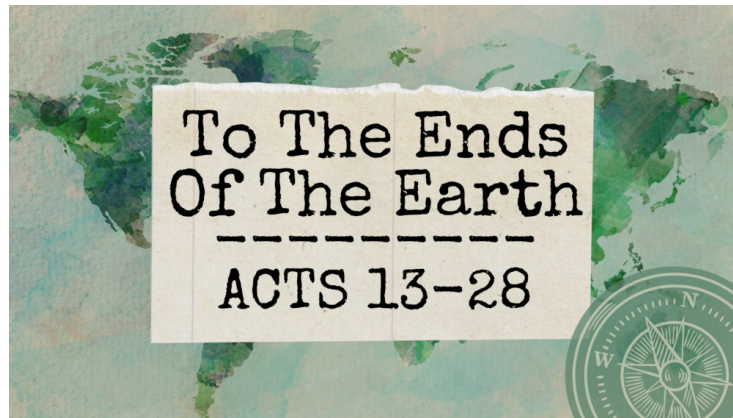


# Philippi: A Leading City and a Roman Colony



**Acts 16:11-40**

**Bro Ricky Cunningham**

It was November 15<sup>th</sup>, 1986. I will never forget it for two reasons: an airplane flight, and a football game. Celisa and I were going to leave that morning with Gran and Ron, fly to Lexington KY to see her brother, Trace, perform at halftime of the UK/Florida football game. He was a member of the UK marching band. We met Gran and Ron at the Murray airport. Before we got on the plane, Ron came out of the little office and said, "This is going to be really, really interesting. At the altitude we are going to be flying, the wind is going to be about sixty miles an hour." We were going to be flying in a Cessna 172. The good news was that wind was going to be behind us, so it was going to be a tailwind that would push us. Ron said, "We are probably going to get there a little early." As we flew, Ron said, "Wow, I have never been this far before at this juncture!" Due to that sixty miles an hour tailwind pushing that Cessna 172, we got to Lexington earlier than we were supposed to. Because of that, we had more time to focus on Trace, get to the football game, and settle in. I had no idea that we would

watch UK beat Florida that day, 10-3, and it would be thirty-five years later before my UK Wildcats would beat Florida at home again! We had a wonderful time. Trace and the marching band did an awesome job. We got ready to get back in the plane and we were inside the little airport outside of Lexington when Ron came out and said, "Guess what? On the flight home, the wind is still sixty miles an hour." It wasn't going to be a tailwind though; it was now going to be a direct headwind. Now at that time, Ronnie flew partially by ground sight and partially by instruments. This meant that we left Lexington and basically followed the four lane highways back to Murray KY. So get this picture — We are in a Cessna 172, flying 'above' the West KY Parkway, and because of a headwind, we were not going as fast as we were going when we went to Lexington. As a matter of fact, I could look below and see cars on the parkway, and (I am not lying) the cars were going faster than we were! It took us so long to get back to Murray that we had to stop at Lake Barkley and refuel because Ronnie was afraid we would run out before we got back to Murray.

What a difference a tailwind and a headwind make in your life! We are going to see a tailwind this morning. Paul has been hitting the gas and God has been pumping the brakes. Paul hits the gas, and God hits the brakes. And now, God has Paul, Silas, Timothy, and Luke headed in the right direction and He is going to give them a tailwind. What a difference that is going to make!

Let's see what Luke wants us to see as he puts three stories together. We are going to do things a little differently. Normally, we preach from ground level, which means we get bogged down, we hike, we slow down to look at things and talk about them, so sometimes we just get halfway through where we wanted to go. There are three stories in this passage that we could look at individually, but if we did, we would miss why Luke puts them together the way he does. I am going to ask you to stay focused on this airplane view. I am going to try to stick to the altitude, and we are going to pray that God gives us a tailwind.

## Scripture

**“So, setting sail from Troas, we made a direct voyage to Samothrace, 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. We remained in this city some days.”**

## A Tailwind to Philippi

Like you, I have already read the rest of the book and I know that we are in the beginning of the second missionary journey. I know the second missionary journey is going to end, and because I know how it is going to end, when I look at these two verses I see God giving Paul, Silas, Timothy, and Luke a tailwind. He mentions they set sail from Troas, traveled through a certain strait, went to Neapolis, and from there they went to Philippi, getting there the next day. On a ship, then in eight miles by land, they get to where they are going in two days! Unbelievable! It is unbelievable because in Acts 20:6 when they get ready to go home, they leave Philippi to go back to Troas and it takes five days to get back. Going, it takes two because they have a tailwind. Going home, it takes five because they possibly have a headwind.

