

**The Enslaved Woman**

Scripture: Acts 16:16-18

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Now, in our study of this marvelous history called the book of Acts written by the Holy Spirit to give us the information regarding the growth of the church from its birth till it reached Rome, we find that we are in the 16th chapter and the gospel has just reached Europe. It started in Jerusalem, then to Judea, Samaria, and now it is penetrating the uttermost parts of the earth. It moved into Asia when it was founded in Antioch and spread to Galatia. It is now moving to Europe, going further west. And we find that in chapter 16, verse 11, Paul and Silas and Timothy and Luke, who is picked up here in Troas, set sail from Troas on the Aegean Sea there, the east coast of the Aegean Sea. And they go across to Neapolis, which was the port of Philippi and, thus, they are in Europe and the gospel, then, has penetrated Europe.

Now, as the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ and His salvation, arrives in Europe, the Holy Spirit focuses our attention on the inevitable dichotomy that always occurs when the gospel is presented: some who believe and Satan who moves in to try to disrupt. And it is done in presenting to us two women, one named Lydia, the other, a nondescript, that is, no name who had a spirit of divination. These are the first two people we meet personally in arriving in Europe...two women. These two women that the Spirit focuses on really reflect back to us the portrait of every woman, or for that matter, every man, for everybody falls into the category of Lydia or the category of the enslaved woman, enslaved by Satan. It's only a question of the particular manifestation and we'll talk about that in a moment.

Let's look at verse 11 and just read the first three verses. "Therefore, loosing from Troas"...setting sail, it means..."we came with a straight course to Samothrace"...which was an island halfway across the Aegean Sea..."and the next day to Neapolis, and from there to Philippi"...which would be about a 10-mile walk inland from the port of Neapolis. Now, Philippi "is the chief city of that part of Macedonia and a colony"...Macedonia being a very famous place, at one point the seat of world rule there when the Greeks ruled through Alexander the Great. Macedonia is now a Roman province in the Roman Empire and Philippi was a Roman colony in Macedonia. "And they stayed in that city abiding certain days." They were waiting until the Sabbath because their approach would be, first of all, to the Jewish population there. There was no synagogue. It took 10 men to make a synagogue, and since there was no synagogue there, it's apparent there were not 10 Jewish men there, but there was a group of women who met on the Sabbath. Verse 13: "On the Sabbath, we went out of the city by the riverside

where prayer was accustomed to be made..." They had a proseuche in the Greek, a place of prayer where they gathered by river, did these women, and they prayed. They were Jewish and Jewish proselytes. And they went and "sat down and spoke unto the women who resorted there."

Now, at this particular place of prayer, we are going to meet two women. Both of them appear at the same place at different occasions. The gospel is presented in Europe and immediately the attention focuses on these two women. Women have always played a very important part in God's work. Women have always played a very important part in Satan's work. God is no respecter of persons. Satan is not either in terms of who he uses. God has used women mightily. Satan has used them effectively. And let's look first of all, just by way of a refreshment, at the transfigured woman, Lydia, that we saw last time. Then, secondly, we'll look at the disfigured woman in verses 16 to 18.

Now, Lydia was really a liberated woman. Only one thing actually really liberates. Jesus said in John 8:36, "If the Son shall make you free, you shall be free for real," and He added the word "for real." It would have been great to say, "If the Son shall make you free, you shall be free." But when it says, "If the Son shall make you free, you shall be free for real," it assumes that there are gonna be some people who think they have freedom but don't. Right? Only Christ can make you really liberated. We hear all about women's lib and, you know, nowadays, women's lib has gotten to the point where they'd even like to get rid of God. I heard a woman's lib proponent speaking on television the other night and she made some quote about God and she said, "You know, God, she does this." That's interesting. The only true freedom available is available in Jesus Christ. Right? Now, if you're gonna tamper with God, you're gonna have problems. Let me read you an interesting article that came to my office two days ago.

Betty Friedan and Gloria Steinem...you must know them...probably are not spending much of their time in Sunday School, but the women's liberation movement is having its effect there nevertheless. Some of the more liberated church women are taking a closer look at just what is in those Sunday School lessons and are subjecting the editors to a little conscience raising. From the earliest years, they and their male sympathizers assert children are indoctrinated with sex role stereotypes contained in stories from the Bible. Now, the article goes on. I'll skip some of it. It comes down to this statement. Denominations involved in sponsorship of this study were the Christian Church, Disciples of Christ, United Church of Christ, Episcopal Church, Reformed Church in America, United Presbyterian Church and Presbyterian Church USA, Southern \_\_\_\_\_. They're involved in this study of whether or not the Bible is propagating sex role stereotypes. Let me give you the quote of what the study has discovered. Quote, "This study has discovered sex role stereotypes to be pervasive in every aspect of these curriculum materials. There is a primary underlying concern, which may be seen as one basis for our whole society's concept of female inferiority. It is this: the masculine patriarchal image of God." The women's lib movement is assuming if we get rid of God, we can get rid of the hang-ups. You know something? The absolute opposite is true. "If the Son shall make you

free, you shall be free for real." There is no freedom outside of that. There is no freedom in eliminating God and turning Him into a woman. Lydia was a liberated person because of what Jesus Christ did in her life. And at that point, she was free to be what God designed her to be.

