



The Indian and the Horse - good news/ or bad news?

Paul's second missionary journey

Acts 16

“⁶ And they passed through the Phrygian and Galatian region, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia; ⁷ and when they had come to Mysia, they were trying to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them; ⁸ and passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. ⁹ And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a certain man of Macedonia was standing and appealing to him, and saying, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” ¹⁰ And when he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go into Macedonia, concluding (to come together) that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.”



- Called to preach the Gospel
 - Apostles plan to visit the churches
 - Forbidden by the Spirit to go to Asia
 - Forbidden by the Spirit to go to Bithynia
 - Interpret vision as a call to Macedonia.
 - Lydia was converted.
 - The ministry is hindered by a slave girl.
 - The girl is healed by Paul.
 - Paul is beaten and thrown in prison.
 - Paul is freed and the guard is converted.

Four guidelines in responding to the hand of God, Satan, or man.

1. *We may not be able to know the ultimate good or bad by looking only at the present.*



<i>Job</i>	<i>Joseph</i>	<i>Jesus</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>We may never understand why.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>We often cannot see the end.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>He didn't fit the image of Messiah.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>We have to trust God in the dark.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>We have to be faithful in the process.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Without the Cross there is no Resurrection.</i>

1. *We may not be able to know the ultimate good or bad by looking only at the present.*

2. *Faith is expressed in both changing (healing) and enduring (Matt.4:1-11) circumstances.*



- God may want
to change
my circumstances*

- *through prayer*
 - *through behavior*
 - *learn from*
 - *witness through*

1 Corinthians 10:13

"No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, **so you will be able to endure it.**"



What is the goal in facing hardship (being overtaken)?

- escape idolatry or shipwreck of faith**
- escape from the bad circumstances**

2 Corinthians 12

"⁷ And because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me - to keep me from exalting myself! ⁸ Concerning this I entreated the Lord three times that it might depart from me. ⁹ And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me. ¹⁰ Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong."

1. We may not be able to know the ultimate good or bad by looking only at the present.
2. Faith is expressed in both removing and enduring circumstances.

3. **The Spirit anoints the believer not the circumstances.**



**God's hand may not be seen in every circumstance
BUT**

God's Spirit will always guide our response to circumstances.

1. We may not be able to know the ultimate good or bad by looking only at the present.
2. Faith is expressed in both removing and enduring circumstances.
3. The Spirit anoints the believer not the circumstances.
4. **Our first call is to take our baptism seriously knowing that God has done so.**



Show the nature of our hope in Christ

- not in this life
- not in our will

Show the nature of our union with Christ

- his cross
- his example

Matthew 5:45

"for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous."

Luke 15:14

"Now when he had spent everything, a severe famine occurred in that country, and he began to be in need."

Philippians 4

"¹¹ Not that I speak from want; for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. ¹² I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. ¹³ I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. ¹⁴ Nevertheless, you have done well to share with me in my affliction."

1 Timothy 6

"⁵ . . . men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. ⁶ But godliness actually is a means of great gain, when accompanied by contentment. ⁷ For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. ⁸ And if we have food and covering, with these we shall be content."

Illustration: I get a bad Doctor's report

1. Am I thankful in all things?

- a. A fallen world afflicts all alike but Christians have a better hope.
- b. Not all natural illnesses are of Satan or acts of God's discipline but Christians know that God can work all things together for good.

2. What would I really like and why?

- a. Am I seeking His Kingdom or mine?
- b. Am I open to hear God's Word and Spirit?
- c. Am I responding with fear, anger, or faith?
- d. Do I see 1) opportunities, 2) options, or 3) obstacles?



HOW TO IDENTIFY THE HAND OF SATAN.

1. Be knowledgeable of Satan's ways - **he attacks faith, hope, & love** - Gen.3, Matt.11.
2. Don't limit Satanic activity to the dramatic - **2 Cor. 11:14** or spiritual warfare to exorcism - **Eph.6.**
3. Expect that some "strongholds" (satanic ritual abuse, addictions, etc.) might have **Satanic roots.**
4. Put on the armor of God - **Eph.6.**
(truth, righteousness, peace, faith, Word of God, Prayer)

Questionable assumptions

1. Because God is sovereign - **let fate take its course.**
But God's sovereign plan calls us to respond with faith and action.
2. Because God has promises - **stand on them in faith.**
But God's promises are for our holiness more than our happiness and for His glory more than our plans.
3. Because God is powerful - **claim the victory by the prayer of faith.**
But God's power is seen in our endurance as much as our escape and in our character as much as our comfort.
4. Because God has a plan - **every event has a purpose.**
But God's plan is more about our response than the circumstances.