

Acts 16; 3 Constraints and 3 Conversions

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Date: 20 September 2015

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 00] A warm welcome to all who are gathered here this morning and a special welcome to those who are visiting with us. There's a whole host of faces around this direction, most of whom I don't recognise.

And you've taken our average age down by a decade or two. So it's good to see you all. I know you're from the churches over in Point. And any others who are visiting with us as well, it's good to have you also.

And we pray that God will bless us as we seek to worship him together. Tea and coffee will be served at the end of the service today. And all are welcome to join with us for that.

We will be joining the Free Church on Scalpy for this evening's service at half past six in the Scalpy Community Centre. The preacher there will be Reverend Thomas Davis.

And a coach will be leaving here at five past six. So five past six, the coach will leave here. How many seats are in the coach, DJ?

[1 : 02] Fifty-three. I can thank you to DJ for organising that. At the end of the service in Scalpy this evening, there will be a tea and coffee and cakes and then a time of fellowship.

If you're able to stay for that, then the coach will be there to take you home. But if you need to leave straight after the service, DJ says he can do a run from here, from Scalpy straight into Tarver and then return to Scalpy afterwards.

So, ladies' Bible study tomorrow evening, 8pm at 32 McLean Street. And the first group fellowship meets at the Church of Scotland Hall on Tuesday at half past seven.

Fair meeting Wednesday at half past seven. And the service is next Sunday at 11 is the English service and Mr. Jim Sim will be conducting that service.

And 6pm is the gallery. Mr. Hamish Taylor will be conducting that one. And then the English fellowship will be on at 8pm as usual.

[2 : 00] And I've been asked to go and preach over in Lox next Lord's Day. Well, from Friday through until Sunday. So, please, remember and pray for that.

These, I think, are all intimations. So, let's begin and worship God by singing to his praise from Psalm 100. All people on earth do dwell.

Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice. Him sour with mirth. His praise forth care. Come ye before him. And rejoice. We stand and sing as to the Lord. Sometimes. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[4 : 33] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Father. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Today we thank you. Thank you.

[5 : 53] and that you are our God the God of all majesty the God of all creation the God who is all-powerful how great thou art the hymn writer wrote in our minds as we heard the music this morning echoed these words Lord God how great thou art and yet we thank you that we sinners as we are fallen rebellious wavering in our faith and yet Lord we can come and we can say that before the throne of God above we have a strong and perfect plea because we have a great high priest whose name is love whoever lives and pleads for me and so we thank you for Jesus the one in whose name we meet the one and whose merits and whose righteousness through whose blood we make our approach and Lord we pray that as again our minds go to the hill of Calvary and the cross where Jesus hung and the grave that he broke out of we thank you Lord that we worship the

risen saviour and we thank you that we have a great gospel to meditate upon and to share so we thank you Lord for the good news about Jesus we thank you that you have not left us in our sin that you have not left us blind and without hope but we thank you that Jesus came to this world to seek and to save sinners such as we are and to save sinners such as we are we thank you that his life is that perfect life that was holy righteous and holy sinners and we thank you that his death was in our place the innocent in the place of the guilty the sinless in the place of sinners we thank you that his resurrection gives us that assurance that the work of salvation is complete and we thank you that we as we remember that resurrection on this Lord's day are reminded that we share in that resurrection when we put our faith in Jesus so we pray that each one of us this day would put our faith in Jesus if we have never before seen him open our eyes to see the beauty of Christ and the desperation of our plight right and give us that faith that we may look to him and put our whole weight upon him we ask Lord that if there are any of us who have drifted from Christ in past days or weeks that you would restore us we thank you that your promise is that those who return to you you will return to them and so we ask Lord for the quickening of the hearts of those whose hearts have perhaps grown cold we pray Lord for those in particular need today we think of those who are sick we continue to remember those in hospital thinking especially of Joan McCaskill and we pray that you would have your hand upon her and that you would restore her health and we thank you for Neil and for his return we pray that you would encourage him and that you would strengthen him and aid him in his recovery and be with the whole family bless them we pray we pray on for those who are receiving treatment or who are anticipating treatment of various kinds