Verse 14, let's look at her. "A certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple"...that was a big business in her town, Thyatira. She sold a purple dye. She came from the city of Thyatira, which was across the Aegean Sea back in Asia Minor. She "worshipped God and heard us..." Now, here we found last week, she was a seeker; wasn't she? She really wanted to know the truth. She was a Gentile who became a proselyte to Judaism, seeking God. She was a prepared heart. All God really needs to work with a prepared heart is proper content. Right? He takes the prepared, He brings along Paul and Silas and they pour in the proper information and God has what He needs to open her heart. And that's exactly what happened..."whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken by Paul." A ready vessel, the right information and God can open the heart. That's salvation. She was saved. She was born again. She was justified. She was made righteous. And the results?...verse 15, "she was baptized..." That's the first thing. She publicly declared her faith. Her whole household was baptized. She was also a strong influence. She had a tremendous personal testimony. Apart from just a public testimony in baptism, she had a personal affect on her house that they were saved and baptized. Then, watch this. Another characteristic of her salvation was, "she besought us saying, 'If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord'"...in other words, if I'm a true convert, if you really think I really, truly believe, then "come into my house and stay. And she constrained us." Now, here we find that when Lydia was truly liberated, she became preoccupied with the home and making a comfortable place to care for those strangers who had preached the gospel. And the word "constrained" is a very strong word. She really bugged them until they said they'd stay. Now, here is a lady who has been free and yet in her freedom, the one thing that dominates her mind immediately is to go home and take care of the place for those people who have need. There is no greater and more glorious responsibility than that. The comforting of people, the area of hospitality, the generosity of feeding people and caring for people and loving people and giving comfort to people is a tremendous ministry. And God knows this. And God does not intend for all women to become professional women. This area has a dynamic ministry. In fact, Paul said to the young women that they ought to love their husbands and they ought to love their children...that's not an option; it's a command...and they ought to be keepers at home. You say, oh, God just wants to keep all of us women boxed up. No, no, no. God knows that that's where you can really have the most effective ministry...with your children and with those who come to your home. You say, well, not too many come to my home. Well, I'm gonna get into that for just a minute.

I really believe that we don't say enough about hospitality. And, ladies, I believe that what you can do in your home could never even be measured, only by eternity, were your home really transformed into a place where Jesus Christ was exalted and glorified. Let me show you what I mean. Just take the little word "hospitality." This is a tangent. You know what they look like (laughter). But take the word "hospitality." The word literally means "stranger love,"...the love of strangers. And, you know, this is a

fantastic thing, a tremendous tool for evangelism, a tremendous way to fellowship within the body and to comfort the saints. I want to talk about hospitality for a minute. In Leviticus 19, you know, God had even given this instruction to Israel. I'll just read you a couple of verses. Leviticus 19: 33 and 34, he says, "If a stranger sojourn with you in your land, don't vex him"...don't make it tough on him. But do what?..."but the stranger"...assuming that you're going to take him into your house..."who dwells with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and you shall love him as yourself..." You're supposed to love that stranger as you love yourself. And remember, love is not an emotion; love is a command. Love is a principle. It's a principle of self-sacrifice. It's a principle of service. We are to love strangers. The Jews had a saying and the saying was this: There are six things, the fruit of which a man eats in this world, and by which his horn is raised in the world to come...in other words, six things that bring reward...Then the Jews had a list. You know what number one on the list was?...hospitality to the stranger. They knew that God honored that particular grace. Now, in the ancient world, of course, hospitality was important. That was before Holiday Inn and all the rest of the things that we have today. The inns in those days were no holiday, believe me (laughter). You can read some of the old Greek writings and find out about them. You know, some of the old guys used to write and compare notes about, you know, letting them know which inn had the fewest fleas. They were just very dirty, filthy places. Not only were they filthy; they were expensive, extremely expensive. Thirdly, they were the equivalent of a brothel or a house of prostitution. They were immoral. And in those days, people were traveling about and particularly those who knew Christ, ministering here and there, and even strangers, and to stay in an inn would be a terrible experience. And so Christians had a fantastic opportunity to make their homes available, not only for the comfort of the saints, but for the evangelization of the unsaved. And so women had this tremendous priority of making a home where people could come who were strangers and be exposed to Christian love and Christian fellowship and Christian family life and exposed to the gospel itself, and where Christians could come and be nurtured in fellowship and love and have spiritual gifts ministered back and forth. So, it was a tremendous ministry. In fact, you know, this was the particular ministry of women. In the indications of I Timothy 5:10, they were gonna put a list together of widows who were worthy of serving in the church. One of the qualifications is "if she hath lodged strangers, if she hath washed the saints' feet." You see? If she was a hospitality kind of person, she was qualified to serve the Lord. That was a very beautiful grace in the heart and life of a woman. As another thought about that, you know, there's some other group that are supposed to be hospitable...elders...elders. It says "bishop" here. "If a man desires the office of a bishop, he desires a good work." Now, if you get hung up on the word "bishop," it means the same as elder or the same as pastor. If you have a problem with that, you can start calling me Bishop MacArthur (laughter). It's just the same thing. I may not respond, however (laughter). Anyway, "if a man desires the office of a bishop, he desires a good work." Here's what a bishop should be: blameless, a one-woman man, temperate, sober-minded, good behavior, given to hospitality... One thing about a man in the pastorate, an elder or a bishop, his home should be open all the time to anybody who would need it. I haven't asked my wife about it, but I'm going to announce this morning, ours is available (laughter). Don't all come at the same time (laughter). This is