I don't want you to miss this...at the beginning of this chapter Paul has no idea where to go. He just goes, and he goes, and he goes, and God keeps stopping him. Now, he has run out of directions to go. He goes to sleep and gets a vision. He sees a man from Macedonia begging him to come and help, so now he knows the directions he is supposed to go. He gets in a ship with the other three men and they get there faster than they would normally get there. Why? Because there is a man who needs to hear what Paul, Silas, Timothy, and Luke have to say. They arrive at Philippi and Luke does something uncharacteristic. He tells us two things about the place they are at. The first thing Luke tells us about Philippi is that it is a leading city of Macedonia. If you were to put a biblical map and on top of a modern map, you would see that Macedonia is basically Europe. In other words, there is a man in Europe needing help and Paul now knows it is God's will for them to head to Europe. Then, when they get there they go

to Philippi, and Philippi is a leading city. It is a leading city economically, politically, spiritually, and socially. In other words, it is a city that influences the areas around it.

The second thing Luke tells us about Philippi is that it is a Roman colony. Have you noticed this pattern that is developing lately? Paul is passing over a lot of places, but he is making some stops in some really big towns, really big cities. I think Luke is trying to tell us here why God has him going to Philippi, why God has him going to Europe. It is because Philippi is influencing others and it is a Roman colony.

Let me just pause for a moment here before we get into it being a Roman colony. Do you think it is possible that we, in the church, are overlooking the cities, the metropolitans? Every time I read about a new mission work we Christians want to do, we are trying to find another unreached people group. We are trying to find a little tribe down at the end of a river somewhere. We are trying to find an island that has not heard the gospel yet. I am not saying we shouldn't be doing that, but when is the last time you heard about a missionary who God laid it upon his heart to go to Washington DC, or New York City, or Chicago, to Bangkok, Beijing, or Moscow? When is the last time you prayed for one of those big cities? (Have you ever watched those election maps on election night? It is amazing how a whole map can be one color, yet that group not be elected. There are these little bitty pockets of the other color, but that is where all the people live, and it is those pockets of people who are influencing not just a nation, but a world.)

### **A Roman Colony: Ambassadors for Rome**

Paul didn't shy from clashing with culture. He felt a heartbeat to go to the cities. Luke is trying to tell us about Paul's heartbeat and the reason he wants to go to these cities is because he knows they are influencing all of the regions around these metropolitan pockets of people. Philippi was not just an influential city; it is a Roman colony. From history, we understand that Rome literally wanted to rule the world. They had a system of government that they believed in. They had freedoms for their people that they believed in. They wanted to conquer other people groups so that their

way of life could be the dominant way of the world. As they expanded their empire, they wanted to put a miniature Rome in the farther areas or cities, and they classified them as colonies. Not all cities in the Roman Empire were considered colonies. When they classified a city like Philippi as a colony, they would give a piece of land to their veterans who had fought for Rome in war, and they settled that city so it would be a military outpost. Rome was really smart. They would put them on the boundaries of the empire and those military trained men would be there to stop an enemy invasion. Every citizen in a Roman colony also became a citizen of Rome, and that meant they had to be an ambassador for the Roman way of life. They would dress like a Roman and speak like a Roman. Their laws were governed by Rome itself. When you went into a Roman colony like Philippi, it was just like being in Rome, except a miniature model of Rome.

### **A Heavenly Colony: Ambassadors for Christ**

Now, I don't think Philippi saw this coming, but God doesn't just want for Philippi to be a Roman colony; God wants Philippi to be a heavenly colony. He is going to spiritually invade Philippi with the good news of Jesus Christ. Several weeks ago, Kory told us that the people coming to Christ in the book of Acts aren't coming to Christ just so people will be converted. People are coming to Christ so that in all regions of the world there will be churches. And here is what we know...God wants a church in Philippi. We know that Paul is going to later write to the church in Philippi, and in Philippians 3:20, he reminds them that they are citizens of Heaven. James Moffat translates this from the Greek into English this way, "we are a colony of Heaven," and he is playing off Philippi being a Roman colony. You and I are able to identify with this, because just as a Roman was proud to be a Roman and to have the government that they have, we, as Americans, are proud to be Americans and have the form of government that we have. We believe it is the greatest form of government in the world. Therefore, we are proud to be citizens of the United States of America, so we can identify with Philippi.