and we commit them to you and ask that the great physician himself would lay healing hands upon those that we bring to you at this quiet moment and father we pray for those who are receiving treatment of those that we pray for those who will gather around the Lord's table in scalp and in tarboard in different denominations we ask Lord that whatever the word of God is opened and preached in truth whatever Christ crucified is proclaimed we ask father that you may add your blessing and that you may build your church we pray now that you would cleanse us from our sin open our hearts to the gospel and lead us by the Holy Spirit thank you for those who are visiting with us today we ask for your particular blessing upon them as they have enjoyed the activities and your word over the course of this weekend bless them as they continue in that and bless the congregations that they are part of of unite each one in Christ we pray we pray continue with us we ask now and we commit all these things to you in Jesus name

Amen now I want to uh what do we game with you today? we will have a couple of volunteers uh for a shootout see here target here loaded gun line it up take the aim fire oh dear zero points to parador E&A; okay oh oh go on Aman I know you're desperate too I know Aman really is oh oh dear Dan okay Dan you can come out oh there you go Dan you've got to line it up see you've got to line it up so it's okay oh oh what's your name again?

Lydia okay Lydia we're going to hear about you in the service Lydia oh thank you very much tell me boys and girls who did best E&A; did best E&A; got 25 Farrakhar got somewhere below the ceiling and the rest of you and the rest of you Amman same again way over here and the rest of you nobody even hit the target tell me who hit the bullseye?

no one hit the bullseye not one person hit the bullseye and to win this game you have to hit the bullseye now do you know what I'm showing you this boy and girls girls it's because in the bible the word that's used for sin do you know what it actually means?

[13 : 23] it means missing the mark and the picture that we have is kind of like a target a bullseye and when we sin we miss the mark and some people live lives and they do absolutely awful things and we read about them in the newspapers and they're on the tv and the news and everything and their lives are way way way off God's mark because you read about murders and shootings and killings and stealing and it's not nice to read about they missed the mark and then there's other people and they don't ever rob a bank and they don't ever kill anybody and they don't ever even maybe punch anyone in the nose in their whole lives they might not even shout and rage at somebody ever in their whole lives but are their lives perfect?

well we ask them put your hands up everybody whose life is perfect is there one? is there one? no and if anybody put up their hands saying that their life is perfect even if it had been up until that point that would have been the first mistake because that would show pride and pride in the sin tell me boys and girls was there ever anybody whose life was perfect?

great? Jesus there was only one person ever who came and whose life hit a roseye and he never sinned in thought or in word or in deed his life was absolutely perfect and Jesus went to the cross to take our sins on himself all our imperfect scores Jesus took on himself and in return he offers us his perfection he came to save us because our lives missed the mark and when we trust him and when we put our faith in him he becomes our saviour so what I want to say to you today it's just very simple all our lives missed the mark all of us sinned there's no one righteous says the Bible not one but we all need to trust in Jesus and if we do he will save us we're going to sing about that in a minute but we'll pray about that first our heavenly father we thank you that you love us and we thank you that you in your love have shown us that our lives miss your mark you are the holy God and you cannot bear any sin and so we see that we cannot come close to you because of our sin but we thank you that Jesus went to that cross to take our sin upon himself and we thank you that on that cross he offers us his perfect score his perfect life and we thank you that when he saves us we can come and know you and be your friends so help us today to say sorry for our sin if we've never done so before and help us we pray to put our faith in Jesus as our saviour and we pray this in Jesus name

Amen we're going to sing now and we'll sing from Mission Praise 1003 and the words will be on the screen my Jesus my saviour Lord there is none none like you and so we sing to his people Acts chapter 16 Paul came to Derby and then on to Lystra where a disciple named Timothy lived whose mother was a Jewess and a believer but whose father was a Greek the brothers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him Paul wanted to take him along on the journey so he circumcised them because of the Jews who lived in that area for they all knew that his father was a Greek as he travelled from time to time they delivered the decisions reached by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for the people to obey so the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers

