.

Now that we know where they're going, we need to review who was with them. We know the team included Paul and Silas. We're also told that Timothy had joined them in Lystra. But there's another clue about who had joined them. Notice the change in pronouns in Acts 16. In verse six we read, "*And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia.*" Verse seven says, "*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.” They, they, they, they.

We know that in the English language when someone uses the word “they,” they’re speaking of a group they’re not a part of. In this case, Timothy is the author using the word “they.” That means this was a group he was not a member of. He was simply speaking of another group. Yet in verse ten we see a change. Luke writes, *“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.”*

Now instead of talking about they and them, Luke is using words like we and us. We can therefore conclude he had become part of the team and would stay with them throughout this journey. This might provide us with a spiritual lesson. As a follower of Christ, you can do one of two things. Both are good, but I think one is better than the other.

First, as believers, we can be spectators of what others are doing. You may follow Jesus, you may love the Lord, you may long to see His work done—but you have taken a back seat, as Luke had when he was writing about what others had experienced. That can be okay. It’s very encouraging when we go into our small groups and someone tells the group, “I shared the good news of Jesus Christ with someone at work this week and they came to know Jesus.” If that happened in your small group this week, all the spectators of this experience would erupt in great joy over what had taken place. Yet while that’s good, and there are times when all of us act as spectators to what God is doing,

I believe Luke was far more impacted by his journey to Philippi than he had been previously. In the earlier parts of Acts, either he was a spectator, or he was dependent on the reports of eye witnesses. Now as an active participant, Luke will experience first-hand what God is doing. We see this beginning in Acts 16:11:

We made a direct voyage...We remained in this city...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. One who heard us was a woman named Lydia....After she was baptized....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.

Luke experienced what it was like to be an active participant in the work of God.

This last week, our small group—like most of yours—had a social time when we shared food together. One of our elders, Travis, gave us a report on his trip with a team from our church to Liberia. As a spectator, I was deeply impacted by what Travis shared and was overjoyed to hear about his experience. But while what I felt was a good thing, Travis had a far greater experience as a participant. I was changed for a moment, but those who are actually involved in ministry and who watch God’s unstoppable work through them are changed for a lifetime. Travis’ testimony probably impacted our group for a few days. But as an active part of the work, Travis himself had his life changed.

Brothers and sisters, it is okay and even good to be spectators of what God is doing. But the book of Acts calls us to become active participants in the work God is doing, because when we are active in the unstoppable ministry of God, we are changed for a lifetime. So be active. But how do we do that?

We can see from our text how these men involved themselves in the ministry of God. After some closed doors in Acts 16:6-8, God lets them know He wants them to travel to Macedonia—and this is where Luke has joined them. *“We sought to go into Macedonia...”* After Paul had seen the vision in verse ten, the next word we read is “immediately.” Paul believed God and immediately obeyed.

If we want to be changed and if we want to see God move, we need to immediately obey God’s clear direction to go. This team obeyed quickly, concluding that God had called them to preach the gospel to the people of Macedonia. Because the winds were favorable, they sailed directly from Troas to Samothrace. Then they traveled to Neapolis and on to Philippi. We’re told in verse 12 that Philippi is *“a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony.”* In the original Greek, there is a flair of pride in what Luke wrote. This implies that Luke may have been from Philippi himself.

I talk this way about Hinckley, otherwise known as God’s country. We have the best teams, the best schools, the best students, the nicest water, the nicest people. We have the Dairy Joy. Tim and Amanda live there. It beckons everyone to come there. We’re the home of the first game of the Harlem Globe Trotters. That puts us on Wikipedia. I’ve called Hinckley home for all my 42 years. I’m proud of the town I live in.

It sounds as though Luke was excited to be in Philippi. That may even have been the reason he joined the team, because he would know the area. I want you to know that even though I may exaggerate some about my little home town of Hinckley being

greater than all the surrounding cities, Luke had reason to speak well of his city. It was in fact a leading city in its region. It was located just off the Aegean Sea, making it a major commerce hub, similar to the city of Chicago in our area.

Second, Philippi was a military city where many Roman military leaders lived or where they would retire. It was also a place of great affluence.

