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Act 16 versus 16 through 34. These are the words of god. Now, it happened as we went to prayer. That a certain slave girl. Possessed with a spirit of divination met us who brought her masters much profit by fortune telling. This girl, followed paul and us and cried out saying these men are the servants of the most high god Who proclaimed to us the way of salvation?

And this she did, for many days. But paul. Greatly annoyed. Turned and said to the spirit, I command you in the name of jesus christ. To come out of her. And he came out that very hour. But when her master's saw that their whole of profit was gone, They seized paul and silas.

And drag them into the marketplace. To the authorities. And they brought them to the magistrates and said, these men being Jews. Exceedingly trouble. Our city. And, They teach customs which are not lawful for us. Being romance. To receive or observe. Than the multitude. Rose up together against them. And the magistrates.

Tore off their clothes and commanded. Them to be beaten with rods. And when they had laid, many stripes on them. They threw them into prison. Commanding the jailer to keep them securely. Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison. And fastened their feet in the stocks.

But at midnight, Paul and silas were praying and singing him to god. And the prisoners. We're listening to them. Suddenly. There is a great earthquake. So, that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately, all the doors were opened. And everyone's chains were loosed. And the keeper of the prison awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled drew his sword and was about to kill himself.

But paul called with a loud voice saying, do yourself, no harm. For we are all here. Than he called, for a light. Ran in. And fell down trembling before paul and silas. And they brought them out and said, Source. Hot must. I do to be saved. So, they said, Believe on the lord.

Jesus christ and you will be saved. You and your household. Then they spoke the word of the lord to him and To all who are in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night. And washed their stripes. And immediately. He? And all his family. We're baptized.

Now, when he had brought them into his house, He set food before them. And he rejoiced having believed in god, With all his household.

Amen. My sends this rating of gods. Holy inspired in an errant word. We rejoice to know that he adds his blessing. To the preaching of it. Please be seated.

Last week as we were, considering the providence of the holy spirit and how that providence is often puzzling, You remember? The holy spirit. Forbidding them to go and to preach. And then not permitting them to go. And To preach the gospel. Uh, whether it was in asia minor or in, Bethenia.

And the They come to fill up high at last and They don't even find a synagogue. And then there's just Uh, the one convert so far that we know of And how puzzling the providence of god

is continues in this passage. The difficulties. The hindrance is the obstacles increase instead of Decreasing the opposition and the suffering and the providential frustrations mount.

And yet, it is often. Puzzling providence like this. That becomes the canvas. For the spectacular display. Of god's power. And god's mercy. By the time we get more than halfway through our passage This morning. Or for today. We find that. It seems to be a display of the power of the devil.

And it seems to be a display of the power of the world. And we are among people who are uniquely examples of being under the power of their own sin. And yet, by the time we get to the end of the passage, We know that it has not been an account of the power, Of the devil or of the world, or of the flesh.

But the power of god and jesus christ our lord. Over against and even through. Of these others. And so we see them in that order the encounter with the demon. In verse 16, through 19a. And the encounter with the Masters, the slave masters, and the magistrates and the multitude.

And the The material. Suffering and imprisonment. Of the missionaries. Encounter with the world. In verses 19 be a second half of verse 19, through verse 24. And then the overcoming. Of the bondage to sin and And the bringing to salvation. Of those. Who are in slavery. To their flesh.

In verse 25. Through 34. And having. Well, paraphrase of Psalm 46 that That has been written first in german and translated for us, that we may sing. We've Uh, organized it around some phrases that many of you will know. Hopefully not to make you think more about the song, but taking advantage of the song to help you understand and organize your thoughts of the text, And so, first of all, we'll be hearing about though this world with devil's filled.

And then the word above all earthly powers. And then it lasts the truth about the lord jesus, he must win. He must win. The battle. First, then though this world with devil's filled, Verse 16. Now it happened. Does we went to prayer Uh, so they are now stationed in operating out of Lydia's house, she has been converted.

She is the head as it were such as it were of her household not having a husband. As we? Found evidently from the text in the portion that we heard preached last lord's day. And apparently. They are going day by day. Back to the river, where those at least whom the lord has granted this groping after the god of israel.