Paul is going to build a colony of Heaven there because that is what God ultimately wants in this city that prides itself on being an ambassador of a Roman way of life. But God knows that is human based, and even though

it was the best humans could come up with at that time, God didn't want people living under the rule of man; He wanted people living under His rule. So, in the midst of this colony of Rome, God puts His colony there, a church. Later, Paul has to remind the church to be a good citizen of Rome but to remember that, ultimately, they are citizens of Heaven. In this Roman city of Philippi, there is now a group of people who will be living out a new way of living, and that is God's way of living.

Let's pause for a second. Which are you more loyal to? Your American way of life, or God's way of life? God wants every city in America, including Hardin, to have a heavenly colony. Then whatever comes our way, we don't act like an American, we act like a Christian. So that, ultimately, we will shape and influence those who do not know Christ and there can be more people in every nation of the world who bring themselves under His rule and not just the rule of man. That is what this passage is going to be about.

## **The Sabbath**

Three stories are going to show us God's will for the church, in my opinion. Paul, Silas, Timothy, and Luke (remember those four names) arrive after sailing for two days in Philippi, after walking eight miles from the harbor. Luke tells us they stay for several days and it is now the Sabbath. Now, we are already used to Paul's rhythm. Paul's rhythm of life was that he did what he did for six days, but on that seventh day, he went to the synagogue and looked for every opportunity he could to influence that group of people with the gospel. That was a day where he rested, where he worshipped God. Remember, Paul is in this transitional period from Jewish people worshipping on the seventh day and the church worshipping on the first day, but he just couldn't help continuing to go to the synagogue. Even though we know that he is called to be a messenger and apostle to the Gentiles, whenever he went into a town he looked for a synagogue, and he went on Saturday. He just seemed to believe what he said in Romans when he said the gospel came first to the Jews and then to the Gentiles, so he always took the gospel to the Jews first in the town. But when Paul gets to Philippi and Saturday rolls around, he can't find the synagogue. There is no synagogue. This is terrible.

Do you remember that in the Old Testament, God exiled His people twice out of the homeland into the nations of the world? When they went into the nations of the world, they were to influence those nations. Jewish law said if there are ten men in a city, you can form a synagogue. Jews were scattered all over the world — but in this leading city, this Roman colony called Philippi, this means there are not ten spiritual men who are loyal to God and celebrate the Jewish law, so there is no synagogue. The law said if there were not ten men to form a synagogue, then there could be a place of prayer down by the river. Luke is telling us that Paul can't find a synagogue, so he knows, surely, there are enough Jews in the town that he can go down to the river and find a place to pray with them.

Now, we know that Paul was a Pharisee before he got saved. He was in line to succeed Gamaliel, a trained rabbi, a Hebrew of the Hebrews. Do you know what those guys prayed every morning? I assume Paul prayed this too. At some point in his morning prayer, he would thank God that he wasn't a woman, he wasn't a slave, and he wasn't a Greek. So he gets this vision of a Macedonian man needing help and that is right up his alley! I know you don't like to think about this, but before Paul became a Christian, he was prejudiced. He could see people and make a judgment about them without ever getting to know them and he thanked God that he wasn't like those people. Luke is going to record meeting three people in Philippi: a woman, a slave, and a Greek man. Is God good, or is God good? It is going to give us the origin, the blueprint, the DNA of this church in Philippi. Can you imagine how shocked he was when he got down to the Gangites River and he found the prayer place, and there wasn't a man in the midst? It was all women. There is a group of ladies praying and Paul joins them.

## **Lydia**

As Paul begins to speak, we are introduced to this lady named Lydia. She was from Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, and she was a worshipper of God. That means she was a lady who had a business in high fashion. If you were the man, you didn't want your wife shopping in her shop. You tried to steer her away from that booth because she sold the purple goods, the expensive stuff. Guess what God does to her? Luke says the Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what Paul was saying. This is the one

experience we all have in common as part of God's church. We didn't figure this thing out; we came under the preaching of the gospel and the Lord God, in His sovereignty, opened our hearts, just to have the ability to pay attention! In paying attention to what Paul was saying, Lydia heard the good news. Paul would write to the church at Rome and say, "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God." So under the preached word of God, she was open to the truth of what God did for her and she came to the place to know Christ in a personal way through faith. Luke doesn't say that, I am adding words to it. Luke goes from God opening her heart to getting baptized. Do you get this picture? They are having a place of prayer down by the river, Paul is preaching the gospel, and something in her heart causes her to want to go down into the water and identify that her personal faith is in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. By doing so, the old person that she was is dead, and she is now a brand new person. So, she got baptized and her household as well.