exactly...exactly what hospitality is. And, women, there is no greater ministry than the love that you share to a Christian brother or sister by allowing them to share time in your home. There is no greater ministry to an unsaved individual than to open your home to that individual and their need and to allow the opportunity for them to see what Christian life is all about and to hear the gospel from your lips. Don't think that it's no high calling to go home. It's a tremendous high calling; it's just that we have really kind of twisted around what the home is to be.

Now, I want to talk a little more about hospitality. I'm enjoying this part, so I'm gonna go over to Genesis 18 and I want to show you some interesting principles. Now, this is about Abraham and Abraham had some visitors. And I mean, he had visitors like nobody had ever had. You know who came to visit Abraham?...God. God did. This is terrific. Watch what happened. "And the Lord appeared unto him by the oaks of Mamre and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day." Now, here's old Abraham sitting in his tent and God arrives. Now, this is what we call in theology a "theophany," or a pre-incarnate appearance of God. God appeared in a body. We know that because He ate. Now, this is like the reincarnation of Christ, only before and only for a temporary expression. This is a theophany. So God appears and old Abraham "lifted up his eyes and looked, and lo, three men stood by..." You know who the other two were?...angels. God came with two angels. Now, I've heard of having company, but that's really having company (laughter). "And when he saw them he ran to meet them from the tent door and bowed himself toward the ground and said, 'My Lord, if now I have found favor in Thy sight, pass not away I pray Thee, from Thy servant. Let a little water, I pray You, be fetched, and wash Your feet and rest yourselves under the tree. And I will fetch a morsel of bread and comfort ye your hearts and after that You shall pass on for, therefore, are Ye come to Your servant.' And they said, 'So do as thou hast said.'" Old Abraham about breaks his neck to get out there and show hospitality. Get under the tree. I'll get you some water. Have some bread. You know. Now this is the spirit, see. You know, so many times we sit in the house and we hear a doorbell and "Who is that?" (Laughter) We open that little peephole and (laughter)... Afraid they might interrupt your television program or your fight (laughter). You know, the home of a believer ought to be something that's wide open for people to just pass through at any time. You are what you are at home. Well, anyway, they said okay, fine. And listen to what Abraham...Abraham really got it together in this one. Verse 6, "Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah..." Now, you see, this was Sarah's responsibility. He said, "Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it and make cakes upon the hearth." Now, \_\_\_\_\_ Sarah's just in the tent there and he says...and you know, she probably said, Oh, Abraham, you're always bring home somebody from work without calling or something (laughter). But anyway, "...make cakes...and Abraham ran unto the herd and fetched a calf tender and good and gave it to a young man and he hasted to dress it." I mean, she's baking in the kitchen, here's a guy and they've got a fatted calf all gettin' cooked up. "He took butter and milk and the calf which he had dressed and set it before them. And he stood by them under the tree and they did eat." Now, that's hospitality. That's just loving hospitality. You say, I'd do that, too, if God and two angels came to my house (laughter). No TV dinners for that group (laughter). Well, the record indicates then that the two angels left and went to Sodom. And when they got to Sodom, they found

