

AM Acts 16:11-34 & Philippians 1:1-3 "Servants and Saints"

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[0 : 00] This morning, can you turn to the book of Acts, the book of Acts and chapter 16, the book of Acts chapter 16, and we're going to read some verses from there.

We're going to cut into this chapter because it's kind of long, but I want us just over the next couple of weeks when I'm here to have a look at this book of Philippians.

And Acts 16 gives us the account of the Apostle Paul and Silas, or Silvanus, on their second missionary journey, and they come to this Roman colony of Philippi.

So this is the historic context of Paul's visit to the place called Philippi. And then we're going to read a few verses in the epistle or the letter to Philippians also.

So reading from verse 11. So setting sail from Troas, we made a direct voyage to Samothrassia, and the following day to Neapolis, and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia, and a Roman colony.

[1 : 16] We remained in this city some days. 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. One who heard us was a woman named Lydia from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshipper of God.

The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul. And after she was baptised, 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 on us. And 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.

[2 : 32] 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.

But when her owners saw that their hope of gain was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers.

And when they had brought them to the magistrates, they said, These men are Jews, and they are disturbing our city. They advocate customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to accept or practice.

The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates tore the garments off them, and gave orders to beat them with rods. And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely.

Having received this order, he put them into the inner prison, and fastened their feet in the stocks. About midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken.

[3 : 50] And immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's bonds were unfastened. And when the jailer woke, and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword, and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped.

But Paul cried out with a loud voice, Do not harm yourself, for we are all here. And the jailer called for lights, and rushed in, and trembling with fear, he fell down before Paul and Silas.

Then he brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.

And they spoke the word of the Lord to him, and to all who were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their wounds, and he was baptized at once, he and all his family.

Then he brought them into his house, and he set food before them, and he rejoiced along with his entire household, that he had believed in God.

[5 : 07] And then just two or three verses in the book of Philippians, please. The book of Philippians in chapter one. If you can turn over to that. Just the opening two verses, actually.

Paul is now writing, some years later, back to the Philippians, and he writes these words, in his opening salutation.

Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus, who are at Philippi, with the overseers, and deacons, grace to you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen, and may God give us, good understanding of, his written, and inspired word. Now before we come to, now if you can just turn back to that, passage of the Bible that we read, in Acts, or in fact in Philippians one, that's what we're really going to look at, this morning, these opening two verses, in Paul's letter to, the Philippians.

And I want us, this morning and this evening, just to look at a few, of these verses, from this opening chapter, of Philippians. Acts 16, records where Paul, on his second missionary journey, came to the Roman colony, of Philippi, with the gospel.

[6 : 43] All sorts of people, as we read, came to faith, in the Lord Jesus Christ, at Philippi, on his visit, and a church, was established, there.

But Paul found himself, in big trouble, at Philippi, with the authorities, we read that, he was beaten up, he was put in prison, and in the stocks, and, but even in the prison, as we read, people like, the Philippian jailer, and his household, came to faith, in the Lord Jesus, through Paul, and Silas's, witness, and their worship, and ministry.

When we come to, Philippians chapter, one, that we read, we are some, 14 years, on now, from, what we read, in Acts 16.

Paul is now, in Rome, as he writes this letter, he's under, house, arrest, in Rome, he's due to be tried, before, the Roman courts, he's not sure, whether he will live, or whether, he will die, but he writes, this very, personal letter, back to the Christians, at Philippi, back to these, believers, back to that, church, because a strong, bond, and relationship, and partnership, had, been established, when the apostle Paul, had been, at Philippi, I'm sure, that that bond, was even stronger, because, of the adversity, that they had, all gone through, on that occasion, you know, I'm sure, if you can think, over your own life, that, if you've gone through, troubles with people, they are, dearer to you, if they have been with you, in the difficult times, then a stronger bond, and fellowship, is in place, and so it was, with the apostle Paul, and those, in Philippi, he was, dear to them, and they were, dear to him, and so he wrote, this letter, back to them, he hadn't, forgotten them, he was, they were, very much, in his mind, and in his prayers, even in his situation, now I don't know, about you, and maybe I'm, getting on in years, and showing my age, but I like to, get a letter, through, the post, they call it, snail mail now, rather than, email, don't they, but I like to get, a letter, or card, through the post, and people in their family, the Thompson family, like that, and one of the things, they do, for example, when it comes to birthdays, is the cards, come through the door, if you're fortunate, to get, numerous cards, and what we do, is, we look at the card, we look at the envelope, and say, whose handwriting's that, who's that come from, maybe you do that yourself, sometimes, the sender is put on the back, and that's, an easy out for you, because you know, who's sent it, but trying to recognise, the handwriting, is good fun, but when the Philippians, got this letter, they were, in no doubt, who it was from, because in the very opening, words, of Philippians 1, we discover, who the writer, who the sender is, it's Paul, it's Paul,

