

Date: April 15, 2019

Text: Acts 16:13-40

Title: The Gospel Brings Freedom!

Big Idea: The Gospel confronts and frees people from demonic and worldly systems of oppression and bondage.

CHIASTIC STRUCTURE OF THE PASSAGE

“Chiasmus is a rhetorical device in which two or more clauses are balanced against each other by the reversal of their structure in order to produce an artistic effect.”¹ Chiasmus is used throughout the Bible to give emphasis. Here is the chiasmic structure of this passage:

A. Lydia and her Household Believe (vv. 13-15)—named woman, marginalized, outsider. Believes, is baptized, extends hospitality.

B. Slave Girl Freed from Demonic Bondage (vv. 16-18)—unnamed girl, slave, oppressed. Experiences gospel freedom from demonic *and* physical oppression. This challenges the existing power structure.

C. Power Structure Reacts Violently (vv. 19-24) with persecution, violence, and bondage. Because the extension of freedom in **B** is spiritual and in **B'** is physical, the point is implied that the two are connected: behind the oppressive power structures of the world (based on power and money), is a spiritual force: Satan himself.

B'. Paul & Silas Freed from Physical Bondage (vv. 25-28)—named men, Jewish, Roman citizens. Persecuted. They experience gospel freedom from an oppressive and violent power structure. This challenges the expression of power by the Philippians.

A'. Jailer and his Household Believe (vv. 29-34)—unnamed man, at the center, insider. Believes, is baptized, extends hospitality.

Conclusion: vv. 35-40. Paul & Silas, Roman citizens, use their “insider status” to explicitly challenge the existing power structures (the Philippians magistrates and their miscarriage of justice) that have brought oppression and marginalization on outsiders, the weak, and the vulnerable.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Application

- What does it look like to experience spiritual and/or physical Gospel freedom?
- Explore ways in which you are prone to buy into or proliferate the oppressive systems of the world: love of money and material wealth. A desire for power and prestige. Prejudice against those who are not like you. Etc.
- How can our church be an active gospel presence in the world by bringing freedom to those who are in bondage and oppressed (spiritually, physically, mentally, etc.)?

¹ <https://literarydevices.net/chiasmus/>. Check out this link of do a Google search to learn more.