



November 20, 2017

God desires that we speak His Word so that we can reconcile people back to Him. He has given to us the ministry of reconciliation.

II Corinthians 5:18:

And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation.

I know and believe this truth; yet occasionally when I am running errands, grocery shopping, and otherwise around people who may need to hear God's Word from me, I find myself thinking, "I'm too busy to talk to anyone right now." I know that I want to be operating my ministry of reconciliation; but at times, I can be tempted to think that I have more important things to do right at that moment.

There is a record in the Book of Acts that helps me overcome these thoughts. In Acts 16 Paul and Silas faced important matters concerning their well-being, but they didn't allow these matters to interfere with keeping it a priority to operate the ministry of reconciliation. And in the process, they won a whole household to Christ.

Paul and Silas were moving God's Word in Philippi, when they were faced with pressure to stop. They had found individuals who humbly received God's Word, yet the adversary moved in to thwart the movement of the Word. A woman possessed with a devil spirit began following them and harassing them. This woman was being used by her masters to make money for them by divination (speaking false predictions of future events) by way of the devil spirit.

Acts 16:16,17:

And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying:

The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.

After many days of this, Paul (by revelation from God) cast the spirit out of her, bringing her deliverance (Acts 16:18). However, her masters were not happy with this since “the hope of their gains was gone” (Acts 16:19); therefore they brought Paul and Silas before the magistrates of Philippi and falsely accused them of troubling the city. The magistrates then had Paul and Silas beaten and thrown into prison.

Acts 16:23,24:

And when they [the magistrates] had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely: Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.

This certainly wasn't the ideal situation for Paul and Silas. You would think it would put a halt to the momentum they'd gained thus far. However, Paul and Silas stayed their minds on God by praying and singing praises unto Him, and a solution followed.

Acts 16:25,26:

And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.

And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed.

God literally gave them an open door to deliverance—the jail doors were opened and all their bands were loosed; there was no doubt that God was at work.

In this situation it could seem as if the one “most important” task to attend to was that of getting out of the prison. Paul and Silas could have walked out of those prison doors, but they instead chose to walk through God's open door to continue

operating their ministry of reconciliation. They did not waver from their commitment to do what was most important to them—delivering men and women with the truth of God’s Word.

Acts 16:27-34:

And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled.

But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here.

Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas,

And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?

And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.

And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.

And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.

That night, the jailer took Paul and Silas to his own home, where his entire household received the Word and were born again. Paul and Silas delivered this man and his whole house. Furthermore, since the jailer would have been killed for letting the prisoners escape, Paul and Silas returned to the prison. The result was not only that they were freed the next day, but they had operated their ministry of reconciliation and delivered an entire household with the powerful truths of God’s Word.

We may not face the pressure of being beaten or jailed for speaking God’s Word, but we still face pressures or distractions in life that could tempt us to not keep operating our ministry of reconciliation as a top priority. When this happens, we can focus on what is most important, knowing that God is faithful to meet our every need as we walk through open doors and speak His Word with boldness. As we do His will first, our needs will still be met, as God’s Word states in Matthew 6:33: “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”

We are never too busy or occupied with a task so important that we can ignore the calling of all Christians to speak God's Word, to operate our ministry of reconciliation. We may face pressures, but as we follow the example of Paul and Silas, we will see benefits and blessings for ourselves and for those to whom we speak.

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