



**Acts – Can I get a Witness?**  
**Wk. 49 A Tale of Two Ladies / Pt 2 Liberating Freedom**  
**By Pastor Jody May 09/03/2023**

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**Acts 16:16-24 ESV**

**Paul and Silas in Prison**

<sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> She followed Paul and us, crying out, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation." <sup>18</sup> And this she kept doing for many days. 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.

<sup>19</sup> 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. <sup>20</sup> And when they had brought them to the magistrates, they said, "These men are Jews, and they are disturbing our city. <sup>21</sup> They advocate customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to accept or practice." <sup>22</sup> The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates tore the garments off them and gave orders to beat them with rods. <sup>23</sup> And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely. <sup>24</sup> Having received this order, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

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**[READ THE TEXT]**

**[PRAY]**

**[INTRODUCTION]**

We are in week two of A Tale of Two Ladies (covers two weeks) which is part of a larger story of three different types of conversion. Up to this point and then afterwards Luke describes **conversion** that is 1<sup>st</sup> regeneration, then 2<sup>nd</sup> true repentance empowered by a gift of faith, he describes that in general and broad terms. It seems though that what he is doing here in chapter 16 as Paul and his traveling companions are now taking the Gospel into new territory (Europe), he's describing what conversion looks like in people that are far from God and knowledge of Him. These are people that don't have synagogues in their towns, that their places of residency have no touch of



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---

God's presence, but they were still religious. That means they are worshipping demonic deities as the divine, and that looks totally different than it did in the middle east. All that to say as you and I continue to read Acts know that these types of events are happening all the time now, this is what **supernatural liberation** will look like in these Greek influenced Roman provinces.

God is demonstrating now in Acts that Salvation has come to the Gentiles, but we are seeing the effects of an unseen war that is spreading outside of Palestine. You see, the Devil does not want to release His captives that he has worked so hard at getting over centuries of pagan worship in other lands. The mission of God at this point though is to save His children, those He chose before time, it is time to set the captives free! That brings us to the main point of chapter 16:

***"To be freed from the world one must be enslaved to Jesus".***

The **Liberating Freedom of the Gospel** as delivered by Christ is this,

**John 8:32 ESV**

<sup>32</sup>and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

The Truth is that Jesus is a Conquering King, and to be liberated from this world is to become a servant/slave of Christ.

**Romans 6:22**

But now that you have been **set free** from sin and have become **slaves** of God,

Jesus' Truth is the only hope and grace that these people have. It is in Philippi that Luke will paint for us the picture of what it will look like through the rest of the NT and up until His return.

Last week you met a woman named Lydia, and she is wealthy, she is a God fearer, and she **is liberated by public discourse** because in Luke's words, *"The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul"* (16:14).



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---

This week we have a slave girl, a woman with no money of her own, a native Greek, tormented by evil spirits, and she is **liberated by a powerful exorcism**. Lastly next week, we will meet a Roman jailer, a blue-collar joe, that is **liberated through powerful miracles and personal testimony**. All three are examples of Jesus' Gospel emancipation graciously given to people captured by the world in different ways. This passage is meant to show you what will be happening going forward which is really a representation of the world we live in.

I have known people that have been God fearers, that have been made aware of their sin and have a desire to be saved and all it took was the HS capitalizing on someone trying to clarify Jesus' role in all of that. That could look like in our culture the person that had been **in and out of church for years**, who never really understood Grace and then someone explained it to them and the fire erupted. That's a story of many of you in this room.

But then we get to the part of the story that makes us scratch our head a little and that is trying to wrap our heads around **Demonic Possession and Oppression**. Because if this is a representation of the Gentile world, are you saying Jody that Demonic Entrapment still happens in our world, in this day and age? I would say absolutely, I seen this as well. There are people in our world that are held in bondage by demonic spirits, that speak for the demonic world, that capture by their power on influence followers who seek to gain off their wisdom.