Who is worshiped on the The sabbath day and whom gentiles who Grope after him. And offer this. This religious service unto him. Are called god fearers and this is the the contact place. And so, every day they are going to prayer Verse 16. This they are doing for many days and we know that because they get followed by this girl says verse 18 for many days.

And it happened. As we went to prayer that a certain slave girl. Possessed with a spirit of divination. In other words, she's a slave twice. Or three times. She's a slave to her sin in the first place and then she's a slave to a demon. Who is owning her using her operating in her?

And then, Uh, she's a slave to earthly masters, who rather than having pity or care for her find a advent, an advantage, an opportunity for profit Because this demon is telling true things. True things, of course, for false. Reasons. It is and evil spirit. And yet, even in the past, since in verse 17, Uh, we see the demon telling a truth.

And in a world where fortune tellers and diviners as it were Uh, get most everything wrong. It can be very profitable. To have a slave girl who is actually possessed by a demon that for its

own twisted and wicked purposes. Or is telling things that are factually, true. And so, they encounter this.

Slave girl. And she brought her masters much profit by fortune telling, This girl followed Paul and us. And cried out saying, these men are the servants of the most high God. Who proclaim to us. The way. Of salvation. And this she did, for many days. Now we have a warning here, don't we?

That the world is full of devils and demons and even when they don't possess people, they take advantage of people's flesh. And there are things that unbelievers and even wicked spirits. Say that our true and things that we are tempted to think that our helpful I mean, think about Paul in the situation that he's in, He's come to Philippi after all of these roadblocks and all of these obstacles.

And the, the ministry in Philippi is not going particularly well at this point. And this girl starts following him. Wouldn't many of us in the same situation be tempted to To come home to our, our wife or our family or tell our our Christian friend. You wouldn't believe it.

God did the most wonderful thing today. We were followed by this girl, and she started to announce that we were servants of the most high God And that what we are preaching is the way of salvation. And this girl turns out to be someone that the people of Philippi, listen to, in fact, they listened to her so much that they paid good money.

In order to hear what she has to say. And now she is telling everyone. That we are servants of God. And our proclaiming, this must be how God is going to bring the revival in Philippi. How God is going to bring the gospel to Philippi? There's a warning here, isn't it?

Isn't there? Not to jump to mental or emotional. Conclusions. When we received praise and recognition from the world,

It's not necessarily wrong or bad. If you get a five-star Google review, For your church. From someone who is an influencer and as followers. Or a tweet or Whatever tweets do these days.

But we should not. Find our hope in such things. Or count on such things. As being that, which God will use. To save many or grow our church. Because, after all, God doesn't need the help. We're tempted, aren't we where we are in verses 16 through 19 to think that God needs the help?

But isn't the point of the passage as a whole by by the time God has done doing what he does. The God doesn't need the help. Praise God, the apostle knows this about God. He has learned. The lesson that we were learning by Luke's spirit inspired pen in the preceding passage.

That the providence of God is the providence of God, the Holy Spirit. And that the Spirit is, Powerfully, saving all those For whom, the Lord has planned to say for whom Christ has died. And, It's no use going to Asia or it's no use going to Bethany, unless the Spirit is going with you, and it's no use Having a five-star review.

Or having the one. The girl that all of the Philippians listen to and pay good money to hear what she has to say announce that you're a servant of the most high God in our proclaiming the way of salvation, unless God. Is going to open the hearts. Of those who hear you.

You see? One of the reasons not what stock in promotion or publicity from the world is because God doesn't actually need it. It's going to take an almighty work of God on the order

of creation, that he who called light forth, from darkness, would make the light of the knowledge of the glory of god shine in their hearts.

And the face of jesus christ, it's going to take an almighty work of god on the order of creation. To save them. Even if even if the whole city, Could be gathered into one, great stadium. And all would listen with with wrapped attention. Because they've been convinced. That you are a servant of the most high god and you are, proclaiming to them the way of salvation.