hospitality in the house of whom?...of Lot. In the meantime, God stayed. And God was staying there in this house. And God said to them in verse 9, "Where is Sarah, your wife? And he said...'in the tent.' And he said, 'I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life. And, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son.'" Now, this is God announcing the wonderful promise. "And Sarah heard it in the tent door"...Sarah...(laughter) gotta watch that..."which was behind him. Now, Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in age"...and I love this phrase..."and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women." Interesting...(laughter) In the vernacular, Sarah didn't have it anymore, right. (Laughter) Verse 12, "Therefore, Sarah laughter within herself, saying 'After I have become old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?'" And they were, you know, in their 90's. "And the Lord said unto Abraham, 'Wherefore did Sarah laugh'...oooh, nobody had even seen Sarah..."saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child who am old?" And you know that she said that in verse 12, "therefore Sarah laughed within herself saying..." God heard what she said in her own mind. And then I love verse 14. "Is anything too hard for the Lord? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life and Sarah shall have a son." Then Sarah told a lie. "Then Sarah denied, saying, 'I laughed not,' for she was afraid. And He said, 'No, you did laugh.'" The thing I want to pull out of this passage is the hospitality of Abraham and Sarah. You say, well, John, I'm telling you, if God came to my house with two angels, I would do the same thing. Anybody would. Listen. You know, we ought to really be careful because you just don't know. Hebrews 13, listen to this. "Let brotherly love continue." But listen to verse 2. "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers..." Why? "...for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." You say, you mean I better be careful about \_\_\_\_\_, some have entertained angels? Yes, the sum right here, Lot and Abraham. You say, well, boy, if angels came, I would take care of them, believe me. You want to know something? Now, this is exciting. Do you know, it would be wonderful if angels came to your house or my house and that would be a tremendous opportunity to show them hospitality. But listen. Do you know that something greater than that is possible at your house, something actually greater than angels coming for dinner? You say what could possibly be greater? Look at Matthew 25 and I'll show you. This is greater than angels coming. Matthew 25, verse 31, "When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory. And before Him shall be gathered all the nations. And He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. And He shall set the sheep on His right hand, the goats on His left." All right, now, to the sheep, the King says, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Now, how are these nations going to be accepted? On what basis are these nations accepted? Verse 35...here's the Lord. This is Jesus talking. "For I was hungry and you gave Me food, I was thirsty and you gave Me drink, I was a stranger and you took Me in, naked and you clothed Me, I was sick and you visited Me, I was in prison and you came unto Me." And these nations scratched their heads in verse 37 and they say, "'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? When saw we you sick or in prison and came unto You?' And the King shall say unto them, 'Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren; you

have done it'...what?..'unto Me.'" And here you see Christ identifies with Israel and He says, on the basis of how you treated Israel, that's how you treated Me. Do you know who could come to your house more important than angels?...a Christian...a Christian. You say, what do you mean? Are Christians higher than angels? I Corinthians 6:17, "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." And just as those nations have treated Christ in treating Israel, so do you in treating any other believer. Angels coming to your house, that's nice; a Christian coming to your house, that's Christ Himself. Think about that. That is the most important thing that you be showing your love to Christians. In Matthew 10 there's a couple of interesting verses...10:40, "He that receiveth you"...listen, just read that one verse..."He that receiveth you, receiveth Me. And he that receiveth Me, receiveth Him that sent Me." Wow! Jesus sends out these disciples and He says, whoever receives you is receiving Me and God Himself. Think of that next time some believer knocks on your door or some Christian that you don't know has a need and you think about whether or not you ought to open your home to them. Just remember who it is you're receiving. It's Jesus Christ Himself. Now, this is particularly applicable in the case of preachers. They are to be received so graciously. This is very important (laughter). In Luke chapter 9, verses 4 and 5...of course, these are the preachers He sent out in chapter 10 of Matthew we just read about, the ones who were preaching and teaching. In verse 4 of 9 it says of Luke, "Whatever house you enter into, there abide and from there depart." In other words, don't go bouncing around from house to house. But if somebody doesn't receive you, shake the dust off your feet "for a testimony against them." In other words, treat them as if they were Gentile territory, as if they were outside the covenant. Very important, the hospitality shown toward the servants of the Lord. This is so very important. Missionaries that come on furlough and Bible teachers that may come...what a tremendous opportunity for you to treat them as you would treat Jesus Christ. In Luke 10:5 it says, when you go into some house say "Peace be to this house...if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it. If not, it shall turn to you again. And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give, for the laborer is worthy of his hire and go not from house to house." What's he saying?...stay there and build a relationship. God's forever and ever wanting us to build relationships...tremendous opportunity for hospitality. Now, this is not just some kind of a whimsical thought through the Gospels. In Romans 12:13, it says you're to show hospitality. In I Peter 4:9, Peter said you are to be given to hospitality without grudging. That means you don't say, oh, that MacArthur gave that message; we better have them over (laughter). No, no, you've destroyed the reward that you would gain from your hospitality because of your attitude. Lydia was a lady who showed hospitality and here was the evidence of the genuineness of her salvation. Watch. She was instantly liberated to be exactly what God wanted a woman to be, to make a home where she could lodge strangers and meet their spiritual needs and their physical comforts. What a beautiful picture. And, believe me, the man who said the hand that rocks the cradle moves the world is right. Women, don't underestimate your responsibility in the home. It's really what moves the world. Men are sort of authoritative figureheads. We know who operates behind the scenes. You know, and in the New Testament, you know, people are always saying, well, Christianity tends to minimize women. That is not so. It is Jesus Christ alone who frees women to be content to be what God designed and to be so