Paul, verse 1, and Timothy, servants, of Christ, Jesus, Paul identifies, himself, at the very opening, verse, as the sender, and the author, in the very first word, of the letter, you see, it was typical, in the first century, to record, your name, first, rather than placing it, at the end, like we do, when we write a letter, as our custom is today, in fact, in this, at this time, culturally, a letter, really had three, constituent parts, it had a sender, it had a recipient, and it had a general, greeting, in other words, who it was from, who it was to, and a general, greeting, to the recipients, and Paul, in all the New Testament, letters, that he wrote, follows that same pattern, that was generally, used at that time, but his introduction, here, is no mere, formality, it's not just, being pleasant, for being pleasant, sake, these opening words, as we shall see, or hopefully, we'll see, are full, of gospel, and doctrinal, content, after all, he could have, if he was, keeping up to date, with what we're like today, could have, just said, hi guys, at Philippi, yeah, but he didn't do that, and I submit to you, that you shouldn't call, men and women, guys either, yeah, but he could have, done that, but he didn't do that, and so what we're, going to look at, is we're going to look at, these three constituent elements, we're going to look at, the sender, the recipient, and the greeting, so who's the sender, first of all, well,

[12:28] I've already outlined, who the sender is, Paul and Timotheus, or Timothy, the servants, verse one, of Jesus Christ, to all the saints, in Christ Jesus, who are at Philippi, with the overseers, and deacons, that's a unique introduction, in its own way, for a number of reasons, firstly, normally, in Paul's letters, if you were to look at them, normally, Paul would introduce himself, as Paul, the apostle, and nine out of the thirteen letters, that the apostle Paul wrote, that is how, he, starts his letters, he introduces himself, and he does that, because people were very often, challenging his position, and challenging, his apostleship, his authority, effectively saying, well who are you, who are you, but he doesn't have to do that there, in this letter, the Philippians, knew him, they loved him, they had shared, in the gospel, according to Acts 16, together, they had come to know, the Lord Jesus, through his ministry, and so there was no question, of them, questioning, who he was, or why he was writing to them, or of his authority, but secondly, in this introduction, only here, in all of Paul's letters, does he single out, or include, a group called, the overseers, and the deacons, and we might just have time, to say something, about that, and then he introduces himself, also, in a unique way, alongside,

Timothy, these years are tendons, isn't there, for us just to read these letters, and just skip over, the first couple of, introductory remarks, and say, well let's get to what, Paul really wants to speak to us about, let's get into, the centre of the epistle, but actually, we will miss out, certain things, if we just skip over, this introduction, so Timothy is, put down, as alongside, the apostle Paul, no distinction is made, Timothy is not an apostle, remember that, but in the outworking, of the gospel, they are both alike, the great apostle Paul, and young Timothy, they are both, servants, of Christ Jesus, the word actually, used, in the original, they say, is the word, slave,

Paul and Timothy, slaves, or born slaves, of Christ, Jesus, slaves, were people, who were owned, by, and were subservient, to their masters, in the Roman Empire, a slave, was not a free person, but belonged, to somebody else, and for Paul, and Timothy, they are now, the servants, of Jesus Christ, now remember, where Paul is writing this from, he's bound, in a house, to a Roman, soldier, but he's not, bond servant, to the Roman state, or to Nero, or to Caesar, Caesar, he's a servant, or he's a bond servant, of Jesus Christ, because he's employed, in the service, and commission, of his Lord, and Saviour,

Jesus Christ, they are Christ's slaves, bound to him, as their master, and that slavery, that they talk about here, is a glad slavery, expressed, in loving service, to God's people, serving, serving, the Lord, Jesus, you know, Paul uses, that language, of being a bond servant, being a slave, to refer, to all those, Christians, who have been, bought, by Jesus Christ, and who now, serve him, as their master, and so, if you're a believer, here this morning, if you're a Christian, here, you're a servant, of Jesus Christ, you're here, to serve, the Lord Jesus, he's your master, you see, to be a bond slave, was to be bought, and owned, and Christ, has done that, for all of us, if we're Christians, here this morning, you remember, what the apostle Paul, says, in 1 Corinthians 6, and 20, he says, he reminds the church, at Corinth, the Corinthian believers, he says, you're not your own, you've been bought, with a price, therefore, glorify God, in your body, you see, what the apostle Paul, is saying, really here is, you're a servant, you've been bought, with a price,