There unable to heed the things that are spoken. Unless as was said of Lydia, in verse 14, Unless the lord. Opens. Their hearts. And so our great hope is not and what's happening in the circumstances or the promotion of publicity, we might get from the world. Our great hope.

Is in god, who is saving? Who is opening hearts? And then whomever, he gives us a hearing with We tell of christ with confidence. Knowing that christ is confident christ is glorified by the believing preaching of his word. Even if not by the believing hearing. Because now, the the one who's who's proclaiming christ isn't proclaiming christ out of a confidence in himself or a confidence in his ministry.

Or a confidence in the circumstances, within which his ministering. Is preaching out of a confidence in the god, who is saving? And if no one has saved that day. It's not a word of gospel falls, on any elect ear? That day. Christ is glorified by what he's done in the preacher.

And yet the preacher, who knows that god is saving and that god is not wasteful. And that god is well glorified. Just in his preaching yet, doesn't he have good hope. That the particular ones. To whom the lord has given him to speak. Are there are four likely to be one that's in the lord is saving.

Knowing that the providence always comes. In the wisdom. And the power of the one. Who has saved him and who is saving others? And so, it's this confidence. On paul's part that enables him to be a great, a great study in the difference between the gobby and the wicked in In their attitudes towards oppression.

We've already noticed that. This girl has been enslaved twice by others. And therefore, it's not difficult for us to draw the connection here. Her masters are acting like demons, aren't they? The demon wanted to possess her for its purposes. The masters wanted to possess her. For their purposes. They act like demons with respect to the second great commandment, not loving their neighbor as themselves.

Because unbelievers think like demons with respect to the first great commandment. So don't recognize god as the creator of all things from whom and through whom and to whom are all things and to whom is to be given glory forever and ever. Amen. No, they think like satan. They want the world to exist for their own purposes.

They want others to recognize, not the god, who for whom all of this by whom and for whom all of this exist, they want to be recognized and praised. They want to live, according to their own pleasure's And the one who does not love god with all his heart, soul, mind and strength can, therefore not be expected to love his neighbor as himself.

He doesn't even love god. It is a great satanic lie. That we can have love of neighbor in our culture. If there is not love of the triune god. Who has made himself known through jesus christ. Our lord And so, the masters, the slave masters Are acting like demons.

But paul is acting like christ. This doesn't come across very well. In the way we Many of the translations, translate verse 18. But paul greatly annoyed. Oh, how dangerous it is for sinful,

and immature people to read the bible. And read into. The sinners there. But some of them saved.

And being sanctified, sinners. That we, we're always in danger of reading our own attitudes in The. The one preaching it right now often in his earlier, life read this as a sort of petulance that he's irritated maybe. Maybe thought that since not many people were getting converted by what this slave girl was doing anyway.

There's no use. In this excellent advertising that she was giving him. You're gonna misread things that way. But the word that's translated with these two words greatly annoyed is actually A combination of a root talking route. That means evil and a preposition. That. That describes what is happening on account of the evil.

The the Uh, the greatly annoyed word here is talking about the the provoking of paul's spirit by the wickedness. Of what is occurring. You see, he's freed by the certainty, that god is ruling, and over ruling all things. And that christ will by the preaching of the gospel and the working of his spirit bring to himself all for whom he has died.

Poll is freed by that confidence, not to see someone who's an opportunity for his ministerial prophet. Right. That's how the the demon like slave masters. See the girl, Someone who is an opportunity for their monetary profit. But paul sees someone Who is under a bondage of great evil, and that twice.

Enslaved by that wicked spirit and slaved by those wicked men. And as this happens day after day, and He witnesses her under that evil. He speaks not to the girl. He's not provoked by the evil of the girl. Even if we translate it the way our version does, it's not greatly annoyed with the girl.

He turns and he says, to the spirit I command you. In the name of jesus christ. To come out of her. That's the evil that has provoked him. That is what he is. If we use that phrase greatly annoyed by Just as jesus. Several times in the gospel. Is provoked in his spirit groans and his spirit.

Over people being like sheep without a shepherd. Or people being under the control of demons. Or people not hoping in god alone. To deliver those. Who are under control of demons. Or people so enslaved by their sin that they don't even recognize him. And rather than weeping for himself, about what they are about to do to him weeping for them.