God's patterns can work. And, you know, Paul, in the last chapter of Romans, he names 26 different people who worked with him and eight of them are women who labored with him in the gospel...Euodia and Syntyche in Philippians 4. He tells the church in I Timothy, he says, you get your women together and you put a role of widows who can serve Jesus Christ. And he, also, in giving the qualifications for a deacon, mentions that the women should also be sober and grave and so forth and so on, not slanderers and all of this. There should be a group of women who serve in the church and we call these women deaconesses, those who serve Christ. Phoebe was such a one, called diakonia in Romans 16. And so women have had a tremendous place. Here's Lydia, the beginning of the church in Europe, a lady, and her home is given as the place where the church meets. You remember that, in whose home did the Jerusalem church meet?...in the home of Mary, the mother of John Mark. Women have always set the place where the church can meet as far as the home, the comfort of the home. They've always been involved in the ministry of the church since its very beginning. Now, of course, in the area of the public worship of the church, people say, do you believe in women preachers? Absolutely not. And I think that is simply because of the Scripture. It's not that I have anything against women; it's just the fact that God has set a certain pattern of authority within the church. And it says, for one thing, that the elders of the church must be one-woman men. They must be the husband of one wife. Now, that eliminates women right there. And that's only from being pastors and bishops and elders. And woman is not to teach in the church. It simply says this, "Let women learn in silence," I Timothy 2:11, "with all subjection." Learn in silence willingly. "I permit not a woman to teach nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." That is talking about the public assembly of the church. Well, you say, why? Because "Adam was first formed, then Eve." From the very creation, God determined that man would be an authority and Eve came from his rib to be submissive. Not only that, "Adam wasn't deceived, the woman, being deceived was in the transgression." Part of women's subjection is creation, another part of it is sin. But ladies, don't get uptight, says Paul, you will be happy in childbearing. You'll really control everything. You have the marvelous joy that no man ever knows, the joy of producing and raising those children with a relationship that no man can ever know. Believe me, there are compensations. There is equality in the mind of God.

Now, you say, then what does a woman do in the church? I'm a woman; what do I do? I'll tell you what you can do. First of all, take some younger women and teach them...Titus, chapter 2. And you say, what am I supposed to teach them? Their lessons are right here in the Scripture. You don't even need to get curriculum (laughter). Titus 2, it says the aged women...that means older women, mature women...teach the young women to be sober minded. What does that mean? Establish priorities: "to love their husbands"...that's not an emotion; that's a command; that's a principle, "to love their children, to be discreet, chaste"...that means pure..."keepers at home, kind, obedient to their own husbands, that the Word of God be not blasphemed." Boy, I couldn't think of anything more exciting than the mature women of this church taking the younger women and beginning to do that. That's what your ministry is. A woman's ministry then, is in relation to other women. Secondly, a woman's ministry is in relation to children. Do you know you are co-equal with a man in terms of the children?



The children, it says in Ephesians 6 are to be subject to their mother and father. This is your ministry...tremendous ministry. And let me tell you an interesting thing. Apart from just Christian families and Christian women in the church, do you know that the world is populated mostly by women and children, therefore, women have the biggest evangelism commission. You have the greatest responsibility of evangelism because there are more women and children in this world than there are men. Another area where you serve is in hospitality. You make your home a place where Jesus Christ is honored and where people can come and share and you can serve the church as a deaconess, as someone who serves. Well, you say, what did those deaconesses do in the early church? They did this: they cared for the sick and the poor, they ministered to the martyrs in prison, they instructed new women converts, they assisted in baptism and they exercised general supervision of the women members and they evangelized. Want to hear a great verse? Psalms 68:11: "The Lord giveth the word"...listen..."the women that published the tidings are a great host." Women, you have a responsibility to publish the Word...evangelism. And you got the biggest field of all. Listen, men, when it gets down to it, Paul was right. You know what he said in I Corinthians 11:7? He said this: The woman is man's glory. If we look good, she made us look good. Do you know that? There's nothing that speaks worse of the testimony of a man than an unruly woman. Right? So men, take care to take care, and ladies, be submissive and, thus, be the glory of the man.