Peter tells us, that we have been redeemed, we've been bought, with a price, and that price, is the precious, blood, of Jesus Christ, we've not been bought, with silver, or gold, from our own, lifestyle, old lifestyle, but we have been bought, with the precious, blood, of Jesus, Christ, you see, to be a servant, of Jesus Christ, is to live, our lives, to please him, and not, to please, people, listen to what, the apostle Paul says, in Galatians 1 and 10, he says, for am I now, seeking the approval, of man, or of God, who am I living, to please, he says, or am I trying, to please man, he says, if I were still, trying to please men, I would not be, a servant, of Christ, you see,

[19 : 03] Paul's focus, as a servant, was to serve, the Lord Jesus, he wasn't, a man, pleaser, his aim, and his goal, was to, please, Christ, in his life, as I've already said, when Paul, refers to himself, here, along with Timothy, as the servants, of Jesus Christ, in verse 1, he doesn't identify, and we hear a lot, about, how we identify, today, in our society, but Paul doesn't, identify, himself, as a slave, of Rome, or of Caesar, or of Nero, yes, he's in the custody, of Rome, but he's the servant, of Christ, in service, to Christ, and that's what we are, as believers, in this world, we may be, in the employ, of somebody, but actually, our whole life, is to be lived out, to serve Christ, in our lives, whatever, we do, we do, to the glory, of God, and so,

Paul is united, he's bound, to Christ, his identity, is in Christ, his prime aim, in life, was to know Christ, and to become, like Christ, later on, in this epistle, in chapter 3, and verse 20, if you were to turn to that, Paul says, that I might, know him, and the power, of the resurrection, and may share, his sufferings, becoming like him, in his death, you see, there was a time, in Paul's life, when he was, outside of Christ, he hated, the gospel, he wasn't a servant, of Jesus Christ, or of God, but now, everything, like that, is in the past, in Philippians 3, and 8, he says, everything else, he counts as garbage, in his life, that he might, know,

Christ, he says, I count everything, as loss, because of the, surpassing, worth, of knowing, Christ Jesus, my Lord, God, he says, for this sake, I have suffered, the loss, of all things, and count them, as rubbish, in order, that I may gain, Christ, you see, his whole life, is lived, in service, for Christ, Christ, and so, we'll not look at this, but if you were to look at verses 1, chapter 1, and verse 21, he concludes, his aim in life, and he says, for me, to live, for to me, to live, he says, is Christ, his number one priority, his goal, the prime thing, in his life, the prime person, in his life, was to serve, his master,

Christ, I wonder, how do you, identify, today, do you see yourself, as a servant, of Christ Jesus, how important, is he, to you, and to your life, if you were to, put, if I was to, give you a piece of paper, and say, for that expression, that we've got, in chapter 1, and 21, for to me, to live, Paul said, is Christ, what would you put, what would you put, for to you, to live, for me, to live, is, family, money, possessions, luxury, what, what, what is the thing, what is the thing, that motivates you, and drives you, and is your goal, in life, Paul says,

I'm the servant, of Jesus Christ, for me, to live, is Christ, and so, Paul, is the sender, of the letter, he's the author, of, the letter, who are the recipients, of the letter, well, if Paul is the sender, and the author, of the letter, then, he writes, in verse, one, again, he says, to all the saints, in Christ Jesus, who are at Philippi, with the overseers, and deacons, well, as I've said, Paul could simply have said, couldn't he, Paul to the Philippians, greetings, hello, no, he writes, to all, the saints, now, that's a very, very interesting word, the term, means, the called ones, those who are set apart, the sanctified ones, God's holy ones, his elect people, you see, just as every believer, in Christ, is designated, as a servant, with regards, to their service, so every believer, is regarded, as a saint, with regards, to their spiritual, status, you have been called, by God, you have been set apart, you're one of his, holy people, and we're a people, who, as someone has said, are called, to a life, of holiness, in a sin, saturated, world, you see, being a saint, it's not a title, or position, bestowed upon, a select few, people, or on people, who have witnessed, or performed, some magnificent, miracle, as I was coming through,