About what is going to come upon them. For what they are about to do to him. There's a great study here. Isn't there in the difference? Between those who are like the devil. And those who are being conformed to christ. And so which are you how do you see other people?

Are they opportunities for you? As you think about your interactions, and you think about how you spend your time and you think about conversation's, Hoping not that. You may come out having been used by christ, To bring him glory and do the good that he intends towards others. But but thinking about your friendships and thinking about your conversations and thinking about your interactions primarily hoping that you will come out better, And by better, we don't mean sanctified now do we That you will come out more, highly esteemed by others.

Or maybe with an opportunity. To increase your possessions. Or to have more control or influence. Are you being conformed to the world or being transformed and conformed to christ? Do you weep like Eliza? Will weep. Next lord's day's kings reading, god sparing us As he looks at the man.

Whom god is going to use justly. To judge the northern kingdom. But the prophet of god weeping, In conformity to the heart of god and conformity to the heart of the lord jesus. Who is god's own display of himself? Over, what's going to come upon israel?

That is a study in the difference between those who are being conformed. To demons and those who are being conformed to jesus. Praise god. It is to jesus that we're being conformed, not to the law. Although, the law is a description and expression. Of him and his character. But that if you find, That the answer of which you are, Patterned after is not what you want it to be.

That the solution for that is in christ. This of course, is a reminder that god himself has become. Our savior got himself has become our christ, jesus meaning yahweh saves christ, to me, the anointed one, the prophet, the priest, and the king. That the son of god became the son of david, In order to be the anointed one.

Why? Because it has been prophesied since genesis chapter 3 that he would crush the serpent's head. The scriptures tell us that he came into the world to destroy the works of the devil. And so this demonic spirits days are numbered. It is not going to get. To provoke and oppress and use and possess.

Indefinitely. And here, the name of jesus christ. Makes it come out that very hour paul with a right authority from christ as the agent of christ, speaking the name of christ This evil spirit doesn't stand a chance. It has to come out that very hour. Because of who jesus christ is.

Indeed, when paul writes to the Romans of the end of his letters, we hear him, reminding them that god will soon crush satan under their own feet. You needn't fear demons. And you mustn't. Fear death either. If this is a reminder here of what jesus christ came into the world, to do to destroy the works of the devil.

Then you should remember that. The great power of the devil is the fear of death according to the book of Hebrews. But hasn't the lord, jesus taken that away. Why is death so frightful because it's what we deserve for sinning in our first parents. It's what we, it's what we deserve for our own sin.

Which we commit, we are sinners, and we do sin, because we sin in our first parents, death is frightful not so much for the death itself. But because it's not all that we deserve isn't There's a lake of fire that has prepared been prepared for the devil and his angels.

And everyone knows inherently. That the reason we die is because we're deserving of hell. Not just death, that's why it's so frightful sometimes a frightful because we don't know what's on the other side. We convince ourselves of that as we push down on the truth and unrighteousness. It's frightful because, Behind all of that supposed agnosticism.

About what happens after. Beneath it all. There's a certainty, there is a god and i am a sinner and his wrath has revealed against all the unrighteousness and ungodliness of men and i deserve that wrath. And death as a reminder and a just judgment that announces to me. That that's what i deserve.

And all the devil. Having first tempted us into sin. In our first parents. And then coming with all of his accusations as our adversary. That's what the the name devil means the name accuser means. He holds us down and the fear of death.

For jesus has delivered us from that. Because there is no condemnation already now For those who are in christ jesus. God made him who knew no sin to be sin. All of the sin of all for whom he was dying, was there on the cross and the wrath that was due.

All of the wrath that was due to all of that sin was there on the cross. That's what petition means. So that it was all consumed, all dealt with. And not only that, god made him whom you know, sin to be sin. So that we might become the righteousness.

Of god and him.

That is the destruction of satan's power. And the life of a believer. You say, oh well. No, we don't live in an age where there are immediate confrontations with evil spirits or at least so much. Does often happen. Uh, more on the mission field. And the more a culture descends into A full-fledged paganism, wherever the gospel?