We still have popular psychics in the mainstream that command a lot of attention like the [Long Island Medium](#), or go check out [Apologia Studio's #316 on UFOs/Occult](#) and discover what UFO fanatics and Occult mediums have in common as in when Dr. Steven Greer tells you if you want to experience an encounter of the 3<sup>rd</sup> kind go out in the woods at night, open your mind to the cosmos, let them know you want to make contact, and picture in your mind where you are at, that's called **a séance**. The local psychic/wicca shops are alive and well, I just happen to drive by one in Hiram the other day. We now have the psychic hotline via internet now, and of course the modern-day interactions with some **AI** that claim to be demonic deities. On top of that I



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---

have seen what demonic possession looks like and deliverance personally, yep, it's alive and well.

We also have people in our government that purport to be Satanists like **Demetre Dasakalakis** who became the White Houses' National Monkey Response Deputy Coordinator last year or you can't forget **Sam Brinton a department of energy official** who is a cross-dressing, sadist and affirmer of paganism. As well, **Rachel Levine** who has served as an assistant secretary for health in the Department of Health and Human Services since 2021, the first openly transgender four-star officer that states it is wrong to withhold gender transitioning hormone therapy and surgery from minors. Demonic powers have been castrating and mutilating people for thousands of years, they don't age they just need new servants over time.

Satan is alive and well, you have seen his some of his henchmen, they lead others astray, and they are always looking for places of power and control. I don't want to jump into a well that elevates the supernatural today, so I am going to stop with the descriptions of demonic working but what I do want you to see that simply the power in Jesus' name, by a true faith in Him, those forces are stopped, their plans are thwarted, and people are set free! The Pagan world is infested with spirits that want to be worshipped but God will take back His people and He will punish those Spirits along with their followers in the end, for He will share His glory with no other (Is. 42:8)!

But before we jump into that part of our story this morning, I want to in way of review show you what makes this type of ministry/deliverance possible. In Acts these men would go from town to town and need resources in order to combat the forces of Hell so Jesus could liberate His people.

<sup>15</sup> And after she was baptized, 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 upon us.

The main tool that God provided for these men in the ancient world was the **gift of Hospitality** so let me speak on that for a moment.



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---

**[REVIEW/HOSPITALITY]**

Lydia was saved and immediately imposed on the men to stay with her. It reminded me of when Abraham imposed on angelic messengers to eat and rest with him, or Lot imposed on the visiting angels in Sodom and Gomorrah to stay with him, or when Rahab kept the spies in Jericho, or when Abigail took care of David and his men, every instance a moment when God was in the process of rescuing His people. He used the **principle of hospitality to accomplish the task of liberation**. God instituted the principle of Hospitality in the law, in Moses' day, and it is still a good law to practice today:

**Leviticus 19:33-34 ESV**

<sup>33</sup>“When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong.  
<sup>34</sup> You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall **love him as yourself**,

That's powerful principle, so the early Christians did this to help in the spiritual conquest of their towns. The Apostles would set up camp in a person's home by which they could eat, meet, and rest so that they could set up their rescue missions into hostile territory. The alternative was to stay in an Inn infested with disease, prostitution, and crime. Remember the first church started out of an upper room in Jerusalem. Lydia does the same thing by the prodding of the HS, and God uses her to set up a place by which these men could use her hospitality to further the cause of God.

The gift of hospitality, to find rest, nourishment, and peace is a **reflection of the Gospel** and what God has done for us through Jesus. In Christ we find our rest from a world that is continually at odds with us, we find the spiritual water and food that never ends and always satisfies, and we find peace from the wrath of God through His sacrifice. Christians are to model, in whatever capacity you have, to each other and their neighbor the **Gospel of reconciliation through hospitality**. It is how we portray Christ to this world, and it is how we empower the forces of God to take back His children. **You get Rest and Peace so you can give rest and peace!**



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---

Rosaria Butterfield said it like this, “And that is what radically ordinary hospitality accomplishes in the Lord’s grace. It meets people as strangers, and makes them neighbors; it meets neighbors and makes them family.” (p.125 ***The Gospel Comes with a House Key.***)

**I Peter 4:9 ESV**

<sup>9</sup>Show hospitality to one another without **grumbling**.

