

“Joy in Adversity – Part 2”  
Acts 16:16-25  
(Preached at Trinity, February 14, 2007)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Last time we followed the events that led to Paul and Silas being beaten and thrown into prison. They had arrived at Philippi and upon the conversion of Lydia they were staying at her house.
2. Each day as they went to prayer they were followed by a certain lady possessed by a spirit of divination. She practiced sooth saying by the power of Satan and many were convinced of her ability to foresee the future. They were willing to pay for her services which brought a tidy profit to her masters.
3. Paul cast the demon out of her which infuriated her masters. Being men of influence they brought them to the rulers and demanded justice.  
**Acts 16:19-20** – “And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew *them* into the marketplace unto the rulers, <sup>20</sup> And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city,”
4. Paul and Silas were stripped and beat with rods and then thrown into prison. Apparently the beating was very severe, enough to break the flesh leaving them bruised and bleeding. Notice their wounds had to be cleansed.  
**Acts 16:33** – “And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed *their* stripes. . .”
5. The thing I want to direct your attention to is the demeanor of Paul and Silas. They had suffered a terrible beating and then they were put in the prison where their feet were put in stocks.
  - A. Sitting in the darkness of the prison most men would have been filled with feelings of anger and resentment. Most would lament the pain of their wounds and the discomfort of their condition. All attention would be upon their present circumstance.
  - B. Not so with Paul and Silas. Their attention was not on themselves but upon the glory of Christ.  
**Acts 16:25** – “And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God. . .”
6. Tonight I want to finish this message on the subject of joy in adversity.

- I. First we need to be reminded again that adversity is consistent with the Christian life.
- A. In our secularized modern church teaching about suffering seems rather foreign.
1. To teach suffering as the essence of the Christian life seems like false doctrine.
  2. Many Christian leaders are being dishonest in describing the Christian life to new converts. They are more like army recruiters who describe all the benefits of the military without explaining the risks and dangers.
- B. Suffering for a Christian should not be seen as something strange or unusual
1. Peter affirms this  
**1 Peter 4:12** – “Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:”
  2. Scripture teaches continually that Christians should expect to suffer.  
**2 Timothy 3:12** – “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”
- C. Later Paul would recount his sufferings to Timothy  
**2 Timothy 3:11** – “Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of *them* all the Lord delivered me.”
1. Timothy had shared with Paul in many of his persecutions. He had probably been with Paul in Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra. Lystra was Timothy's hometown. Timothy witnessed personally this assault upon Paul
  2. When Paul suffered with Silas here at Philippi he didn't see it as something strange.
  3. Paul considered it part of his work to warn Christians of the reality of the difficulties that accompany the Christian life  
**Acts 14:22** – “Confirming the souls of the disciples, *and* exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.”
- II. How should we respond to adversity?
- A. First, We need to keep a proper perspective in this life
1. This world is not our reward  
**Romans 8:18** – “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”
  2. For the Christian this world takes on a whole new meaning
    - a. Many Christians today would say, “This doesn't bring me pleasure. God wants me to be happy. I don't need to do something that doesn't make me happy.”
    - b. True Christianity doesn't look to this life as the source of happiness. Our joy is not grounded in our earthly condition. Our joy is in Christ. He has become the object of our joy.  
**John 15:11** – “These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and *that* your joy might be full.”

- c. Jesus sends us a peace and joy in every situation  
**2 Corinthians 1:5** – “For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.”  
**Philippians 4:6-7** – “Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”
  - d. Jesus increases our capacity to enjoy Him. This is our true joy—our true happiness
  - e. The more our lives are filled with Christ the less significant this life’s events become
3. The Christian has found the only true source of contentment
- a. Our satisfaction is in Christ  
**Hebrews 13:5** – “*Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*”  
 In essence Jesus is saying, “Be content with what you have because you have Me.”
  - b. The man who has found Christ has found everything
    - (1) In the darkest dirtiest dungeon the Christian can have joy
    - (2) When all that we have is taken away there is joy in Christ  
 Is this a reality in your life?
  - c. The Christian is content in spite of circumstance  
**Philippians 4:11-13** – “Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, *therewith* to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”
  - d. Our contentment is found apart from this world and its circumstances
- B. Second, we need to remember that we are soldiers
- 1. A faithful soldier knows he has a job to do  
 You hear it spoken often by soldiers – “We have a job to do.”
  - 2. What is your job? Is it not to serve Christ and to spread His great name abroad?
  - 3. We must not allow discomfort or the love of pleasure to distract us  
**2 Timothy 2:3-4** – “Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. <sup>4</sup> No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of *this* life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.”
- C. Third, we need to remember that God has ordained all things
- 1. If we are called upon to suffer for His name’s sake it is because God has ordained it. God has ordained every detail in our lives
  - 2. Are you happy and satisfied with your appointment from God?  
**Philippians 4:11** – “. . . I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, *therewith* to be content.”

3. What do you truly desire?
  - a. Do you desire to flourish in your fellowship with Christ?
  - b. Do you desire that your faith and love and all other graces grow and increase?
  - c. If God brings suffering for you to have these things it is not a great blessing worthy of all praise and thanksgiving?
- D. Fourth, we need to remember that Christ is worthy of all praise and honor
  1. God is worthy of all praise and worship regardless of earthly estate.  
**Psalm 18:3** – “I will call upon the LORD, *who is worthy* to be praised:”
  2. Paul and Silas were giving God what He deserved
  3. God must be praised by all of His creation  
**Psalm 150:6** – “Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD.”  
**Luke 19:37-40** – “And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen; <sup>38</sup> Saying, Blessed *be* the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest. <sup>39</sup> And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples. <sup>40</sup> And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.”
- E. Fifth, we must count it a blessing to fellowship with Christ in His sufferings
  1. This was Paul’s heart  
**Philippians 3:8-11** – “Yea doubtless, and I count all things *but* loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them *but* dung, that I may win Christ, <sup>9</sup> And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: <sup>10</sup> That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; <sup>11</sup> If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.”
  2. This was also the heart of Peter and the other apostles.  
**Acts 5:41** – “And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.”

**Conclusion:**

1. We need to remember that others are watching us. Are they seeing genuine Christianity or the false Christianity that many are practicing today?
  - a. Notice the other prisoners were taking notice of Paul and Silas.  
**Acts 16:25** – “And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.”
  - b. They must have wondered, “What would cause these men to sing with joy when they should be complaining like the rest of us?”
2. Later, when a solid church had been formed, perhaps including even some of these prisoners Paul reminded them of the duty of Christians:  
**Philippians 4:4** – “Rejoice in the Lord always: *and* again I say, Rejoice.”
3. We must not behave like the rest of the world. We are Christians! Christ is worthy of all praise in every circumstance.