Comes. And intersects with that. And so there's an infatuation that can grow up because of the rarity. With the casting out of demons. I don't know if you've ever met one of these. Hopefully. A genuinely converted but sadly under instructed people. Who run around always recognizing the spirit of this and the spirit of that and casting them all out.

And

But that's not the great power of the devil, according to the bible. Well, jesus has dealt with the great power of the devil and you are to enjoy the victory of christ over satan and his kingdom. Precisely. By your confidence, in his propitiation that takes away, the fear and the sting, and the victory of death and the grave.

That transforms that of, which you had been frightened into that, which you welcome. Because it is the gateway to glory. And it is the cheat code at the end of your life to complete sanctification. Holiness. And a desire for and to delight in the lord jesus like you have longed to have your entire christian life in exactly the moment.

That the gateway by which he, he brings you into that holiness. That desires him is also that gateway by which he brings you into the immediate presence of his glory in your soul. As your soul departs. To be with him and your body rests in the grave until the resurrection.

So, there's a reminder here. That jesus is the god man. Who is promised? In genesis 3, verse 15. There's a reminder, even. That the last of your sin will be done away with. You will be holy. And you will be happy. If you belong to the lord jesus christ.

Because no condemnation. Ends in no separation from the love of god that is in christ jesus. Even death, doesn't separate us. Why Because those whom he justified, he also glorified. Death becomes. An instrument of glorification. So, this World is with devil's filled. And not just demons, but also many earthly powers who in this passage are represented to us, especially in these slave masters, the masters, and then the magistrates Uh, even our english translation, giving us the Uh, the help and verse 22 with the alliteration, and the multitude.

Then verse 22. And these are all present with us in every society, and even material, or earthly suffering or apparent defeat. All of these things. Uh, face a christian and yet the word is operating. In the face of in opposition to bending those wicked who are trying to manipulate all things according to their will.

And yet helpless to do anything, except that, which god who is redeeming has ordained to do. Ordained by which to save his people. First, you have the masters these Uh, these wealthy ones, when her master saw that, their hope of prophet was gone. They seized paul and silas and dragged them into the marketplace to the authorities.

What did Paul and Silas do? Then do anything they've done about the same amount as Naboth, right? Naboth was hated by Ahab and Jezebel for his righteousness. Because he couldn't give up the inheritance of his father's that was against God's law, he couldn't trade that field to Ahab for another one and a better one, this was the one that got it assigned in.

So this is the best one for him. It didn't matter how fertile, whatever the king wanted to trade him was. But the wealthier accustomed to getting their way. And so you have Ahab, you're turning his face to the wall coming home and being grumpy pants with Jezebel.

And Jezebel disgusted. That her her newbie, husband from the house of armored armory, doesn't know, like the kings of tire and satin from, which she descends. He doesn't know how the wealthy get their way. And so she finds the worthless men and pays them all. Just a custom to getting her.

She does whatever she wants. Well, these guys are the same way, aren't they? The wealthier accustomed to getting whatever they want. They don't need an actual reason. To cease Paul and Silas. They're the kinds of guys who get away with seizing people for no reason. They're the kinds of guys who know that.

The government thinks that. You know, the people in government think that they are in power, but it's really the wealthy who manipulate them. That are pulling the strings and using the power. Their masters of manipulation. You think oligarchy or plutocracy? Or plutarchy that also a word is something new.

Do you think that it was just recently that this nation? Uh, came to me governed by The, the wealthy. Who. Who have unimaginable wealth and own businesses, that own businesses. Yeah. You think Zuckerberg and Bezos and the tech rats? As some, you know, radical new development, and the history of man and government.

The wealthy few have been. Have been manipulating through government, pretty much ever since the fall. As long as there has been government by wicked men. There has been the manipulation of government by wealthy men.

They are not new. Neither should you fear them? Are these slave masters actually in control? From an earthly perspective, thus far, it really looks like they're pulling. All the strings, doesn't it? When we can sit here like a sap and say behold how arrogant and proud they are they get away with everything.