Well, we need to help women, though. Men, we do. (Laughter) You say, now, now. That's biblical. Philippians 4:3, Paul says help those women. Why, women have a tremendous ministry, but the authority and the leadership needs to be in the hands of the men to give them the assistance they need to carry out the ministries God has given them. Well, Lydia was a transfigured lady. All that a woman could ever be, she was in the church. Let's look at the disfigured woman. And this is a sad, sad contrast...verse 16. Now, in the world's view, this may have seemed like a liberated woman. This woman probably would have been in on the women's lib movement. Definitely! Why?...because in the first place, she wasn't hung up on religion. In the second place, she wasn't tied to some man...some husband...having to fix meals. She wasn't having a bunch of screaming kids running around all the time. She was a professional woman. She was out there doing her own thing, making money, creating issues. The only problem was she was under control by Satan. Now, the church began to grow. Old Lydia got saved and her household got saved, boy, the thing got off. Well, who do you know immediately is going to invade the situation?...Satan. It's inevitable. It's absolutely inevitable. He is not omnipresent, but he is fast. He is fast. He gets there and he got there in verse 16. Watch. "It came to pass, as we went to prayer"...they're going back to the same proseuche, the same place of prayer..."a certain maid possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much gain by soothsaying." We'll stop there for a minute. Now, they're going back to the same place and they meet another woman. Now, this woman has what the author calls a "spirit of divination." The literal Greek...I want you to get this, a most fascinating thing...the literal Greek is, she had a spirit, comma, a python. That's the same as a python snake, the same term...a spirit, a python, or a python spirit. You say, well, what is a python spirit? Well, in Greek mythology...and this is all mythology...in Greek mythology, there's a place called Pytho, and Pytho was at the foot of Mount Parnassus. Now,

at Pytho, there was a dragon. The dragon guarded Pytho...that area...and the dragon's name was Python. Stay with me. This dragon guarded the oracles of Delphi. Now you may have heard of that. Delphi was a place where oracles were given. Now, you say, what's an oracle? I'll give you the definition. The term "oracle," which is an occult term, means either a place where mediums consult demons or it means the revelation the demons give themselves. So it can refer to the place or the demonic revelation. The oracles at Delphi...Delphi was a place that was a monstrous temple and in this temple were all these medium priestesses and these priestesses were conjuring up demons and giving out information. Now, you say, what about the dragon? Well, supposedly, long ago in Greek mythology, this dragon guarded these oracles. Apollo, who was the third son of Jupiter in mythology, came down and slew the dragon. All of the oracle power of the dragon was then transferred to Apollo and he took on the name Pythias. And so the python idea ties in with Apollo who received the dragon's power and was able, then, to contact these demon spirits at Delphi. Now, let me say this just so you'll understand. They believed, the people in this world believed, in that world of that day, they believed that the gods were alive. They believed in Apollo and Jupiter and Venus and Mars and all those people, Cupid and everybody else. Now, they believed that Apollo...that Apollo spoke through the oracles at Delphi. And so the term python means any kind of medium contact with the god Apollo. This girl, then, was one of the thousands of priestesses from Delphi who were called pythons because they were plugged into Apollo whose other name was Pythias. Now, if you're confused, don't feel bad; I am, too (laughter). But, nevertheless, people would consult this girl, or these priestesses...and they had temples all over the place. In fact, it got to be a universal kind of worship. They would consult these priestesses and they would then think that Apollo, the god, was giving them the information. Now, we know who it really was, right?...Satan and his demons. Let me give you another footnote that's just absolutely fascinating. The term "python" then became synonymous with ventriloquist and is used as such. Ventriloquists were called pythons. You say, why. Do you know what a demon-possessed medium is? He is a dummy for a demon ventriloquist. She was nothing but a demonic Charlie McCarthy (laughter)...essentially the same thing...nothing but a mouth through which a demon spoke...and this is the word ventriloquist. In Isaiah 8:19, the Bible says that the people were to watch out for mediums that peep and mutter and the word in the Greek...it's in Hebrew in the Old Testament, but the Greek translation, they use the word eggastromuthos which means ventriloquist. They were to watch out for ventriloquist demons who used the voice of humans. You say, then that girl was a dummy and demons talked through her. You know something; that isn't anything unusual. I told you last Sunday night about Hitler. That's all he was. He was nothing but a dummy through which demons spoke. You say, well, are there any around today? You better believe there are and they're all over the place. I can name them for you...some of them: Jeane Dixon, Jane Roberts, Taylor Caldwell and etc. They are just vehicles through which demons speak. Now, here was this girl and Satan had his instrument. And according to the ancient writings, these girls would go into frenzies. It says "soothsaying" at the end of verse 16. The root word is frenzy. They would go into almost like a fit and in this terrible frenzy they would become totally distorted. There's some writings that describe visage of these people in the midst of this...horrifying. And they would utter these

statements and this is exactly what is common today. Jane Roberts, I've seen pictures of her going into these things, when she gets this voice that speaks through her. It's absolutely grotesque. You can't even believe the distortion of her person as she becomes a dummy for the demon...and, of course, writes many books.

