

A Convicting Spirit

(Series: Reimagining Church; Message Twenty-Seven)
Acts 16:16-40

- A. Like Murphy, we have a list of rules that experientially resonate
- B. The wind always seems to be in our face (i.e., there is resistance to progress)

THE SPIRIT

A. In Acts, the Holy Spirit is the main character

- 1. The Holy Spirit came primarily to build Christ's Church
- 2. The Spirit's focus is forming us into the image of Jesus

"When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin because people do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness because I am going to the Father where you can see me no longer, and in regard to judgment because the prince of this world stands condemned" (16:8-11)

B. The Spirit is either convicting us or we're resisting him

- 1. Few would acknowledge they are resisting the work of the Spirit
- 2. It is one thing to acknowledge the Holy Spirit convicts people; it is quite another to open ourselves up to be convicted

C. The convicting work of the Holy Spirit begins with us

- 1. There are two kinds of sorrow - godly sorrow and worldly sorrow
 - a. Godly sorrow leads to action; worldly sorrow paralyzes people (Acts 2:37)
 - b. Godly sorrow leads closer to God; worldly sorrow brings shame (Acts 2:38)
 - c. Godly sorrow connects us to community; worldly sorrow promotes isolation - (Acts 2:41)
 - d. Godly sorrow brings joy; worldly sorrow brings more guilt (Acts 2:46-47)

"Search me, O God and know my heart, test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me and led me in the way everlasting" (Psalm 139:23-24)

2. How do we submit to the convicting ministry of the Spirit?

- a. Ask God to make us sensitive to the Spirit's leading
- b. Engage the Word of God (Gospel)
- c. Listen for the words of God in others
- d. Set aside time to examine your heart and life (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:28)

THE STORY

- A. The Gospel cannot tolerate the testimony of anyone resisting the Spirit
- B. Paul and Silas are charged before the magistrates with being Jews and being politically incorrect
- C. *"They were severely flogged [and] thrown into prison..."* (16:22-23)
 - 1. Rule: No good deed goes unpunished
 - 2. Response: they pray and sing hymns
- D. 16:25 - *"The other prisoners were listening to them"*
 - 1. Rule: The world is always watching
 - 2. Response: they always exemplify Christ-like behavior
- E. The jailer asks, *"Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"* (16:30)
 - 1. Answer: *"Believe in the Lord Jesus and you shall be saved!"* (16:31)
 - 2. As our witness goes, so goes the church

THE STATUTES

A. Every spiritual breakthrough brings a corresponding resistance

"I will show him how much he must suffer for my name." (Acts 9:16)

- 1. Paul and company accepted the beating for the sake of the mission
 - "Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted"* (2 Tim. 3:12)
- 2. When we focus on His mission, there will always be opposition

B. Moving from singular to plural is essential to being church

- 1. Luke has been narrating in the third person (cf. Acts 16:7 - *"They came..."*)
 - a. Then in 16:10, Luke begins using "we" (*"We got ready..."*)
 - b. Luke becomes part of the fellowship; he embraces the mission
- 2. When you talk about your church do you use "they" or "we"?
 - a. Are you a bystander or an eyewitness; are you observing or do you belong?
 - b. Is being a follower of Jesus an association you have or your identity?

C. Even if the odds do not appear in our favor, Jesus is still our Savior

- 1. Do you want to be like Jesus?
- 2. It begins with our willingness to listen to the Spirit and make an "X"

D. If there is one rule you should remember, it is "God Rules!"