[25 : 32] Dumfries this morning, we circled around, and came past, one of the churches there, it was a church to, I think, to the blessed, Virgin Mary, and saint, Nini, I think it was, it's not, being a saint, it's not a title, that is bestowed, on a select few, if you're a believer, here this morning, your spiritual status, is that, you're a saint, you have been called, by God, separated, by God, for God, to live a holy life, you remember, in the Old Testament, the group, called the children of Israel, were a holy nation, to God, that's the idea, that we, as the church, are a holy nation, a people chosen, and consecrated, to God, and to, his service, in other words, what, the apostle Paul, is saying, here, or one of the, take home messages, for us, is, that we are, as believers, special, we've got, a unique dignity, we've been called, and chosen, by God, and we are his, holy people, and he inhabits us, and that should, encourage us, this morning, that God, cares for us, and we are, special, to him, one of the, commentators, in his, commentary, on this passage, says these words, believers, in Christ,

Christians, are constituted, God's people, who are, by that very fact, also called, to be, his, holy, people, set apart, by the Holy Spirit, for God's purpose, and distinguished, as those, who manifest, his character, in, the world, you see, the Philippian, people, that Paul, was writing to, became saints, because they had been, united, to Christ, at conversion, they had been, joined, to him, they are, in Christ Jesus, verse 2, says that, to all the saints, in Christ, Jesus, they are united, to Christ, they are in union, with him, now what does that mean, well do you remember, back in John 15, the Lord Jesus, was telling, his disciples, and he referred, to himself, as the vine, and they, were, the branches, that were, joined, to him, you see, believers, are like branches, that are connected, to the vine, the main source, of their life, spiritually, the Philippians, are united, to him, as are, all Christians, they have, the life of Christ, in their lives, all their blessings, that they enjoy, flow to them, because, of their union, with Christ, they're in a new, relationship, they're in a new, kingdom, they have new, citizenship,

Paul will go on, and speak about that, later in this epistle, they are under, new, management, there used to be, a drunkard, in Airdrie, many, many years ago, a man called, Dunkey Donaldson, he was called, Drunky Duncan, because, he was an alcoholic, but he came to faith, in Christ, and Duncan, once he had become, a Christian, used to go around, with a t-shirt on, that said, under, new, management, yeah, it's good that, yeah, because, he was a new, creature, in, Christ, that's what the, apostle Paul says, in a rather, more erudite way, doesn't he, when he says, if anyone is in Christ, he's a new creation, old things have passed away, behold, all things have become new, servants, saints, that's what we are, you see, why, being a Christian, is infinitely more glorious, and dignified, than just being somebody, who comes to a church building, like this, someone has said, going to church, makes you no more, a Christian, than going to McDonald's, makes you a beef burger, isn't that true, we're saints, we're God's elect, we're God's holy people, not because of anything, good in us, but because of God's grace, and mercy, as we shall see, later, what a glorious truth, and status, that you and I have, in Christ, what an identity, chosen before the foundation, of the world, all of this, is implied, in this opening two verses, you see, what you miss, if you just, straight into verse three, spiritually, they're in Christ, time's gone, but physically, where are they, well he says, to all the saints, in Christ Jesus, that's their spiritual status, but their physical location, is who are at Philippi, that's where the rubber, meets the road, for the Philippian believers,

Philippi, was a Roman colony, a wee bit of Rome, as it were, in the province, of Macedonia, Roman rules, Roman religion, Roman regulation, reigned, in Philippi, its citizens, were really, citizens of Rome, in a colony, over here, in Philippi, for ordinary, Philippian citizens, Nero, was their Lord, and Saviour, but believers, in Christ, could no longer, join in fully, with the citizens, of Rome, in Philippi, because now, their Lord, and Saviour, is Jesus Christ, they are citizens, of a much greater, that is they who they, they are, what they, they do, they achieve their own, they have no patience, they offer Mann, and Saviour, to Cal ■■■■,, who they can come back to the Holy, in the name of Jesus Christ, to the Shigeru, that you need to come back, and how they can,

I will tell them, and the strata of God, to Christ, and Peter, they have no longer, or not too, to be able to come back, according to that person, I will tell them, Thank you.

[33 : 35] Thank you.

Thank you.

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Thank you.

Thank you.

[36 : 05] Thank you.

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[38 : 35] Thank you.

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[41 : 05] Thank you.

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[43 : 35] Thank you.

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