Well, this girl was doing what these other ladies are doing today. She was making a fortune...making a fortune. Why?...because everybody's hung up on the future. Everybody's preoccupied with finding out the future. So it says at the end of verse 16, she brought much gain to her masters. She was making money. Well, here we find the clash of light and darkness. Boy, here, we saw it, didn't we, in Cyprus, when they went on the first missionary journey? They started to preach the gospel and here came this magician. It's the same thing here. God moves and Satan counter-moves. He's been doing it all through history. You say, well, this girl was really an unusual girl. Yes, but let me hasten to say this. Anybody without Jesus Christ is in exactly the same position she was in. You say, but I know some good people. They wouldn't do this. Listen, if you do not know Jesus Christ, according to the words of Jesus, you are your father, the devil. It is only a question of manifestation. That's all. It's the same Hell that all these people will occupy. It's the same Satan behind them. It's only a question of how he manifests himself in certain cases. That's all. There's no liberty apart from Jesus Christ. This girl was a slave and so is every woman and every man who does not know Jesus Christ. I want you to watch how Satan operates. He is so subtle. Verse 17...this is this girl, now, and this demon's speaking through her...and "the same followed Paul and us"...well, followed Paul, Timothy, Silas and Luke...and she's crying, ekrazen, yelling at the top of her voice, "These men are the servants of the Most High God, who show unto us the way of salvation." Let me ask you a question. Is that a true statement? Absolutely! That is the truth! You say, what is Satan doing speaking the truth? He does it all the time. Do you know that II Corinthians 11 says he appears as an angel of light and his ministers appear as angels of light? A person said to me yesterday, called me on the phone and very disturbed about a person who was saying they had a certain experience, they knew it couldn't be of the devil because they did it in the name of Jesus Christ. That doesn't mean anything. Satan's been doing things in the name of Jesus Christ for centuries. White magic by definition is black magic in Christian terms; that's all. There are all kinds of demonic things going on in the name of Jesus Christ. Some even have recorded indications of demons who have taken the name of Jesus. You can't say, well, we did it in Jesus' name, therefore, it was of God. That doesn't mean anything. It doesn't mean anything at all. Demons will say anything they need to say. That's exactly what's diabolical about the cults, you see. In eight out of ten things they're right. And that's how people get sucked into them. They'll speak the truth just long enough to hook you, you see, and then you're lost and damned in the error of the system. Well, you know what's gonna happen here. The people in town are gonna say, hey, these guys are in the same thing they're in. Hey, this girl must be part of this group. Can you see the subtlety of that? Dynamite! All of the sudden the little church gets on its first legs and Paul and Silas and Luke and Timothy leave and who's gonna take over now? Who are they gonna all look to?...this girl who came along and said the same thing. Boy, Satan is not stupid; believe you me. Some of Satan's most active and aggressive work is done in the name of Jesus Christ. Do you