Finally, there was no “middle management” in Philippi. What I mean by that is that in many parts of the Roman empire, local intermediary governors had been appointed. But because Philippi was so prominent and influential, it was governed directly by the emperor Caesar. This would be like having the House representative from your district being the “big cheese” in Washington. Projects would get done. Money would be channeled to your local concerns. Philippi had these things going for it. If this city could be ignited by the gospel of Jesus Christ, it would change the known world. Which is exactly what happened, because we know how its influence eventually spread across Europe.

We see the power of God impact a wealthy woman.

When they arrived in Philippi, Paul and his companions met a wealthy woman named Lydia. Normally Paul would first go to a synagogue, but as there were none in Philippi, they somehow heard about a group of women who would meet by the river on the Sabbath to pray. It would have been quite unusual in a country devoted to pagan gods that the women would gather to worship the God of Israel. We don't know how much they really knew about Yahweh or how long they had been worshipping Him. But it apparently had become a pattern in their lives, so the missionary team sought them out. In our day as well, sometimes we need to go looking for the people God wants us to reach.

We don't know a lot about Lydia. In fact, all we know about her is what is given to us in Acts 16:14–15. But what we know helps us to understand her. We know she came from the city of Thyatira, which is midway between Troas and Ephesus back in Asia. Even though she was from modern-day Turkey, she now lived in modern-day Greece. Also, Lydia was a seller of purple goods, which implies that she was wealthy. That's because purple was a color worn only by those who were rich and famous or who were of the royalty. You might say she was the Vera Wang of Philippi. As a clothier for the prominent Romans, it's unlikely she would have been poor.

What we don't know anything about is her husband. She was the seller, not her husband. We know that after she was saved, her entire household was also baptized with her. But there is still no mention of her husband, which leads some to believe she was a widow.

What we do know is that she worshiped God. She prayed, she was in fellowship with other worshipers of God, and it appears she was obeying the law of the Sabbath. We can conclude that she sought to know more about God. It appears that she was spiritually healthy. But as Luke lets us know, she had not yet become a Christian. In verse 14 he tells us that as Lydia worshiped, God “*opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul.*”

The phrase “opened her heart” implies that prior to that time her heart had been closed in some ways. While she was doing all the right things, she was still far from God. I wonder when Paul wrote to the Corinthian church in 2 Corinthians 13:5, “*Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves,*” if he was thinking about Lydia. She was doing the right things, but she was far from God. She was trying to worship Him without the requisite knowledge or motivation. At least we know she hadn't heard about Jesus before this. As Paul said in Romans 10:14, “*How are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard?*” I'm not putting her down. Her heart was opened as soon as she heard the gospel message.

We should realize that it's possible to do Christian things—worship, prayer, spiritual conversations or activities—but still not be truly saved. Here are three truths that we can learn from this story of Lydia's conversion—three warnings we need to consider, lest we too fail the test in thinking we're saved when we're not.

Religion without Jesus leaves you unsaved.

Through Lydia, we see that religion without Jesus leaves us unsaved. We can do all the spiritual things we can think of. We can even be known by others as very religious—which Lydia probably was—but we can still be far from God. Her heart was probably in the right place, yet apart from the saving work of Jesus Christ, Lydia was lost, as you and I are apart from Him. So don't think this hour and a half you spend with us here on Sundays will save you. Don't think the money you put in the offering box or your involvement with some ministry will get you somewhere with God. While these are good things to do, they have nothing to do with your salvation. Religion without Jesus leaves you unsaved.

Had Paul and his team not witnessed to Lydia, she would have been lost. She would have gone to hell. And there are some this morning who have deceived themselves into thinking that a little bit of Jesus is enough vaccination to get them to heaven. But that simply represents a life of religion—not a relationship with Jesus Christ. There's a difference. You need to bow your knee to Him as Lydia did. You need to ask God to open your heart, so you might hear the gospel message and apply it to yourself.

Riches without Jesus leave you unsatisfied.