Paul and his companions travelled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia when they came to the border of Mysia they tried to enter Bithynia but the spirit of Jesus would not allow them to so they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas during the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him come over to Macedonia and help us after Paul had seen the vision we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them from Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace and the next day on to Neapolis from there we travelled to Philippi a Roman colony and the leading city of the district of Macedonia and we stayed there several days on the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river where we expected to find a place of prayer we sat down and began to speak to the woman who had gathered there one of those listening was a woman named Lydia a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira who was a worshipper of God the Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message when she and the members of her household were baptized she invited us to her home if you consider me a believer in the Lord she said come and stay at my house and she persuaded us once we were going to the place of prayer we met we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit by which she predicted the future she earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune telling the girl followed Paul and the rest of us shouting these men are servants of the most high God who are telling you the way to be saved she kept this up for many days finally Paul became so troubled that he turned round and said to the spirit in the name of Jesus Christ

[20 : 16] I command you to come out of her at that moment the spirit left them when the owners of the slave girl realised that their hope of making money was gone they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities they brought them before the magistrates and said these men are Jews and are throwing our city into an uproar by advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice the crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten after they had been severely flogged they were thrown into prison and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully upon receiving such orders he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God and the other prisoners were listening to them suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken at once all the prison doors grew open and everybody's chains came loose the jailer woke up and saw and when he saw the prison doors open he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped but Paul shouted to him don't harm yourself we are all here the jailer called for lights rushed in and fell trembling before Paul in silence he then brought them

out and asked sirs what must I do to be saved they replied believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved you and your household then he spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house at that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds then immediately he and all his family were baptized the jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God he and his whole family when it was daylight the magistrates sent their officers to the jailer with the order the least rose men the jailer told Paul the magistrates have ordered that you and Silas be released now you can leave go in peace but Paul said to the officers they beat us publicly and without a trial even though we are Roman citizens and threw us into prison and now do they want to get rid of us quietly?

no let them come themselves and escort us out the officers reported this to the magistrates and when they heard that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens they were alarmed they came to appease them and escorted them from the prison requesting them to leave the city after Paul and Silas came out of the prison they went to Lydia's house where they met with the brothers and encouraged them then he left Amen and may God bless that reading of his word to us thank God to come and lead us in prayer and prayer We can strip if in those stores.

Himself child's purge. And we'll become a lost father. When the first day we return, thatrick is ■■■gecs and JWRAH.

Amen. You all hadn't changed your life so audiences In the last two years, Seeing a waylectric Strength happened to verbalize others When everyone enjoyed doing thatCause from Charlie Pubgil spokesperson ...

he tells these 100 books would come to look him into the 1830s.

[25 : 19] Now with the first 2 years of school, the first 23 years of life.

If you follow ■■■ or follow based I became very proud of the people,OUR he■, with money, and people.

This is their pleasure, your summers, and a black hour. The am superintendent of our school, to settle in like wine, and for everything we have to eat.

foreign For today's community children in Keph Vanessa defies First event which has the impact of these children, coming on, O000 near backhurst, in ■■■■■ of■■■ed to theavn, in■ plasticity.

0% ticket usezogen it that gross H fired love■ poison there's Sardos it does hear It There's an The crying from his ear

[28 : 18] With this We sing again to God's praise.

This time we sing from Psalm 19. And we sing in Galat. Psalm 19. We sing from verse 7 to verse 8. God's law is perfect and converts the soul and sin that lies.

God's testimony is most sure and makes the simple wise. The statutes of the Lord are right and do rejoice to her. The Lord's command is pure of death. Life to the eyes impart.

We sing to God's praise and Galat. We remain seated to sing this praise. The sinner man will be called abode and tan him ill to be fed.

The sinner man will be fed.

[30 : 09] The sinner man will be fed.

God's Coach cùngIE and Father may have done good news. The sinner man forh TIMIA is pure of death. The sinner man will be fed.