believe that? You better believe it. Do you know, I read an article in a national Christian magazine saying that Jeane Dixon was a Christian and that we had to believe she was a Christian \_\_\_\_\_ because she talks about Christ and she does all this in the name of Christ. So what! It doesn't mean a thing. Of course she does it in the name of Christ. Why? That's the most subtle way. You say, but, oh, Taylor Caldwell's written those books about "Dear and Glorious Physician" and all and she even wrote that book, "Dialogue with the Devil," and, oh, it's so Christian. Of course, of course, what do you think an angel of light is? But Pastor So-and-So stands in the pulpit and he talks about the Bible and God and Christ! Of course, what do you expect? Satan isn't stupid. That's why John says, you better get down close and look and try the spirits to see whether they be of God. It's not always evident on the surface. This is Satan's most subtle avenue. You think he gets tares in among the wheat in the church by having somebody come and say, "I'm not a Christian; I disbelieve all of it and I'm gonna get in and destroy it." Oh, we'd all say, no, you're not, boy, see. You know how he gets tares in among the wheat? He gets people to say they're Christians when they're not. Oh, we believe \_\_\_\_\_. You know how he gets false teachers in? Not by having them state they're false teachers, but by having them state that they're really real and really legitimate and they get in and they get in and then they begin to propagate false doctrine. Satan is subtle. Infiltration is his first plan. If that doesn't work, then he gets outside persecution, but he always starts with infiltration. Remember Ananias and Sapphira? He thought he could destroy the church from the inside? That didn't work and then he turned to persecution. Well, here he tries infiltration. And she says, these men are the servants of the Most High God. It's interesting she chose that term, "Most High God." That was a term that all the Gentiles would understand. That was their common term for the God of Israel and is also the Jews' own term for their own God, El Elyon, the God Most High, so Satan was really sharp. I mean, he was including his whole audience in this deal. And he said, they show us the way of salvation. The Jews and Gentiles were seeking a way of deliverance. He didn't use Jewish terms and didn't use Gentile terms, but he used terms that bridged both. And he was going to suck the whole population in and convinced them that this girl was a part of Paul's work. Boy, is that subtle. Oh, man. And, friends, that is so devious. I'm telling you, believe me, Satan would love to get non-believers to publicize Jesus Christ. You know why?...because they suck people in on that pretense and then one of two things happen. The people get sucked into false doctrine or the people see what they think Christianity is and they reject it. There's a particular television thing that just bothers me to the core. And this particular individual's always having television programs where they have famous Hollywood people and inevitably they put a testimony in their mouths like they almost force \_\_\_\_\_, oh, I believe in God and, oh, I have faith and mmm, and make them look like a Christian. That is diabolical. That is demonic. You say, why?...because then people assume they are and they go out and see what they do the rest of the time and they say, well, that's Christianity. I'll never forget our young people coming back from seeing the taping of one of these things one time and this comedian was there and he was so vile and so filthy and so, just immoral in his conversation, they had to cut the tape just to ribbons, practically. He was absolutely horrible, everything he did. They tried to put a testimony in his mouth, splice it all together so he comes out looking like a Christian. The next thing you knew, I picked up the

paper the other day and read about the same guy, all kinds of unbelievable, gross, immoral activity in his life. Do you see how subtle that is? Do you see how subtle that is? Listen to me, beloved, God does not need Satan's publicity. We need to be so careful that we don't put the mouths of Satan's people into the place where they have to speak the testimony of Jesus Christ. It just is not right. I'll never forget, there was this one guy who was a movie person. And he was saved and oh, his testimony was published and then I found out some things about his life that were just sordid and tragic. And the next thing I knew, there was a big article in the paper, he'd blown a gasket somewhere and he'd gotten into some trouble and he threw his beer can at the director and it went on and on about all the fouled up life. And, boy, that was really a blow. Here, the Christians had lifted up this individual without really being knowledgeable and concerned about the honesty of his testimony. Satan's subtle. Satan is subtle.

Well, all it does is drag the name of Jesus down. Christ never wants publicity from Satan. So watch what Paul did. Verse 18. And she kept it up for many days and Paul was grieved. I think he was grieved for two reasons. I think he was grieved because he didn't like what she was doing and I think he was grieved because he felt sorry for her. And he "turned and said to the spirit, 'I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.' And he came out the same hour." Boy, when the apostles who had the special gift from the Lord Jesus Christ to cast out demons, when they did it, those demons came out. Remember when the 70 came back, they said to Jesus, they said, we can't believe it, but did You know that even the demons are subject to us? And Jesus gave them that commission, didn't He? I believe that one of the gifts of an apostle was the ability to cast out demons, even in the case of an unbeliever. Now, I have no reason to believe in the New Testament that we Christians today can go around and just, flat out, point blank, cast demons out of unbelievers. I believe the only way an unbeliever can get rid of the influence that Satan has in his life today is by putting his faith in Jesus Christ and at that moment, the demons flee. But in those days, they had an apostolic gift. It's not repeated in terms of any of the epistles that we know of as given to the church. But it was given to them for a very special confirming of the Word. And Paul simply spoke and that demon was gone. And even today, you know, in working with people who have demons, it's a long and laborious issue of praying and confessing sin and yielding and struggling, not as instantaneous as this. This was apostolic and he came out. You say, what happened to the girl? I don't know. I don't know. I think if she'd have become a true believer, it would have told us that. It doesn't tell us that so, perhaps, she never did.

There you see two women and they really mirror all of us. We either belong to Jesus Christ and are liberated, or we belong to Satan and we're slaves. You say, what's the difference John? The difference is this; listen to it. Lydia sought to know God and Lydia listened and God opened her heart. That's the difference. And it's true for you. If you seek to know Him, and if you listen to His Word and respond when He opens your heart like her, you shall be free for real. Let's pray.

Father, thank You this morning for teaching us again from Your truth, helping us to see reality again, the reality of salvation in Lydia, the reality of Satan's work and effort in this other maid. God, we would pray that no one who is in the clutches of Satan at this moment in this place would leave here still in his clutches. Oh, God, may there be a time now in the hearts of those who need Jesus Christ when they turn and open their hearts and believe and receive and Satan flees. We pray in Jesus' Name. Amen.

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