And they come out on the other side with more money and more prosperity. And they're surrounded by the ones they love and they have a good laugh over it all. But that's not the right way to read this. Passage. That should be patently obvious to us. You see the technocrats, the wealthy, who are pulling all the strings.

They're not to be feared. And many respects there to be pitied. Look at what slaves. These men are to their love of money. That they do all of this because their hope for profit is gone. This is just out of a vindictive spirit. They don't. You know. Maybe they think that they can get the girl repossessed.

But they're just slaves. To their wickedness and their sinfulness. And their control or power. It's all an illusion. A delusion. A form of insanity and madness. They're gonna go to the grave. They're not going to take any of that money with them. Before they get there, it may get sprout wings and fly away.



But they can't purchase their soul. No matter how much money. They accumulate for themselves. And the more they have, the more enslaved, they are to it. Well, how about magistrates the government You see if you don't see your authority is coming from god, then you're easily manipulated. If you're in government.

They're manipulated by fear the presentation from The the slave masters is pretty good. They bring them to the magistrates, they make sure to do it in the marketplace because the multitude is is going to be key to the technique. Um, they say these men being jews exceedingly trouble, our city And so, the The the magistrates already have oh no, the people are going to be upset and i'm going to have to do something about it.

And then, you know, that's that that's fear pressure from from below. Uh, they exceedingly trouble, our study, and they teach customs which are not lawful for us. Being. Romans. To receive or observe. Now there there's fear pressure from above. Oh they're breaking roman law. We're going to be on the hook if it's If it's found out that that we Let this let this be done.

And then, of course, When the multitude arises, The multitude hears this presentation before the magistrates, the multitude arises, The magistrates are are manipulated by their own fear, whether they know it or not, And so so they want to manipulate the crowd and play it, they're not even thinking about Yeah, is there?

Is there evidence? Is their right? We've have authority from god that is to be justly administered. We shouldn't judge by appearances. We should judge with righteous to. They're not thinking about any of those things. Why? Because they're afraid. And now they they are going to just do whatever they think they need to do into in order to placate and manipulate the masses.

And so they immediately respond with with this. Great display. Uh, the magistrates tear Uh, the the clothes off and It made. The mistake earlier in my study of thinking that they tore their own clothes and made display, but this is the magistrates being themselves, the one, to tear off, paul's clothes and to tear off Silas's clothes.

Yes, it's You know, the speaker of the house and the president of the the senate or, you know, whoever is the majority leader in the senate. Yeah, dragging paul and silos to the press conference in front of the microphones and waiting for the cnn guy to You know, to give them the go-ahead and the red light starts blinking.

And you know one of their aids had started the terror because all those people are spying us limbs. And so this the terror is already started. Once the cameras are rolling, There's paul's back. There's silas's back. They're making this great display. And then they command. For the, for the rod guys.

And that's actually the the term to come in. And lay on the stripes. The camera is zooming in. As each stroke actually leaves an open stripe. That will have to be washed later in the passage. This is the way magistrates. Operate civil government operates, apart from the fear of the lord, and the knowledge that all authority, that is on earth is given from heaven.

Pilot was a milder example but he was an example, wasn't he? He is afraid of the crowd and he was afraid of Rome. He comes to jesus and he says, Don't you or you know, why aren't you afraid? Hello, it's afraid. Jesus isn't afraid. Don't you know that i have authority.

Jesus. Was given to you from heaven. Why would he fear that? Why would we fear that? They may lay stripes on us. They make kill our body. Their authority came from. Heaven. Very easily

manipulated and they are addicted to manipulating. But you and I, if we forget that their authority came from heaven, we can fall into both of those.

Can't we? We can fall into a terror of anxiety about what the civil government is doing. To spare the wicked. And they are doing either what you think? Or something as bad that you can't imagine. Or they're more hopelessly incompetent than you think, and as evil as they are, they're not as good at it as you suspect, they might be.

But whichever one it is. There's no reason to fear in any of these situations. Because that authority came from God.

And last, we, uh, being fearful fall into manipulating others. We must remember that all authority comes from God. Especially those of us who are in authority.