Nine Yum To Sharon Oh Oh Oh

Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh Well if you can turn in your Bibles please to the chapter that we read together Just as we go there again, let's uh Let's pray and ask for the Lord's help Our Father we Acknowledge with the psalmist that your law is perfect

And we thank you that there is power in your word and your law to convert The soul in sin that lies

We thank you that Jesus Is the one that we see As we open the pages of Scripture As we open the pages of Scripture And we thank you that he Is our Savior He's the one who came To save us And

so we pray That as we read this passage Which we acknowledge to be your word And as we see the lives of People who were so different And yet each of them touched By Christ We pray that you

would touch our lives And that you would meet with us In the reading In the preaching of your word And we pray that all That is said and that We meditate upon and respond to We pray that it would

be pleasing In your sight To your great name So equip us we pray

[34 : 19] As we look to you And we pray this in Jesus name Amen Well if we turn to the passage That was read Some of you may have eagle eyes And you may have noticed this already Maybe

others haven't But this is one of these sections Within the book of Acts Book of Acts That we need to just take particular attention To note something Acts I'm sure Pretty much everybody here will know Is the Gospel of Luke Part 2 And Luke records for us The works of Christ The ministry of Jesus Christ As he walked in this world And then Luke records the acts Of the risen Christ As we see him through the apostles And all the miraculous things That were done And just if we flick back for the moment To Luke chapter 1 And verse 1

This sets us back in context And we remember what it is That we're reading Luke's writing for this character And he says in Luke chapter 1 verse 1 Many have undertaken to draw up In account of the things That have been fulfilled among us Just as they were handed down to us By those from the first Just as they were handed down to us By those who from the first Were eyewitnesses and servants of the world Therefore since I myself Have carefully investigated everything From the beginning It seemed good also for me To write an orderly account For you most excellent Neophilus So that you may know the certainty Of the things that you have been taught So Luke from the outset He states his intention He says to this character That he's writing for Theophilus And all those that will read this This is an orderly account Of all these things That were going on And Luke prepares this orderly account And he takes us through So many situations and scenarios As we navigate through Luke's gospel And then we get on to the book of Acts And still at the beginning of Acts We have the same record We have the same general tone In the beginning Acts chapter 1 verse 1 He says in my former book Theophilus I wrote about all that Jesus began to do And to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven After giving instructions to the Holy Spirit To the apostles he had chosen And so still Luke is He has this very clear remit of what he's trying to do He's still trying to write this orderly account As things continue And Christ continues to work in the power of the Spirit To the apostles that he has chosen And from Acts chapter 1 which we've studied Right the way through into chapter 15 And early part of chapter 16

Luke continues to record All of these things Which he has carefully researched And set down on paper So just in the course of Acts chapter 16 We note that Luke goes from talking about They The people that he was writing about To we Note verse 4 Luke talks in chapter 16 About Timothy and Paul and Silas As they join together And he says in verse 4 As they travelled from time to time Flicking down to verse 7 And we're coming to the vision of the man of Macedonia It says in verse 7 When they came to the border of Mysia And in chapter 16 still in verse 8 So they passed by Mysia And went down to Troas This is all a carefully researched account Of what they did And then there's a change At verse 10 After Paul had seen the vision We got ready At once to leave for Macedonia Concluding that God had called us To preach the gospel to them Verse 11 So We Put out to sea From Troas We Put out to sea And so what we have here Is a change In the text This This Goes from being a Curly researched Record Of things that Luke Had come to hear about To something that he was Right bang in the middle of And he's now writing about His own personal experiences And the things that he saw With his eyes We have an eyewitness testimony now

[39 : 30] Of all that was going on At that time And through the eye First hand Of Luke In this chapter We see Three constraints And three conversions Two points to them Three constraints And three conversions So first of all We consider these three constraints A few weeks ago Grace my middle daughter Was over visiting One of her pals And herself And one of her pals Decided to take Their dog out for a walk At least That's what they Expected that they were going to do But somebody who was in the vicinity As Grace and her friend I believe her friend anonymous As they decided to take this dog out for a walk They were watching him And their account of what actually happened Was quite different Their testimony of what they saw With their eyes Was that Grace and her friend