Apparently, Lydia was well off financially. She had a good business as a seller of purple goods. She had a big enough house to receive at least four men—Paul, Silas, Timothy, and Luke—and perhaps others. She probably had servants to help her with her hospitality. She had all she needed to care for these guests.

We also know she had a family that apparently had a good relationship with her. When she shared what she had learned about Jesus Christ, her entire household followed her lead in receiving salvation. Things were going well for Lydia. But all her temporal riches and advantages did not leave her satisfied. She was still seeking after God. Something was missing in her life.

We are often tempted to think that certain possessions will satisfy us, forgetting that Jesus is the only One Who promises to satisfy us and actually can. But it's a big temptation to think differently.

I shared with you recently that the Badals are looking for a new family vehicle. We found one we wanted but couldn't afford. Do you know how hard it is to go back to your old vehicle after you've driven a new one? I felt like I gained 80 pounds. I felt like I hadn't taken a shower in weeks. My kids didn't look as good in our old vehicle as they did in that new one. They weren't happy. I know, you're more Christian than we are. Possessions have a way of promising happiness. Maybe for you it's not a car. Maybe it's a house or clothes or vacations. These things aren't bad. The Badals will at some point get a new car. But we all must remember that what we experience in Jesus is enough to satisfy us.

Fernando Ortega wrote a song that said, "Just give me Jesus. You can have all this world—just give me Jesus." Lydia had the world at her disposal, but she didn't have Jesus—and that left her unsatisfied. You can live in this life with everything you could ever imagine, but I promise that at the depth of who you are, you will be unsatisfied until you find satisfaction in Jesus.

Relationships without Jesus leave you unsettled.

Riches without Jesus leave you unsatisfied. Religion without Jesus will leave you unsaved. And third, relationships without Jesus will leave you unsettled. The first thought Lydia had after she came to know Jesus and was changed by the gospel was to be concerned about her family.

First, her heart was opened by the Spirit to the words of Paul. Second, she was baptized. What does baptism mean? It meant she publicly declared in front of others that she had become a follower of Jesus Christ. Then the text tells us that not only was Lydia baptized, but *"her household as well."* She immediately had gone to her family to tell them they needed Jesus as well. It's important to realize that relationships without Jesus leave us unsettled. Lydia was unsettled until her family would also experience the grace and love and mercy of Jesus. These were the people she loved most.

Over the next two months we'll be entering into what I call "family time on steroids"—Thanksgiving and Christmas. We will sit with people who know us better than anyone else. They're our family. Lydia models for us the truth that our hearts should be perpetually unsettled when we know Jesus and they don't. We should not tire in praying that God would bring about a life change in those closest to us. We should not tire in bringing the gospel to them, even when we receive an angry rebuke in return. We should be asking God to give us more avenues for reaching these people, rather than standing idly by wondering what their eternity will be like.

How many of us have walked past the casket of a loved one with grief in our hearts, knowing that it's too late? Knowing there's a good chance that person is not living eternity with God, but in agony and torment instead. Lydia realized this, and she was compelled to reach her family with the gospel. These thoughts should never leave our hearts and minds. Our relationships will be unsettled until Jesus is a part of them.

We see the power of God impact a wicked woman.

Even in the "best of times," Lydia needed a transformation. But let's look now at the "worst of times." We're now introduced to a wicked woman, beginning in Acts 16:16:

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. She followed Paul and us, crying out, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation." And this she kept doing for many days.

Most scholars believe that this girl was mocking Paul and his companions. The people of Philippi had reason to believe her, because she had the gift of fortune telling and divination. Paul felt their reputation was being reduced by her words. The men probably tried to carry on their ministry by ignoring her, but at some point, they had had enough. Verse 18: *"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."* It's important to note that Paul spoke, not to the girl, but to the spirit.

The girl was young. Older English translations describe her as a damsel. She was also a poor slave, which is an extreme contrast to free and wealthy Lydia. Lydia sought God, while this girl was under the control of a demon mocking God. Lydia appeared to have everything going for her, while the slave girl had nothing going for her.

This contrast reminds us that all people, whether wealthy or wicked, need transformation through Jesus. Whether a person's life is totally together or falling apart, without Christ they're in the same place. Paul and his team spoke the gospel equally to both women, and both were healed. This tells us the gospel is unstoppable in the lives of all kinds of people.