Then, Luke tells us she looks at Paul and the other missionaries and says, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." And Paul said she constrained us...he couldn't say no! So Paul and these three missionaries are now in the house of a woman. Luke doesn't say it, but we know there will be a church birthed here. It probably is not going to be birthed in the house of a man; it probably will be birthed in the house of a lady.

### **Possessed Slave Girl**

Get this picture...Paul has been fellowshiping with these ladies. It is his rhythm to go to this place of prayer. As he is going to this place of prayer, he meets a slave girl who is possessed by a spirit of divination (ESV). No English translation translates this correctly. The Greek says she had a spirit of *Python*. (Have you seen that Oracle of Delphi? Do you remember the big snake? That is a Python.) She has a spirit within her that the locals believe is from this demonic being, this demonic spirit, Python. The demonic spirit gave this slave girl the ability to tell people's fortunes. When she sees these four missionaries, she says, "These men are servants of the Most High God, [that name used for Abraham, a servant of the Most High God] who proclaim to you the way of salvation." This annoys Paul. He gets



upset. He doesn't like it. A few days pass before he finally says enough is enough, and he tells the demon, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." Immediately, the demon comes out.

Have you noticed that Paul, like Jesus, doesn't want demons testifying to who he is or who Jesus is? In the Gospel of Mark, no one knows who Jesus is. And then Jesus will do a miracle, He will cast out a demon, and that demon will say He is the Christ the Son of God. What does Jesus do every time? The Greek says He 'rapped him across the knuckles.' He said *shut up! Hush! Don't tell anybody!* Jesus nor Paul wants demons telling who they are. That is kind of strange. Had to be careful here. Don't play with witchcraft. Don't mess around with demons. Even when demons get the message right, God always knows their motivation is wrong.

Paul heals the girl, but I have to pause there...because this is going to be tricky. I want to be very careful because there are a lot of people who struggle here with Paul waiting several days to heal a slave from a demon. And then, he never denounces slavery. In my opinion, what is going on here is Paul lived in a time when the Roman government believed in slavery. It was legal to own slaves. It blows my mind that any government anywhere in the world could ever believe that it's ok to own another human being! But Paul didn't deal with the social issue; he dealt with the spiritual issue. The spiritual issue was that before there was a person that was enslaved by a human being, that person was enslaved on the inside. Paul deals with the root of the problem, which is spiritual slavery to a demon or spiritual slavery to sin. I think ultimately Paul knows that if you are going to deal with social issues in the kingdom of man, you have to start at the right place, and the place to start is not on the outside, it is on the inside. But when you are starting on the inside, it doesn't mean you believe it's ok to be doing this on the outside. Paul knows that unless you deal with the heart of the issue, you won't really tackle the issue. Before men can be right with other men, men have to be right with God, and so Paul wanted this lady to first be right on the inside. That should be the desire each one of us has.

Now, the church should be concerned about social issues and social injustices of all kinds, but the reason we (the church) are no longer invited

to the table of the conversation of most people is because governments and people in big cities want to deal with the social issue without dealing with the real problem. The real problem is the heart of man. You cannot change the heart of man through legislation; you can only change the heart of man through redemption. The only way to redemption is not religion; it is a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. The world does not want to hear that the way to solve our problems is through faith in Jesus Christ so we are going to be left out of world discussions. That doesn't keep us from doing what we do, we do just what the Bible teaches us to do, and that is to be a witness and take our message of Jesus to people who are enslaved to sin. Once their eyes are opened to the truth, it changes how they view things toward fellowman. We have to get men right with God and then we can get men and women right with each other.

### **The Clash between Culture and Christ**

I want you to see this...Paul freed a lady who was bound, but it caused him to lose his freedom and to now be bound. Why? Because he is more than a Roman citizen, he is a Christian. He doesn't represent Jews, or Rome; he represents Christ. Hear this. For him to set someone else free, it cost him his freedom because he made the owners of the slave mad, and the reason they were mad was because they lost their business. If you want to see people's true colors, just watch them go through a financial hit, watch business go from being prosperous to losing money to having no business, and whoa! How could anybody on the earth be upset that this girl is now free from a demon? If you are profiting off of her, you don't want her to be free. I don't know if the church will ever fully understand this, but there are people, even in our society, even in our communities, who prosper off of the sinfulness of society. They do not want people redeemed from certain behaviors because they are profiting off of those behaviors! We, in the church, aren't always trying to shut down those behaviors; we are trying to change people's nature so that they walk away from those things on their own because of the new nature Christ has put within them. But some people don't want us doing what we are doing as a church because they are prospering off of the sinful nature of humanity. Sometimes there is going to be a clash between the culture of world and the culture of Christ.