Were not taking the dog out for a walk at all The dog was taking them out for a walk The dog was much bigger than the two of them combined And although they may have had the lead They were not doing the leading And if and when the dog decided That he or she did not want to go that way But wanted to go this way Whether they liked it or not That's the way that they were going to go They were going to have to head In the opposite direction To what was in their minds Because the dog was constrained Another story Which I happen to hear And we'll know why I pretend It was a horse And they lived in a field Day after day And it was happily in that field But one day Said horse escaped from the field And this horse was found wandering around in the road

I think it was up at Brownie's direction Parading around and just enjoying its general freedom One guy happened to be passing Who knew a little bit about horses And he recognised the horse He

recognised that this horse shouldn't be on the main highway And he recognised that this horse shouldn't be on the main highway And so he got out of his car and started to try to negotiate with the horse He tried to pull it He tried to push it He tried to coax it He tried to do every possible thing To get this horse from the danger of the highway to the safety of the field That the horse would not be constrained Three constraints That's just two But as we're looking at verses 6 to verse 10 Of the chapter that we read Chapter 16

What we see three times Is that Paul and his companions Are constrained to do God's will They do not And they cannot Constrain God To go to some of the places That they had decided That they were going to go to And so rather What we see in these verses Is that they, Paul And Timothy and Silas Were constrained by God They did not They did not constrain God To follow their travel routine But God Constrained them To go the place that they wanted to go He wanted them to go And to do the things that he wanted them to do And so we see quite mysteriously in these verses That they were kept from preaching They were kept by the Holy Spirit Verse 6 From preaching the word in the province of Asia

We see also in verse 7 That the spirit of Jesus Would not allow them To enter Bithynia And we see in verses 9 And verse 10 That they concluded that God had called them To preach the gospel in Macedonia As they hear this call Come over to Macedonia And help us So there's three constraints there They go into Asia And it seems that they have this intention to preach But they're not alive They get to the door of Bithynia And they want to head into that place But the spirit of Jesus Would not allow them to And then As they're in Troas They have this vision And they hear This man of Macedonia Saying come over to Macedonia And help us Three constraints Now

[44 : 42] Why did God Constrain them From preaching in Asia Why did God Stop them from going into Bithynia These are kind of mysterious questions That I'm not going to go into today But I think I'll pick back up And when to the evening At the prayer meeting So I don't want to Speculate too much Over the whys and wherewords Of the green light And the red light At this stage What I want us to know Is what they did When their plans Were thwarted When they found that they could not preach in Asia And when they found that they could not enter Bithynia We don't read about Paul And Silas And Timothy Waving their kind of travel itineraries angrily In the direction of God We don't read of them Becoming frustrated And shaking their fist And demanding an explanation of God They had set this in their iPads

They had put this in their diaries They had determined their plans Why were they not working out? What we read is that Under these three constraints They submitted to the Lord And they let him direct their paths And so must we Every day In every way Whether we are 14 Or whether we are 84 Proverbs chapter 3 Verses 5 and 6 applies We are to acknowledge the Lord In all our ways And let him Direct our paths And so whether It's in terms of relationships Whether it's in terms of our work Commitments Whether it's in terms of our family life Whether it's in terms of our Career path Or our impending retirement Or our education Or our leisure time Or Christian ministry

The point is That you and I Do not constrain God You and I Do not get to push And pull God In the directions That we determine Are best We do not dictate That he must be squeezed Into a particular section Of our year planning We submit to him Because he is the Lord Because he is the Lord He is God Almighty He is stronger Than we are And he will not be manipulated He will not be pushed around And we submit to God In terms of our plans Because he is the Alpha And the Omega He knows the beginning He knows the beginning From the end And the end From the beginning We just see a snapshot In time God sees all things

From eternity To eternity And so he knows Which way is best for us Even when we don't And that is an encouraging Biblical principle To lock onto Especially When it seems Like our plans Are falling apart I don't know what is going on In everybody's life Here today We can all put on A very convincing facade Of everything always being fine And we can smile And drink coffee And eat cake And seem to have everything Very much on a level And yet Over the last Seven or eight years In ministry I've been stunned When I hear Of how People's lives