Family, Hospitality is something we all can accomplish, it is something we all have been equipped to do, and you are going to see how it will be a necessary component if we want to reach the lost for Jesus. Now let’s get back to our story and see how the Apostles faired with this next liberation of a helpless woman from a very dark force.

We will see over the next few minutes how Demonic Players are deceptive and look as if they support church endeavors, Demonic Powers when overcome become and angry and vengeful, and how Demonic Plans can only be thwarted by the Gospel.

**1. Demonic Players will always try to infiltrate the church.**

<sup>16</sup>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.

They didn’t meet this poor woman in a back-alley way, a brothel, or a pagan temple, but as they were *on their way to a place of prayer*. Look the Devil knows what’s happening around him, and he knows that if he lets this evangelism continue, he will have a spiritual rebellion on his hands, so he goes to take a look for himself through his servant.

Right away you see she is not just a captive to this spirit but to men who exploit her based on what she can do, she had owners. Even with her supernatural ability she could not escape her bondage. She is spiritually and physically bound there is no hope of liberation **unless God works first**. Well, that’s how it is for all of us, you’re living your best life now never realizing you are enslaved to the prince of this world, and you have no idea just how deep you are in it.



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---

She is a woman who is bound to a *spirit of divination* or **Python**.

Python is another word for dragon, that according to Greek Mythology was slain by Apollos. This serpent was said to guard the oracle at Delphi at Mt. Parnassus. At this point in history there was still a temple there, where people would go to seek guidance from this oracle. And oracle was a person that would be overcome by a spirit, that would take over the body of the person, and would talk through the person giving supposedly secret information. This girl was possessed by the same spirit, so she was a highly treasured person being that they were far from the temple and yet she could do the same things as the oracle could do. You could get your fortune told, this was a lucrative business controlling most likely the wealthy and political figures of this town.

<sup>17</sup>She followed Paul and us, crying out, “These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation.” <sup>18</sup>And this she kept doing for many days.

So, this spirit is no dummy, and what it seeks to do is infiltrate what the Apostle Paul is doing. Paul is starting a church, and this spirit knows he can't stay there forever so it is trying to connect itself to the work that Paul is doing. The spirit is seeking to infiltrate so it can gain control of the new believers to bring it to an early end. It is like a parasitic wasp that lays eggs on a host so it can be eaten alive to give its offspring life. This is truly a demonic plan.

Well Paul has had enough; he turns around and rebukes the spirit.

<sup>18</sup>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.

What we see is that the power of this spirit, a very powerful one with a large reputation, is no match for the power of Jesus! God used the men's greed, the spirit's vile motives, and Paul's anger to liberate this woman from a thing that she had most likely gotten used to. Sometimes Salvation is like that, you get delivered even when you are having fun, because it's about God's plans not



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**Wk. 49 A Tale of Two Ladies / Pt 2 Liberating Freedom**  
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---

yours, it's about God's timing not your calendar, if the good Lord had destined you for good works that He prepared for you beforehand to be accomplished for Him (Eph. 2:10) then your rebellion will come to an end and it will happen abruptly.

Listen there are still powers that seek to infiltrate and misguide people in the church. There are pastors that will use the charismatic populace to gain wealth and the people are foolish enough to oblige, because they have bought **the lie that if they do what the pastor says they will get wealth too**. That sounds like the Python Spirit. The devil is no dummy, in Philippi it knew to proclaim that Paul worked for the one God overall and by doing so was **pretending to be on His side**. Demons can say Jesus' name, and they will use it to get around His people and steal worship. They like to worm themselves into churches, and they love to start softening the gospel to the point it looks no different than any other cult. They have toppled the mainline churches and now it looks like their servants have deeply infiltrated the UMC and the SBC because of liberal theological drift. They have time, they don't age, and they have plans that go on for years.