If you're a husband, you're being a husband as assigned by God. To carry out in the way that the Lord has defined in His word for the good of your wife. To display the character of Christ. Even as you serve the agenda of Christ. If you're a father. You can't operate out of fear.

Of what the rest of the family will think. You have to operate as one whom the Lord has put there. For the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. For the instruction of Scripture in which God displays Himself. Primarily pre-eminently in the Lord Jesus. Teaching your family. The word of God pleading.

For your family before the face of God. Governing your family. As a servant. Of God.

Then it's the Lord who gives you authority in His church or authority. And the civil government. You must see it as coming from God so that you may be released by hope. From fear. Released by humility under Christ. From pride and a lust for more power. The word above the power of the masters.

With the magistrates of the multitudes. Oh, the mob. The mob. It seems to have a great deal of power themselves. They are for us analogous to the culture. In fact, the more the society breaks down, the more it enacts like a mob, like a multitude. Especially in a virtual world where they don't even need to be physically gathered.

Uh, to make a mob of themselves. But notice what makes the multitude so easy. For the wealthy masters to manipulate. It is their prejudice and their prosperity and their pride.

Verse 20 again. They brought them to these to the magistrates and said, these men being Jews. Oh, that was a trigger word and philippi. It was a trigger, it was a trigger word in philippi, to the extent that there weren't enough uh, self-respecting faithful Jews to form a synagogue in the place, and you only needed 12 men for that.

But as a trigger word in philippi because this was a Roman soldier retirement colony. And the last place you ever wanted to be assigned in the legion. Was that backwater place full of rebellious people called Jews in the southeast. Out there in Palestine. Where there are uncivilized, and arrogant in their uncivilized monotheism and always rebelling and getting you into trouble.

Juice is a dirty word for these Roman soldiers. And their prejudice makes them. They didn't need to hear anything else. That was set about pollen silas. It was, it was probably already decided by the time. The slave masters, got to the word Jews. These men being Jews. You know, prejudice makes you easy to manipulate.

Generalized stereotyping that isn't actually according to knowledge. The assumption that someone from a group is necessarily like everyone else in the group. It makes you easy to manipulate because the rational part that actually, is presented with evidence and comes to reasonable conclusions. About it, goes out the window, because once the the trigger word, that trigger identity is made, you've already decided in your heart.

And now you're hearing, whatever the data is the way. A lot of people do their internet research, you already decided the conclusion, they're going to come to and all they need is 17 thousand results so they could pick the 11 that say what they want to hear.

Prejudice. Makes us easy to manipulate. But by christ's love for others, we don't become so easy to manipulate. Even if what was generally, true of many jews was specifically true of these two Jews if you have a love, even for Jews. And then you are operating under the lord, according to the character of the lord, as directed by the law of the lord.

And that keeps you from rushing to conclusions without evidence. You hear the words? Of the two or three witnesses. You understand that there's a great danger of unjust conviction and sentencing of people. Just as There is the opposite danger and you fear, god, not men. Prejudice makes the multitude easy to manipulate prosperity also does.

These men being jews exceedingly trouble. Our. City. Philip, i was a good place to live. Disciplined people. Military wealth. Paid well. They were addicted to their comfort. I loved order. You know, the disorderliness and randomness of civilian life can be difficult. For people coming out of military service.

This is i, i think, A pretty serious warning to us. We have more. Disposable. Oh, it's a good enough term for the well we have more disposable wealth. Discretionary wealth. Discretionary time. Creaturally comfort. A machines that make what would have taken all day? Uh, for a wife or mother, you know, just a couple hundred years ago.

Her possible to do, and Five or six 10 minute stints throughout the day. We can very easily become addicted. To our comfort. And our perceived orderliness of our life and our prosperity. And if someone becomes a threat, To our comfortable. Enjoyable, get pretty much what i want when i want all the time life.

Our prosperity makes us. Easy to manipulate. Into resenting them. And god forgive us, we even do it to, you know, make our children. Immediate subject, not only of their own sin, but of the harm that prosperity. Um, Where the bondages that prosperity can bring them into? We don't teach them how to wait.

You know, we don't respond to their, i don't like that at the table, with we're going to go to the store and we're going to buy 30 meals worth of that, you're going to have it every day for a month.