Have been Falling apart Behind smiles The fact is Sometimes things are falling apart Behind the smile Behind the smile And sometimes We are In meltdown A meltdown That no one But the Lord himself Can see Sometimes we can be in a state Where we Cannot understand Why what is happening to us Is happening to us Sometimes we can see No sense And no good In why the Lord Is allowing us To go through A particular providence And be in a certain place At a certain time Where there is so much Shrapnel Flying or whatever Sometimes we shake our heads In dismay As

we sing

[49 : 49] God moves In a mysterious way His wonders to perform But even when we don't understand And even when we cannot see What God's purpose is Day by day In the little things And the life changing things Your calling in mind As it was for them Is to trust him To trust him Not to seek to negotiate with him To change floors Not to become furious And withdrawn But to trust him God knows what he is doing In all of our lives In all of our lives He has a plan He has a plan And that is an encouraging Thing Which we need to grasp hold of

With the faith that God gives us Think about Peter Peter had to learn this the hard way Put yourself in the In the shoes of Peter for a moment In Mark chapter 8 Jesus is there with Peter And Jesus has said to Peter Who do you say that I am?

And Peter has for the first time Realised that Jesus is the Christ And then Jesus starts to teach them And Jesus says that Teaches them and he says That the son of man must suffer many things And be rejected by the elders, chief priests And teachers of the law And that he must be killed And after three days rise again He spoke painfully about this And Peter took him aside And began to rebuke him Peter takes the Lord aside He takes Jesus aside And he says No, no Jesus All that you're saying just now All this teaching that you're giving us About suffering and dying on the cross That's not the way to do things That's a bad plan Don't go there He teaches this stuff And Jesus silences him And Jesus makes clear That even though Peter Didn't like it and couldn't understand it Peter must submit to his way Think about John 13

Jesus starts to wash the disciples' feet And he comes again to Simon Peter And he says Peter Who said to him Lord, are you going to wash my feet?

Jesus replied You do not realise now what I am doing But later you will understand No, said Peter You shall never wash my feet Again, Peter is saying to the Lord This is an awful plan What are you doing with a bucket of water And a sponge like this?

[52 : 51] Why are you washing my feet? Why are you in the The posture of a servant? You're the Lord This is nonsensical This is madness This is a bad plan, Jesus But Jesus again makes clear To Peter Even though you do not understand this Peter You must submit To my way And in both these accounts John 8, Mark 8 and John 13 They are pointing forward To the ultimate plan Which was Calvary Where God the Son dies Lays down his life And where Satan Seems to have conquered And if you and I try and put ourselves In the shoes of the disciples

On that day As Jesus hung and suffered there And lowered his head And gave up the ghost How dark That must have seemed And how mysterious And tragic It must have appeared And how the disciples Must have wanted to constrain Jesus And get hold of him And stop him from going to that cross And yet that was the only way For sinners to be saved That was the plan Of salvation The love of God Was constraining Jesus to come The love of Christ Was constraining Him to go to that cross And it's that same love Incidentally that should drive outside that door

With the gospel message to tell As it did the apostles here As it did the apostles here So we see here three constraints And then secondly and quickly We see three conversions And my expectation is that Luke would have seen many more than three conversions But he picks out just three And in doing so Luke shows us as God inspires him that Jesus is for everyone Jesus is for everyone Everyone needs Jesus Now can you take your Bibles please And follow quickly with me these verses Because I have very little time And I just want to very quickly look through these three accounts

Three conversions Three conversions Overarching head Everyone needs Jesus First subheading Is Jesus is for the very good We see that from verses 11 To verse 15 And who we see in these verses is Lydia And we find Lydia on the riverbank She's at a prayer meeting She's at a prayer meeting And essentially that was the church in Philippi If there were not ten Jewish men They had no quorum to be able to have a synagogue And Paul when he arrived in a place He would always go first to the synagogue Philippi had no synagogue And so he heads down to the river Where people often prayed And so we see here as Paul anticipates Just a few women who are gathered down by the riverside to pray Verse 13 Lydia is amongst them Who is Lydia?