Our loyalty must first be to the colony of Heaven, not to the colony of Rome.

### **Paul and Silas Imprisoned**

So what happened to Paul, a Roman citizen? The owners of the slave girl drag him and Silas in front of the magistrates, who happen to be in the marketplace. They didn't have the privacy of a courthouse. Rome trials were public. They had the power to beat someone to within an inch of their life or to take their life. Now, a Roman citizen had the right to not be beaten, but those slave owners stirred up a riot and said these men are Rome who have customs that are different than we have as Romans. And those magistrates took Paul and Silas's clothes off them, called for the rod-bearers who brought a rod and an axe, and they beat and they beat these guys, and threw them in prison.

Now, I have been trying to emphasize that four guys are on this mission trip: Paul, Silas, Timothy, and Luke...but only two get put in prison. Only two get beaten. Why? In my opinion, it is because Luke is a Gentile and Timothy is half Gentile. Paul made it clear that Timothy's father is Greek. He just got circumcised because his mom was a Jew. But now, he is Philippi and he is not placed in prison because he doesn't look like a Jew. In my sanctified imagination, he is like Kory Wayne...he looks a lot like his daddy. Therefore, when he walked into that city he looked like a Greek. Luke looked like a Greek. Paul and Silas were Jews and they looked like Jews. This Roman city was prejudiced against Jewish people and they played on that prejudice to stoke a flame of fire. Can you imagine someone looking at the color of someone's skin, or the way they look, or their features, and then judge who they are based on that outward appearance? We can't imagine that in the church because we never do that. There is never a time when we are in a situation where we have a thought about somebody based on those things, but this is what is happening to Paul and Silas. They have lost their freedom (even though they are Roman citizens) because they are Jewish. They had set somebody free who was bound, but now they lose their freedom and they are bound, and they now find themselves in a jail in stocks! Everything I have researched over the last few months said putting them in stocks meant they put their legs in an

uncomfortable position and they cannot move them. They have freedom, from Rome, to not be put here unless there has been a trial and they have been found guilty of the charge. There has been no trial.

I have to make sure you are seeing this. There is a group of people using Roman law against somebody they believe is breaking the law, but in the riot, they actually break Roman law. Imagine a group of people getting so caught up in an act that they accuse somebody of doing something wrong, yet their own actions are violating the very laws they say they believe in! It causes two men to lose their freedom! I know that in America there is no way we could ever imagine any personal freedom we have from the American government being taken away from us, so let me ask you a question. Imagine you are Paul and Silas in prison. You have done the right thing in setting someone free, but now your freedom is taken away from you. Now you are in stocks in the inner part of the prison. Where do you think your mind might be? Would any of you be thinking about criticizing the government? Would you be criticizing the process? Would you be focused on yourselves, feeling sorry for yourself? But what does the Bible says Paul and Silas are doing at midnight? They are praying and singing hymns to God! Their focus isn't on themselves and the freedom they have lost. Their focus is on God! Why? Because they believe they are in the will of God. They believe they are doing what God wants them to do, where He wants them to do it!

We have just seen a whole group of people whose whole life is about themselves — because that is what Rome did — Rome made life about you, the individual. God doesn't believe that; God believes life is bigger than that. God believes life is about Him, and others. So, He put two people who are ambassadors of a heavenly colony in a situation and their eyes are not on themselves complaining about their circumstances. Their eyes are on God and they are praising Him, and Luke tells us the prisoners are listening! They have a captive audience here. There is something about the life of Paul and Silas that catches these prisoners attention and they are now listening. They are not telling their jokes anymore. They are listening to these guys praying and singing to God.

Then, the unthinkable happens. An earthquake comes. But it doesn't cause the walls of the jail to fall or the roof to collapse. It just causes all of the doors to open and the stocks fall off of the prisoners. Let's be honest here. If you have just been praying to God, singing hymns — 'Victory in Jesus,' 'How Great Thou Art' — and the prison doors open and our stocks are gone, if you are like me, you are making a beeline out the door! We would be interpreting this as God just answered our prayer and set us free, and we would be out of there. Not Paul and Silas. They are now free, but they choose to remain bound, not physically but inwardly. Why? I think Paul believed that he was free, he got bound, and now he is free, but his freedom isn't about himself. It is about this jailer.