In answer to this, God gave us wise men in the past, that even before this nation's constitution was ever written a better document was formed by our Baptist Forefathers the [LBCF 1689](#) **which outlines and guides us into careful God worship helping us steer clear from heresy**. That's why we use it, and we the elders don't elevate it over scripture, but we recognize the wisdom of men smarter than us to help us protect the interpretation of scripture. That's why the Apostle's Creed was developed in the first couple of centuries in church life, so they can keep the demonic forces out of the development of early Christian Doctrine. The LBCF expounds and highlights what you find in the Apostle's Creed so that we are not led astray.

So, when the spirits can't get their way though, when they are stopped, let me now show you how they respond, because they don't just tuck tail and run. You and I need to understand this because as we seek to liberate our lost brothers and sisters in our community it won't be a walk in the park.

**2. Demonic Powers when overcome become angry and vengeful.**





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**Wk. 49 A Tale of Two Ladies / Pt 2 Liberating Freedom**  
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---

<sup>19</sup> 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. <sup>20</sup> And when they had brought them to the magistrates, they said, "These men are Jews, and they are disturbing our city. <sup>21</sup> They advocate customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to accept or practice."

So, **a good thing for the Kingdom is not always the wanted thing in the community**... Paul did the right thing, as a matter of fact he was patient and tried to ignore the lady, he was fine just focusing on evangelism till she wouldn't stop. The problem is that the devil is not going to let successful ministry go by uninterrupted and unhindered even when you are not hurting anyone.

The real problem is that **the men's money maker was gone**. Do you know what you would discover if you tracked the elevation and proliferation of porn in relationship to divorce, adultery, human trafficking, prostitution, and indoctrination into alternative lifestyles that as porn use increases so do all the other things. But it's a multi-billion-dollar industry, it would hurt the economy if it was done away with or cast out, so anyone even talking about regulation anymore is vilified. Eventually there will be no age restrictions and no such thing as pedophilia anymore because it's all about money.

This woman's handlers became enraged when they discovered Paul didn't play the same games they do, and he didn't care about their pyramid money scheme. They dragged him into court and blamed him on disturbing the peace. That is essentially what got Jesus killed. His love for people, his lack of wanting to play religion with the Sanhedrin, His tireless work at liberating His people from demonic oppression and the preaching of the Kingdom of God, got Him incarcerated and executed.

**He became the scapegoat** for the problems of the Jewish people. If He would just be quiet and get in line, it would all have been ok, the priests believed. Thank God, that too was the Father's plan to raise His Son up as the blame/scapegoat for the world, and He took that blame and in return he sets us free from the consequence of sin, death. This is now Paul's path to model



**Acts – Can I get a Witness?**  
**Wk. 49 A Tale of Two Ladies / Pt 2 Liberating Freedom**  
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---

His Savior as a Roman citizen. Paul will be beaten and incarcerated so that the knowledge of God comes through his persecution.

This is what our elected officials are attempting to do now, SILENCE THE CHURCH, if you would just go away everything would be fine! If we can just silence the church, if you would stop calling things sin, if you would stop calling to attention the need for a Savior, if you would just stop calling out the lies in culture, we could accept you! Sorry, Jesus didn't play the conformity game and neither do we. But you have to be ready for what comes next.

<sup>22</sup> The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates tore the garments off them and gave orders to beat them with rods. <sup>23</sup> And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely. <sup>24</sup> Having received this order, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

Paul is beaten and thrown into jail. They make it look good though. They had the magistrates do the public dirty work. In the Roman towns the magistrates or deputies walked around with a rod with an axe head on one end, they were empowered to inflict punishment and even death when warranted. This was all legal and went through the courts, the crowd was just the cheer section. Then when the public beating is over, they are thrown in the stocks. Holes in wood whereby your legs go through, but these were often at wide angles so as to elevate pain and suffering.

