

The Holy Spirit and Philippians

Next week we will look at (both) the broad and immediate context of Philippians as well as get an overview of the content

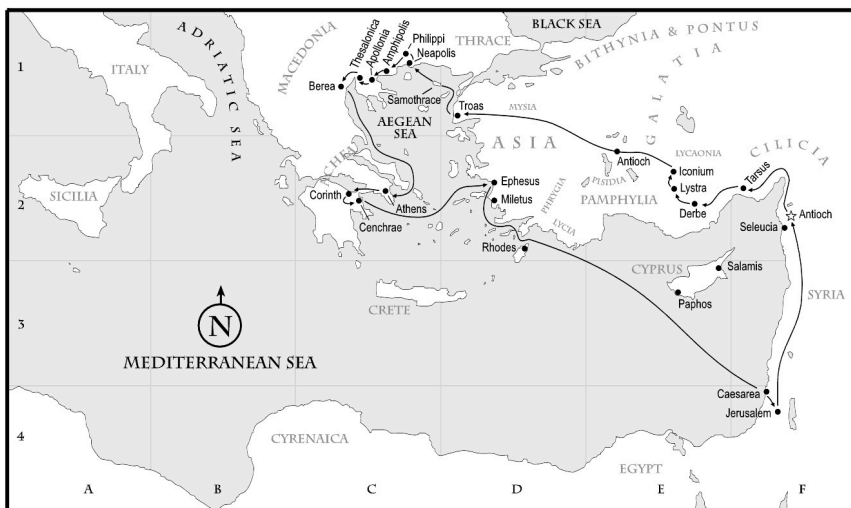
- The Big Picture of Philippians
- The Critical Concept in Philippians

But before we get to those things **in** Philippians, let's journey along the road **to** Philippi

Philippians is a NT book that was originally **a letter** written by the Apostle Paul to the church in a city called Philippi

- Modern Greece (Southeastern Europe)
- Nestled between Italy and Turkey

- **MAP**



We are going to look at **Acts 16** and I want us to see here **the leading and power of the Spirit and the Gospel** working in and through both men and women to birth a new church

Well before Paul wrote the letter, there were some critical areas of **needed receptivity** to the Holy Spirit

- There was a church in Philippi to write to because Paul obeyed **the leading** of the Holy Spirit—even though it was contrary to his wants and plans
 - The **story of the Philippian church** is the story of the **working of the Holy Spirit**
 - That is our story too (as a church)—but each of us as Christians
 - How is that continuing for you? Are you aware of it?
 - Lets look at the road to Philippi

A c t s 1 6

About 10 years before Paul wrote to the Philippians

Paul's Second Missionary Journey (c. 50 A.D.)

- Visiting already established churches (15:36)

Acts 16:4 - 8

- Paul wanted to take the Gospel to western Asia (Ephesus) (v. 6)
 - MAP (The west coast province of Asia Minor—Ephesus)
 - But he was forbidden by the Holy Spirit
- So then he figures at Mysia, “we’ll head northeast to Bithynia/Turkey” (v. 7)
 - But the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them (v. 7)
 - That is not explained—but it is extremely important

Their plans have been halted by the Holy Spirit and now they are left wondering what to do

- “No” is important

Acts 16:9 - 12

- A vision (Man from Macedonia)
- The go to Philippi, a leading city there
- God had a different plan than Paul and Timothy and redirected them supernaturally
- A turning point in history
 - The first time the Gospel goes to Europe

Philippi is a strategic church plant from the Lord

- Depended on God's people hearing and obeying the Spirit
- How do we do this?
 - I'm not really sure
 - Not 3 steps/unpredictable
 - But should be expected and pursued
 - God is communicative
 - I do know that when it happens—you know (Cf. Paul knew)

• Me and Kate in Idaho

- Our church planters
 - Chaddick (SF—LA)
 - Lomas (Santa Clarita—SF)
 - Josh (Vision—Streets of Stockton)
 - Vision of Linden Ave
 - Why I share these examples
 - Not 2000 years ago and 2 continents away
 - Our story
 - God is present
- Hearing from the Lord
 - Can be messy
 - Can end up being presumption not providence
 - But what is at stake?

Now we are going to see the Holy Spirit birthing a church through prayer and the Gospel and 3 very different people

Acts 16:13-15

- Place of prayer
- A prayer meeting
- Women praying (Jewish)
 - This is ultimately how this church would begin
 - The Holy Spirit moving (Cf. Cornelius in Acts 10)
 - **Cf. The ladies praying in Carp (came to me)**
- Lydia (God-fearer = A gentile that was into the Jewish God)
 - Lydia was a region of western Asia Minor, south of Mysia (Cf. v 7)
- Asiatic/Asian
- Upper Class
 - Purple was a luxury good associated with wealth throughout Mediterranean culture for over a thousand years
- The Lord opened her heart to respond (The Spirit working)

Acts 16:16-18

- A demonized girl (a child in the Greek)
 - Discerning of Spirits
 - Spirit of Divination is the functional name
 - πνεῦμα πυθωνα (Python Spirit)
 - In the Greek city of Delphi there was the center for Apollo worship
 - The oracle of Delphi was where there was a priestess known as Pythia
 - Because she was empowered by the Python Spirit
 - On the 7th day of the month she would take a ceremonial bath, sacrifice a goat to Apollo, enter an underground chamber beneath the temple of Apollo, sit on a bronze altar and tell the future (\$)
 - = Same type of demon the girl had = heavy duty
 - Demon empowered psychic
- A slave girl
- A Greek
- Lower Class
 - In the eyes of the law she was not a person but a tool
- The Lord rescued this girl (the implication)

Acts 16:19-34

- The Holy Spirit led them into some very real suffering
 - But look at the outcome
- A government employee
- A Roman
- Middle class
- The Lord saved His whole family!

Look at the fruit of the Gospel being directed by the Holy Spirit

- A wealthy business woman, a demonized fortune teller slave-girl, a jailer
- These people were the Philippian church! (That is who would have been a the first service)
 - The work of the Spirit!
 - Working on both ends
- The work of the Spirit in our lives will sometimes cause our lives to look... like we don't want them to look! (None of Acts 16 was Paul's plan)
- Look how Paul dealt with difficulty (v. 25)
 - Because he just knew this is where God had him
 - This **joy in the midst of pain** becomes a major theme when Paul writes to them 10 years later from another prison
 - They would know suffering too and receive **the Epistle of Joy**

The DNA of the church

- "Converts often take on the atmosphere in which they were born." ~Leonard Ravenhill in *Revival Praying*, p. 51
- The reality of **redirection**, **opposition** and **suffering** and yet **joy** in the midst of it
- **Life is like this...**

But the Spirit of God was at work

- I believe that God cares as much about your life
 - Just as connected (God is real, alive and active!)
 - He wants you to experience Him through His spirit
- Gonna look different
 - But there will be **redirection**, **opposition** and **suffering**
- He wants to draw you into His story
 - There was a point where Paul's unfolding story was hijacked by God's story
 - Whose story are you living?