The Book of Acts Lesson 32

Acts 15:16-40

“Singing in Suffering”

Introduction: It is amazing the things people will do for money. "Money is not everything, but like air, if you don't have any you will die before too long". Without a doubt, you know that the best things in life cannot be bought. The reality is however, that all of us in this room either worked, or are working a job in order to have the life that we have. We are able to enjoy vacations, sports games, a vehicle, help others, and fulfill our obligations like pay our bills, or making purchases so our family members will be safe and healthy. Money is something you cannot get away from in our modern world. But God never designed for money to rule over us, it is a tool which should be used to the glory of God in our lives. Sadly, many people waste their lives and sacrifice their families trying to get one more dollar. Paul and his companions were affected by man's insatiable desire for money in our passage,

1. Paul had an effect on a small market economy.

 A. There was a damsel who made much money for her masters trough divination.

 1. This is not something that we totally understand, nor should we. There are some

 things in this world not worth knowing more about.

 2. There is a time to curb our curiosity.

 *3. This is also seen in 1 Samuel 28:7 Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a*

 *woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and enquire of her. And his*

 *servants said to him, Behold, [there is] a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor.*

 4. Though God allows this to occur, He forbids his people from engaging in it.

 a. 1 Chronicles 10:13 *So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against*

 *the LORD, [even] against the word of the LORD, which he kept not, and also for*

 *asking [counsel] of [one that had] a familiar spirit, to enquire [of it];*

b*.* Galatians 5:20

 B. She followed them crying out, but it grieved Paul.

 1. That which was within her was not good.

 2. Her confirmation of their ministry was unsolicited and unnecessary.

 3. Her power had to submit to the power of almighty God and was cast out.

 C. When her owners saw it they saw their way of life and their survival threatened.

 1. There was nothing they could do to bring their spirit back, but were motivated by

 revenge.

 2. The mob beat them and they were imprisoned.

Transition: Money is the source of much heartache in this world, but not the only source. God has many options when it comes to testing His people. The disciples get an +A.

II. Instead of discouragement, they rejoiced.

 A. God intervened through the earthquake, but it was not for Paul.

 1. God used it for the salvation of the guards. V.29-32

 2. This occurred because the Christian prisoners showed self-restraint, choosing to share

 the gospel with the guard instead of fleeing for their lives.

 B. Remember that God still works like this.

 1. When our lives are shaken up it may be that God wants to use it so our lives will lead to

 souls getting saved.

 2. When trial come that which is within us will show to those which are about us.

 3. Would you respond like these disciples?

Transition: During the trials that seem there is no way out, God can make a way.

III. God intervenes for His saints.

 A. The offense that infuriated the magistrates hours before changed to no big deal.

 1. The heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord.

 2. It is not a cliché, God is still able to deliver His children from trials.

 3. That is why it is important for us to pray and keep trusting that God is in control.

 B. God does not always save us from pain or difficulty.

 1. Paul was eventually executed much like the other disciples.

 2. Many godly people today suffer greatly.

 C. The important thing is god's glory through our lives.

 1. When times are good and God is using us to accomplish much through our efforts.

 2. When times are tough and God wants to accomplish much through our pain.

 3. Your example through trials will show what you truly believe about God

 a. Do you believe that He is able to help and deliver His children from despair?

 b. Do you believe that God is mean and vengeful or that He doesn’t care about what

 happens to us?

Conclusion: Following God is not always comfortable or fun, but it is always the best thing we can do with our lives. This is not only possible for super saints, it is possible for all of us to go through life's trials with joy and security. Remember that the hard things we go through are for us as much as they are for a world that is hungry for an example of genuine faith in God.