Our suffering for the Gospel at this moment doesn't entail this but yet in other countries they are encountering treatment like this. It may be one day you and I may encounter something like this but perhaps it will be more in line with seizing your funds, starving you out to make you comply. Are you willing to comply with requests for peace even if it means you have to lie or perpetuate the lie that all men are inherently good?

### **3. Demonic Plans are only thwarted by the Gospel.**

The Gospel, and here's why it is dangerous to the demonic world, why they would try so hard to silence the church, it takes the need for supernatural



**Acts – Can I get a Witness?**  
**Wk. 49 A Tale of Two Ladies / Pt 2 Liberating Freedom**  
**By Pastor Jody May 09/03/2023**

---

knowledge for gain, and it discards it because it removes you out of the driving seat for your life and puts Christ there. The good news of the Gospel claims that God makes your plans, sets your days in motion, and gives you all you need for life to make much of His Son.

**Jeremiah 29:11 ESV**

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.

When we trust God and the good news that Jesus saves us unto eternal life, then we don't need demonic clairvoyance, we don't need tarot cards, nor horoscopes, nor a medium, a psychic, or a witch! No, we need to TRUST or put FAITH in what God has said, we have a future, and we have a hope, and we must trust it is better than what this world offers. Now how do we know this Hope is worth it?

**Philippians 2:8 ESV**

And being found in human form (Jesus), he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

The Gospel says, the Father predetermined what would become of the Son, the Son accepted his lot and humbled Himself, so that by His sacrifice, the answer for sin is given. The answer is not found in demonic false hope and dreams. Our Hope is found in the radical love of the Father, displayed in the radical life of the Son, you want proof of whether you should live life with Hope you look at the life of Jesus not a false prophet. In the words of Edward Mote (1834) "**My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness; I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus' name.**" Hope comes from Jesus not from a demonic dolt. And what is the reason for having to lean into His name, what can He give that this world cannot give?

**Romans 6:23 ESV**

For the wages of sin is death, but the **free gift** of God is **eternal life** in Christ Jesus our Lord.



**Acts – Can I get a Witness?**  
**Wk. 49 A Tale of Two Ladies / Pt 2 Liberating Freedom**  
**By Pastor Jody May 09/03/2023**

---

The Gospel says, the Master came and served you first without a cost to you, to give you the most valuable thing in the universe eternal life all held in the Life of Jesus our King. To look for gain from demons is to accept a cheap imitation of real love, their love always cost you something, it is always short lived, and it is never free. So family, how do we respond to this Hope we have in Jesus, that demons are jealous of and angels are in awe of it?

**Romans 12:12-13 ESV**

**“Rejoice** in hope, **be patient** in tribulation, be constant in prayer. <sup>13</sup>**Contribute** to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.”

The Gospel says, we contribute to the work of liberation through our constant rejoicing, patience, and prayer contributing to the ongoing fight against the Devil and his hordes through the act of **hospitality**. Hospitality is the end stop if you are truly joyful over your hope in Jesus!

We don't know if this poor woman was saved although the work of God made it possible. Through Paul and Silas' work, and through the hospitality of Lydia, a home was prepared to receive her and many like more like her for God will always rescue His children even when they don't want it.

My family let us not bow to our culture's demands for fealty to demonically controlled propaganda. Let us instead **support the work of Gospel expansion** through our continued efforts for standing up for God's Truth and by the act of outdoing one another in **Holy Hospitality**, for the sake of the Gospel and the fame of Jesus. Amen.

**[PRAYER]**

**[COMMUNION]**

**[BENEDICTION]**

Go in the name of the Father, that liberates us from the power of evil through the His effective and generous gift of Grace.



**Acts – Can I get a Witness?**  
**Wk. 49 A Tale of Two Ladies / Pt 2 Liberating Freedom**  
**By Pastor Jody May 09/03/2023**

---

Go in the name of the Son, that liberated us through the failed attempt of execution by the schemes of Satan, and through the cross we are saved.

Go in the name and power of the Holy Spirit, that goes before us, frees us from demonic holds, and empowers us for radical and joyful hospitality.