What can we learn from the story of this slave girl? Remember, she was a slave who had to do whatever her masters demanded. She was also demon possessed, which gave her the ability to tell the future. She brought her owners great wealth, something that would be lost, as we'll discuss next week. But today we see her mocking the gospel message.

Through her life, we see that the occult is no laughing matter.

Somehow this girl became inhabited by a demon, to the extent that when Paul spoke, he addressed the demon and not the girl. We also read that at Paul's command, the demon *"came out that very hour"* (verse 18). It wasn't the girl who was deranged or crazy. She wasn't mentally unstable. This was something entirely different. People who see everything as being a mental illness or the result of bad experiences will miss what was going on here. You can't speak to a mental disorder as if it's a being. This was a demon-possessed person. Paul commanded the demon to leave and it did.

We need to realize that the occult, the powers of darkness under the leadership of the devil, are very real in our world even today. These aren't fairy tales or magic. The occult is real and it impacts people. There was nothing positive said about this woman. She was a sad person. She had no freedom and was being used and abused by the people who owned her. Even more than her masters, that inhabiting spirit kept the young girl in deep bondage.

That spirit of divination is also alive in the 21st century. Despite all our knowledge and technology, some people are able to tell the future through inhabiting spirits. Even though we see the first century as primitive, and we might consider ourselves to be above those kinds of deceptions, we still have very active psychic hotlines in our day. In every major newspaper, there is a page dedicated to horoscopes. We don't have to drive far to see signs advertising fortune telling, tarot card readings, and offers to conjure up the dead. These things are also available on our televisions. Conversations with dead people regularly influence some people's decisions about the future. The spirit of divination is alive and well today. Yet Christians often regard these things casually instead of taking them seriously. We see a resurgence of the supernatural in Hollywood, including black magic and other occult practices. This is no laughing matter.

Think about it this way. Demon possession is the counterfeit of being a Spirit-filled Christian. The Spirit of almighty God is filling you so you're able to do things you never thought you could, to speak in a way you never thought possible, to reach people in a way beyond your natural ability. Just as this is true, so the devil says, "I can fill people as well." When people are filled with evil spirits, however, they gain none of the fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). Instead, they experience fruits such as abuse, marginalization, and torment. Therefore, it is altogether unfitting for the people of God to dabble in things that destroy others. We must be careful. "Oh, it's just a horror movie. It's just a scary story." Be careful not to be casual about the spirit of divination, because it's wreaking havoc in the lives of many people. The occult is no laughing matter, so steer clear of it.

Through her life, we see an opportunity to look out for the marginalized.

Our hearts should break when we encounter a damsel in distress. We aren't given the name of this slave girl, her age, anything about her family or her home, not even what she looked like. These things didn't matter to her owners. All they cared about was

the wealth she could bring them. Acts 16:19 points to this: *“When her owners saw their gain was gone...”* They had no regard for her as a person.

This should remind us that we should never marginalize a person as simply being a means of our personal benefit. We should never use people for what we gain in spite of what it does to them. I don't care if it makes you a good business person or the most popular kid in school. I don't care what it does, we must never use people for an end that simply benefits us. That's slavery.

Also, we need to recognize this kind of marginalization wasn't just happening in the first century; it's happening today. How ironic that it's a young girl. While young boys may be impacted as well, our young ladies are marginalized by men who use them for their enjoyment without regard for them. Thousands of young girls are told they're heading to a career in modeling, but it leads to pornography. They're lied to and promised things, until they're no longer attractive or useful, then they are thrown aside.

Let me bring this closer to home. You might say, *“I would never get involved with creating pornography.”* But when we engage in viewing it ourselves, we are high-fiving the pornographer. We're saying, *“Yep, I'll take what I want from her or him for my enjoyment,”* without regard for this fellow image-bearer of God. When we engage for our enjoyment in the marginalization of others, we are no different than a slave holder.

