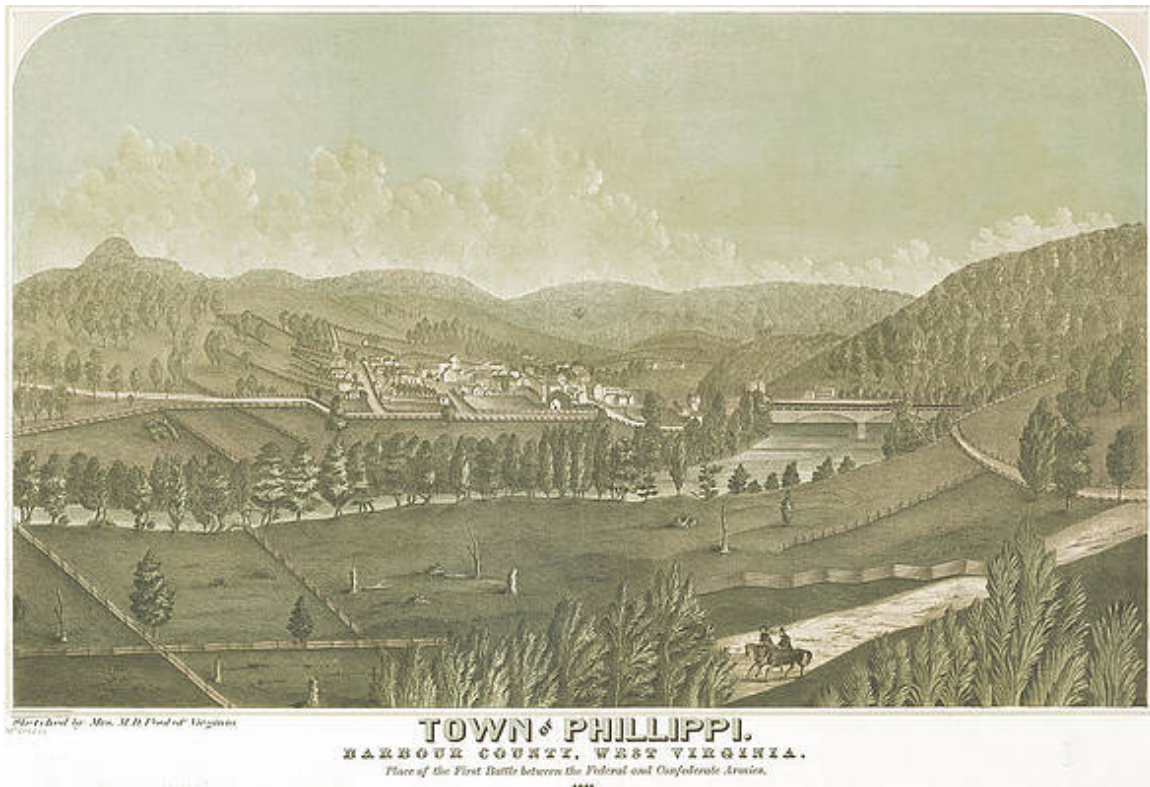


Study 2

FAITHFUL PREACHING



Background

Paul's initial time in Philippi was rather brief. Philippi was a *leading* city in Macedonia (Acts 16:12). In the short time he, Luke and Silas were there, they led a businesswoman to the Lord and baptised her (Acts 16:14-15) Paul cast out a demon from a fortune-telling slave-girl (Acts 16:16-18), disrupted business activity in the city (Acts 16:19-22), and was thrown into jail (Acts 16:23-24).

1. And if all of that wasn't dramatic enough, what other dramatic episode contributed to the planing of the Philippian church according to Acts 16:25-40?

Each of these converts had experienced a dramatic conversion as a result of the preaching of God's Word confirmed by the Holy Spirit. After the Philippian magistrates came to Paul and Silas and apologised to them for their mistreatment, they were obliged to leave the city. It appears that Luke may have remained in Philippi to set the church in order. "The use of the 'we' in the narrative of Acts is dropped until Acts 20:5-6 when Paul returns to Philippi" (Kent et al 1996, 4). There is an ancient tradition that Luke was actually a Philippian. Upon Paul's second visit to Philippi, the Philippians warmth of affection appears to have been made clear.

2. How does Philippians 4:15-16 reflect this appreciation by the Philippian church shown to Paul, its founder?

3. It appears that the Philippians were deeply concerned for Paul when he was imprisoned in Rome. How does Paul reassure them in Philippians 1:12, and what does this tell us about Paul's outlook in the midst of his trying circumstances?

4. According Philippians 1:13, who were among those to whom Paul preached to, and what would *this* have revealed about Paul? Consider.

5. Rather than view his imprisonment as a setback to the cause of the gospel, what tremendous benefit did Paul recognise as a result of his imprisonment according to Philippians 1:14?

The Importance of Preaching Christ

Amazingly, “The names Jesus Christ, Christ Jesus, Lord Jesus Christ, Lord Jesus, Jesus, Christ, Lord, and Saviour, occur 51 times in the 104 verses of the Epistle” (Kent et al 1996, 7).

6. What might this reveal about the aged apostle's relationship with God at this stage of his life? Discuss.

Even though Paul was imprisoned he was seeking every opportunity he could to preach the gospel so that everyone could come into a relationship with the true God. To Paul, the gospel was so powerful in transforming lives (as the Philippians themselves had experienced) he was glad when God used anybody to preach it.

7. But how did he feel when some people were preaching the gospel with selfish motives to simply receive accolades (and probably financial gain) from others? (Phil. 1:15-17)

It appears that some of these preachers might have been claiming that their freedom to preach was a sign of God's blessing on them and that Paul's imprisonment was a punishment from God. Rather than Paul being distracted by these possible taunts, which he alludes to in Philippians 1:17, he actually r _____ d (Phil. 1:18).

8. What does this tell us about the importance of preaching and why is this so? Discuss. (Consider Roman 10:14.)

9. How were Paul's positive reactions to his negative circumstances - where at times he even *rejoices* in the midst of them - a challenge to us? Discuss.

10. What cause for rejoicing do we currently have?

Application Discussion

- How does the Evil One discourage most believers from sharing the gospel?
- Why is it that some believers struggle to see the positive in life challenges?
- How do you do good things even when you don't feel like it, and why?