Did you catch that? What if we really believed that as a colony from Heaven, from time to time God is going to make a clash between us and the culture around us (no matter how much we prize that culture), and we are going to ultimately believe that sometimes God has freed us not so that life would be about us, but so that life would be about others — and sometimes, for the good of somebody else we bear some unjust things that might come our way so that ultimately someone else can be free from what is really binding them — and that is a sinful condition where they are separated from God, and if they don't get free they will spend eternity separated from God.

The jailer gets ready to take his own life, and Paul says...*Hey wait, we are all here!* The jailer raises a lamp and sees that every prisoner is there. Somehow, I think Paul and Silas convinced the other prisoners to stay and the only thing that convinced them to stay was they were so enamored by the lives of Paul and Silas. They had listened to them praising instead of bellyaching, criticizing, and griping about the personal freedoms that they lost. The prisoners realized that Paul and Silas's lives were not about themselves, their lives were about God, and so they stayed and the jailer didn't have to take his life. Now, the jailer runs and falls down at the feet of Paul and Silas and asks that famous question: "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Paul says, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." Do you know what that Philippian jailer did then? He took them out of jail! He took them out of jail, took them home with

him, and he washed their stripes, wow! After he had washed them, he wanted to get washed with the waters of baptism because he knew that the blood of Jesus Christ had already washed his heart when he put his faith and trust in Jesus. There in that house, Paul and Silas preached the gospel to the household and the household gets saved, and they get baptized. Then, everybody rejoices that the Philippian jailer believed because when he believed he brought a new life to them. Now he is part of this new colony of Heaven, and because he got saved, the family got saved. If he hadn't got saved, the family wouldn't have known who Jesus was! See, God's plan for him wasn't just for him; God's plan for him involved his whole family. God's plan for you doesn't just involve you; it involves others.

### **Paul and Silas Freed**

I love what happens next. The jailer feeds Paul and Silas really well and he puts them right back in jail. The next morning, the magistrates decide they need to release them thinking they had learned their lesson. They send the police to tell the jailer and the jailer tells Paul and Silas they are free. Paul just sits there. He said nope...not moving. He said I am a Roman citizen, I got flogged, and that is against the law, so I am not moving until they acknowledge they were wrong and they come and apologize to me. The jailer tells that to the police, the police tell the magistrates, and the magistrates get afraid. So, they go and apologize to Paul and Silas that they didn't know who they were, but they asked Paul and Silas to leave the city. Can I just be honest with you? Paul has them right there in his hip pocket. All he has to do is send word to Rome and those guys will lose their jobs. Paul can stay in this city as long as he wants to because they are now 'asking' him to leave. Do you know what he does? He asks them if he can go visit Lydia and the brothers and then they will leave. He does what an unjust group of people asks him to do, a group who had just taken away his personal right, and he leaves the city.

### **The Church at Philippi**

Why does Luke tie this back to Lydia and, not the two missionaries in the house, the brothers in the house? Again, the book of Acts isn't about

converts; it is about churches. There is now a church in Philippi. Because there is a church in Philippi, Paul knows he doesn't need to hang around. He knew if he stayed, it would be about him, and everything he would do would be in violation of what Roman law wanted him to do. Paul knows if he does that it will bring reproach on the name of the church, so he leaves. He leaves because there is a church there. I hope you are getting this. It is not God's will for the world to have a missionary or evangelist or a pastor. It is God's will for every community in the world to have a church, a heavenly colony, so that when there are clashes in society between the way man operates, there is you, and there is me — as a businessman, as a Christian, an employee, an employer, facing the same situation my lost friends are facing — except I am not operating on the principles of a human government, I am operating on the principles of a divine government! Yes, I am proud to be part of a Roman colony because I believe it is the greatest type of government known to man at that time, but my loyalty is that God has me here as a Roman citizen, as a citizen of Heaven so that I can be an ambassador to a different way of life. That different way of life is a God kind of life.

May God give us the grace to be the church in Hardin that God wants us to be. May we have a desire not just to reach the unreached people groups of the world, but a desire to even reach the leading influential cities or centers of the world. You and I are part of the plan.