Verse 14 Lydia is a dealer in purple cloth Which means that she's a successful businesswoman We assume that she's a successful businesswoman Because purple cloth was the expensive cloth of the day So if you want to put Lydia into today's terms We can think of Lydia as being somebody on Princess Street With one of these designer boutiques With Armani or Burberry Or one of these labels that I can't get anywhere near She's the one who has this shop She's the one who is the

fashionista The hoi polloi of the day She has a big house verse 15 She has plenty of money And verse 14 tells us that she was a worshipper of God Now that is a technical term that we've come across before In Acts chapter 10 To be a worshipper of God In that day That described somebody who had a belief in God And who was seeking God And who was living a moral, religious, clean life [57 : 53] As they were observed from a distance And so there's Lydia Just a snack shop Plenty of money Big house Big house Designer shop All the designer labels Clean living Respectable Religious And people would have looked at Lydia And said she has it all Good, clean living Respectable lady She has success in this world She has a form of godliness But the reality is She had nothing Without Christ And she knows it And that's why she's down by the river And so when Paul gives his message As he does The Lord who had begun this work in her Opened her heart verse 14 To believe And she was saved And she professed her faith Instantly She's baptized And we see a change

Immediately in her life As she opened her life And her home To the apostles And so there's Lydia And the point is The main point is Jesus Is for the very good Jesus Is maybe Especially For the very good The very respectable The very religious Because the very good And the very respectable And the very religious Are the very people Who are so easily Deceived By Satan Into And to believe Into And to believe in That they're okay On account of their Squeaky clean lives And their respectable facade Even the very good Even the legends

Need Jesus Need Jesus And can only be saved Can only be converted Through Jesus She's in church She's in prayer She's reading the scripture She's trying to live a good life And it got her nowhere That's why God Sent Paul over there To preach Christ And when she hears about Jesus Her heart is open to respond And she's saved And Lydia is in here this morning You need Jesus The second point within this little account

Is that there are many people Who come to faith Just like this No drama No earthquakes No flashing lights No huge shouts from heaven Just a gradual Gentle Leading And then An opening of the heart To respond to the gospel of Christ And if that's how you become a Christian Tell your testimony Luke takes the time To tell Lydia You be encouraged to tell yours Jesus is for the very good Secondly, very quickly Jesus is for the very bad Look at verses 16 to verse 18 And Luke flies at great speed From one end of the social spectrum And the spiritual spectrum to the other As he introduces us in verses 16 to 18

To a girl, she's a slave girl She is even possessed by a spirit That enabled her to predict the future And she is exploited by her owners So that they can profit from her And if we want to kind of import this into Our own day and our own perceptions If we were to try and think of a comparable Case in our own eyes We might think of a prostitute Someone who has been trafficked from one country to another And is in the possession of these gangsters And whose life is a life of drug addiction And violence And psychological And spiritual And physical torment It's probably the closest that we can get To trying to process what kind of character Luke is introducing us to This is the kind of hopeless case That is following Paul around Many people would have looked and said

[63 : 08] That is a lost cause That is a tragic waste of life Why doesn't he get rid of her? Certainly Certainly she couldn't be any more different from Lydia If she tried And this is a girl here And she is lost And she is broken She is a lost cause But she is not She just needed Jesus She needed Jesus She needed Jesus to rid her of that spirit That had her in such dark bondage She needed Jesus to give her hope She needed Jesus to save her And although it's not crystal clear in the verses here Although it's not expressly stated I think this girl came to know Christ I think that's why we're being told about her Certainly we know that by the Lord's command

Through Paul the evil spirit Leaves her We know also that her owners When they realise the spirit is gone They realise they have no more potential to make money off this girl She's changed She's useless to them And so certainly her life looks very different A friend of mine Is a guy called Steph McLeod He's a singer, songwriter, musician And go back just a few years He was living on the streets of Edinburgh He was alcoholic Homeless Living in a box Penniless Broken And hopeless But his testimony Which you can hear about in a song When I found Jesus His testimony is encapsulated in one line of that song And it says in that line

One touch From the King of Kings Changed everything And I think that's what Luke is pointing us to here And I think that's what Luke is pointing us to here The likelihood is that she was saved That she was converted And this shows us For our encouragement today As we look inside ourselves with any honesty And as we see the brokenness that is there Or as we look around us And we think

of people who are so far gone And so sad and so hopeless We see through this girl That Jesus is for the very bad Is for the very bad And he is for the very very lost And he is for the very broken And the very hopeless There is no one who is beyond the Irresistible

