

Gospel Freedom

Scripture Reading — Acts 16:16-24

“In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!” — Acts 16:18

She was a slave, bound to men who used her to make a lot of money. They found she “had a spirit by which she predicted the future,” so they used her for “fortune-telling.”

Whatever that spirit was, it knew that Paul and his friends were “servants of the Most High God,” and it moved her to pester the new missionaries in town. This slave girl connected with the gospel of Jesus by way of surprise. Paul grew so annoyed by her carrying on that he told the spirit to leave her “in the name of Jesus Christ.” And immediately she was free—not just from her demonic master but from her human ones too. She experienced Christ’s power as a gift.

Paul walked and talked the gospel, and that can bring radical change. Set free, the girl no longer fit into an exploitative system. The gospel changed her life and upset the social balance, and that stirred up trouble for Paul and Silas.

Some people try to stuff the church into limiting categories and definitions. But the dynamic church, true to the gospel, cannot be contained. The gospel brings personal and social change. Jesus brings salvation that triumphs through losing, prospers through giving, and leads through serving. When Jesus’ power comes into our life, we do not look at people or social status in the same way. We begin to see everyone and everything with Jesus’ eyes of love and justice.

Prayer

Jesus, you came to set captives free and care for the poor. Help us to do the same, in your name. Amen.

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