Because you don't exist to be comfortable. And to have your tastes indulged.

So, so that they live in the in this Uninterrupted. Continuum of what i want. Only what i want all the time. And you teach parenting classes on how to manipulate them into thinking, they're getting what they want. So you turn the little demon god into more of a demon god just someone who You know, you've outsmarted for a little while.

Prejudice made this multitude easy to manipulate prosperity, made this multitude, easy to manipulate Pride made them easy to manipulate. You can hear the pride already in the hour

city. And then you can hear it in the us and the Romans. Verse 21 and they teach customs which are not lawful for us.

Being romance. Here are men who had devoted much of their lives. To serving the interests of Rome. Many of them perhaps, even on fringes of the empire at some place where greater military presence was needed, they were Rome. Rome was there identity.

We can have that. We can have that pride too. It can be national. Particularly, because of the goodness of the lord. And in how Uh in his providence and how our nation began. Although if we are honest before god with A shred of humility. Of. Our nation is. Is not something to be proud of before god.

In fact, when things were better in our nation, we often had days of humiliation. And days of actual thanksgiving, like where the day was set apart for prayer and for worship. For humbling ourselves before the lord.

It can be ecclesiastical too. If our response to the word hope. Well, Or the idea of our congregation. Is not one of thankfulness to god. For. Outpoured undeserved mercy. Because of what he has given us, if it is instead. Yeah, hope well. Where we worship the way the bible says, Because we're better at worship.

And we teach the theology that the bible teaches because we're better at theology. And we have this wonderful congregational fellowship. Where there aren't? Yeah, these factions that that are in in friction, with each other. But pretty much, everyone hope will loves everyone else. I hope well because we're better at fellowship.

The new here, hopewellians. The same way you hear the same way. There's that multitude heard the word romans But if what god has done for us, Is all grace from him and not from us. And the way we hear the word hope, well, is with wonder and thankfulness to god.

An amazingness that. Any of us could be involved in something that that he is doing like that. Then when you hear the name of another church, you're not thinking. That one's not as good as mine. Or another minute. He doesn't preach his faithfully as mine. Are you or you happen to?

Yeah. Hear their songs or hear about these. I'm glad we don't We don't do you know, we don't sing that junk. I'm gonna read junk. But you know the god of grace and your eager for the same, god to show the same grace and other places and the humility, and the gratitude makes you less easily manipulated by your pride so that you don't have a haughty spirit.

So that you don't rush into judgments. Because they are not you. Even apart from evidence. I think we're gonna. Save the the last part when when we get to The jailer. And so forth. For the next lord's day. But look at the The way that the demonic powers operate and look at the way that the worldly powers operate and look at how christ overcomes them, overcomes them in and of himself.

And how he operates to overcome them in the lives of believers. Because we're not just fighting against them. We are susceptible by our remaining fleshliness and and in our remaining sin to participating in That which oppose us christ? And yet he wins the victory. Not just in defense of us, or on our behalf.

But also in us. Against that remaining fleshliness. He subdues us to himself, that's the first part of how he exercises, his kingship isn't doubt. Defeating his and our enemies as the latter part. Praise be to christ. And let's pray.

Lord, we thank you. We thank you for the Gracious way that you had worked and Paul and Silas, and their company. That. In a passage in which we see much of our own hearts in those. Against whom they were doing battle. We may know that you who have brought us to yourself by grace through faith.

Are working by the same grace. Have been given us this beginnings in the same faith. That you had worked in them. We ask King Jesus that you would help us to have this confidence in you. And this likeness unto you. That protects us from all the fearfulness, and the manipulation.

And enables us. Trust in you to serve you. Whatever. Whatever may come, and you're a good providence. From the opposition. Even if Satan, or of the whole world. Make us, we pray to be those. Who love not our lives, even unto death. But who overcome? By your blood and the word of your testimony.

And glorify yourself by continuing to do the work. Of gathering in all for him, you died. And conforming all whom you gather in faith. Conforming them all. Conforming us. All to your own image. We ask Lord Jesus. In your name, and for your glory. Amen.