



## Open My Heart [Freedom]

Acts 16:16-25

### What happens when God opens our hearts?

#### Freedom

*She went from being demon-possessed to embracing the freedom found in a relationship with Jesus.*

#### A. The Miracle - Freedom [16:16-18]

“The demon probably hoped to secure enough goodwill to avoid a confrontation and maybe ride the coattails of Christianity: “They offer a way of salvation; I offer a way of salvation; we’re together in the salvation business.”

- Chuck Swindoll [Commentary on Luke]

“... if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

[John 8:36]

#### B. The Mayhem - Resistance [16:19-24]

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. <sup>2</sup> Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, <sup>3</sup> though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling. Selah [Psalm 46:1-3]

#### C. The Response - Worship [Acts 16:25]

“Do not be deceived, Wormwood. Our cause is never more in danger than when a human, no longer desiring, but still intending, to do our Enemy's will, looks round upon a universe from which every trace of Him, seems to have vanished, and asks why he has been forsaken, and still obeys” [C. S. Lewis, The Screwtape Letters]

“In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.” John 16:33b

**Acts 16:16-25** As we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination [G: Pythona] [Leviticus 19:31] 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, [Daniel 3:26] who proclaim to you the way of salvation.” [James 2:19] <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, [Acts 19:25] they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers. [Acts 17:6-8, 21:30, James 2:6, Acts 8:3, 18:12, Matthew 10:18]

<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.” [Esther 3:8, Acts 16:12] <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. [2 Corinthians 6:5; 11:23-25, 1 Thessalonians. 2:2]

<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. [Luke 21:12]

<sup>25</sup> Around midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening. [Job 35:10, Psalm 42:8, Psalm 77:6, Psalm 119:62]

**Leviticus 19:26** You shall not interpret omens or tell fortunes.

**Leviticus 19:31 [NIV]** - Do not turn to mediums or seek out spiritists, for you will be defiled by them. I am the Lord your God.

**Leviticus 20:6** I will also turn against those who commit spiritual prostitution by putting their trust in mediums or in those who consult the spirits of the dead. I will cut them off from the community.

**Luke 6:35-36 [The 12's MARCHING ORDERS]** “Love your enemies! Do good to them. Lend to them without expecting to be repaid. [give this selfless kind of love to the most unlovable people - Swindoll] Then your reward from heaven will be very great, and you will truly be acting as children of the Most High, for he is kind to those who are unthankful and wicked. <sup>36</sup> [Grace principle] You must be compassionate, just as your Father is compassionate.”

### Study Questions/Prayer

- [1] Read Acts 16:16-18. Have you ever seen a person overwhelmed by evil who was rescued by the power of God, and found freedom in a relationship with Jesus? How did it impact you?
- [2] Read Acts 16:19-24 and Psalm 46:1-3. What modern-day "mayhem" situations might people face, and how can faith provide strength in these moments?
- [3] Read Psalm 46:1-3 How do these verses describe God's presence during difficult times? What assurances does it provide?
- [4] Read Acts 16:25 and John 16:33. What does it mean to “take heart” in the midst of tribulation?
- [5] Pray for God to open your heart with the goal of ongoing personal transformation, embracing freedom found in Christ, and the courage to leverage opportunities to impact the lives of people around you by the power of the Holy Spirit.