The far reaching grace of Christ No one And so we have here two very different testimonies From two very different people One needs a gentle nudge Lydia And one needs a dramatic Spiritual confrontation But both need Jesus Jesus Jesus is for the very good Jesus is for the very bad Finally, just in a moment Jesus is for the very normal And probably That's where most of us would put ourselves As we are sitting here Jesus is for the very normal And the very normal is portrayed to us through the prison guard He was just a normal Ordinary guy Philippi was a Roman colony We are told that in verse 12 So it was full of retired soldiers And just as As you look around in the court service You find retired policemen by the dozen What they would find in Philippi In places like that was Retired soldiers in prison service And all this kind of civil duty And so here is a guy He is working as a prison guard Just like so many like him would have been His life wasn't very good His life wasn't very bad Things were okay And he doesn't have any fierce antagonism towards God That we know of like the demon possessed girl did And yet he seems to have no particular interest Like Lydia did He is an agnostic So how can an agnostic be reached for Jesus?

[68 : 08] He is not likely to want to listen to any of Paul or Silas' sermons He is not even going to consider coming to church Waste the time he would say Leave that to the women folk down by the river Just like so many husbands still say Leave all the spiritual stuff to the wife I am just going to read the newspaper So he is not open to the gospel And he is not ready to listen So how can he be reached?

Well this man needed to see the gospel in operation He needed to see Jesus in the lives of the apostles And so the Lord planned in his wisdom Exactly that Paul and Silas verse 20 to 21 Again falsely accused Stripped verse 22 Beaten Flogged verse 23 They arrive in prison Their wounds are not dressed They are not met by the prison medical officer They are battered And bruised and bloodied And thrown into the stocks It is nothing new for the jailer He has seen it a thousand times before He does not touch his heart He would have been immune to their tries He would have been immune to their wails Their complaints That would not touch him But what did touch him Was that these characters in prison Bleeding and battered

Are filled with joy And they don't moan And they don't grouse They sin From their prison cells And that is not normal That is remarkable And then when the prison starts to shake And the doors fly open The guard realises that they are not going to be And then when the prison starts to shake And the doors fly open The guard realises It is all over for me You lose your prisoners Bang!

You are gone! And so the man decides to save himself The humiliation of the public execution And he draws his sword And he is about to kill himself Because verse 27 He thinks everybody is gone But then Paul and Silas stop him Verse 28 And they say We are all here Put your sword away Why didn't they run?

They could have Doors are open Freedom They can see it They can taste it Why didn't they run? Why didn't they embrace their freedom?

[71 : 03] They didn't run They sacrificed their freedom And their lives So that this man could live And when this man Sees that He sees something that he has never seen before He sees Christ in him He sees A shade of the one Who laid down his life In order that you and I could live They see the one Who came To be a sacrifice For our sin And so the jailer cries out Verse 30 What must I do To be saved?

How can I get What you strange people have? And the answer for Mr. Normal the jailer Is the same answer That was prescribed for Lydia And the demon possessed girl And the demon possessed girl And the answer for Mr. Normal the jailer Is the same answer That was prescribed for Lydia And the demon possessed girl And the demon possessed girl And it's the same answer That is for you And it's for me Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ And you will be saved You never remember anything else in this sermon Take that line Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ And you will be saved

There is no one who is too bad To be denied him There is no one too good Who doesn't need him There is no one too normal So as to be unaffected Everyone Needs Jesus Let's pray Heavenly Father we pray that as the word Has been read That you would add your blessing to it And that you would by your spirit Speak into our lives So that we would indeed Whatever we stand before you Lord that we each one of us Would believe in the Lord Jesus Christ And be saved We pray this in

Jesus name Amen

We sing to you To conclude The mission phrase 162 Words on the screen From heaven you came helplessly Have entered our world Your glory veiled Not to be served But to serve And give your life That we might live This is our God The servant king And I may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ And the love of God the Father And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit Be with us all Both now and forevermore Amen