Christians, we need to face this and confess this. The sin of pornography is not just a sin of lust; it is a sin of outright brutality against a fellow human being for our own benefit. By clicking on that site, going to that place, we make this person a slave to our own bidding. When we're done, we move on without being aware that they can't. That's their life. Oh, Christian, be very, very careful to not marginalize others.

God speaks of this over and over again, because marginalized people exist in other places besides the world of pornography. They're the strangers and aliens in our world. We're called to speak on their behalf, to rescue them. Let us be careful to not allow marginalization to continue in our areas of influence. Paul got rid of it once and for all in the case of the slave girl.

Through her life, we see that God's opponents don't stand a chance, yet they still mock.

Finally, there are two battles going on in this story. One is the battle between Paul and his team versus the slave masters in the physical realm. But there is also a battle in the spiritual realm between the forces of good under God versus the forces of evil under the devil. Paul was fighting on the side of God, whereas the demon in this girl was opposing him.

It seemed at first as though the devil had the upper hand. The girl called them out as they entered Philippi, *“These men are servants of the most high God. They've come to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ.”* No doubt her mockery caused fear in the minds of these missionaries, realizing their ability to spread the gospel was being threatened. But God held the upper hand. When Paul named the name of Jesus, notice how long the fight lasted. We read that the demon *“came out that very hour.”* The devil and his demons don't stand a chance against Christ.

The world mocks our ministry, right? How many of us have been called all kinds of names for being followers of Jesus Christ? We must remember that Jesus always wins—and the devil and his demons know this. They shudder at the name of Jesus. They know they've lost. In spite of the mocking, never forget that the opponents of God will one day stand before Him, then at the name of Jesus not only will they leave every person they have possessed, but they will bow their knee and worship Him as Lord.

Some concluding thoughts

Two totally different women—different backgrounds, different lifestyles, different engagements with God—yet both were saved. So here are some final thoughts. Once again, we see that God's work is unstoppable. How do we see that?

Step out in faith and you will see God move.

In order to see God move in His unstoppable work, we have to step out in faith. Nothing in Acts 16:11–18 could have taken place apart from verses nine and ten. God told Paul what He wanted him to do. As soon as they heard the call to Macedonia in a vision, they immediately headed that way. Had they not obeyed God, they would never have seen Him move in such a dramatic way. Remember, this is only part one of what happened during their time in Philippi. There's more coming next week.

Some of you are spiritually sitting in Troas right now, begging God to show you how He's moving. You're asking Him to save your family or to do some other amazing work. But you're ignoring His command to get over to Macedonia. You're thinking, *“I'll go once I see something happening in Troas.”* But nothing was happening there. Only when they set sail for Macedonia did these

missionaries see the world change. Some of us need to take a step of faith before we'll see God move. Some of us need to leave Troas to see God revealed in Macedonia.

Salvation spans the spectrum.

Second, we need to see that salvation spans the spectrum of people. Let's not forget this passage of Scripture, because it reminds us that no matter how rich or poor, old or young, slave or free, close to God and seeking after Him or far from God and mocking Him, no one is outside the spectrum of God's salvation. Therefore, we must reach out to all people, not just our kind of people—people of our color or our economic status. All people everywhere are lost and in need of a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

God seeks to save sinners.

Finally, the heart of God is to extend salvation to all. I want you to know that His plan started long before these men arrived in Philippi. He was at work in the lives of these men and women long before the actual moment of salvation took place.

Listen carefully and don't forget this as you head into a new work week or school week. God is on the move and very possibly at this moment He might be preparing the hearts of people you will be encountering tomorrow. It might be someone whose name you don't yet know. But we must trust that He Who has begun a good work in people is faithful to see it completion (Philippians 1:6).

God is calling you and me to be His ambassadors who go out into the world to share the good news of Jesus Christ with all who will listen. Let's pray that we won't be distracted from that calling, but that we will be filled with the Holy Spirit so when the opportunities arise, we will be ready, willing, and able to preach the good news and watch God change lives. He did it in the lives of two women. He's done it in our lives. And we know this week He'll do it in lives of those around us.

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All Scriptures quoted directly from the English Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

Note: This transcription has been provided by Sermon Transcribers (www.sermontranscribers.net).