

GROWTH + GROUPS

NAVIGATE LIFE TOGETHER

Maranatha Chapel Sermon Based Study Guide
SB 6.6.21

DIVINE REVELATION – ACTS 16:35-17:17

Receiving the Message and Relating to the Study

What insights, principles, or observations stood out to you from this week's message? Discuss with your group.

On June 6, 1944, American, British, and Canadian forces landed on five beaches along a 50-mile stretch of the heavily fortified coast of France's Normandy region. This was one of the largest amphibious invasions in military history. The invasion, sometimes referred to as "D-Day", combined the forces of 156,115 American, British, and Canadian troops, 6,939 ships and landing vessels, and 2,395 aircraft and 867 gliders that delivered airborne troops. Thanks to the massive influx of courageous troops, D-Day marked a decisive turning point in the war. Less than a year later, on May 7, 1945, Germany signed an unconditional surrender. Some 2,000 years earlier, another battle for Europe took place. It was a battle to spread the gospel of Jesus into all of Europe. The enemy tried to resist, but Jesus crossed the enemy lines and prevailed through people like Paul and Silas. Today, the divine revelation of Jesus is still going out because of the costly victories that were won in Europe so long ago. Let's get into our study...

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

1. What struck you most or spoke to you from Pastor Ray's message this last weekend?
2. What battles do we face in spreading the gospel of Jesus today? How can victory be obtained?

IN PREPARATION FOR TODAY'S STUDY HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 16:35-40

Paul and Silas were brought before the Philippian magistrates who tore off their clothes and beat them with rods. And when they had many stripes laid upon them, they threw them into prison. There, the jailor put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in stocks (ACTS 16:22-24). Stocks were an additional form of punishment, a square log split in two with holes drilled for the prisoner's ankles. After days, the prisoner would not be able to move their legs and would not be able to sleep. This was beyond restraint, it was torture. When the magistrates learned Paul was a Roman citizen and became very apologetic. They urged Paul and Silas to depart without further disturbance. However, Paul said, "They beat us publicly without a trial, even though we are Roman citizens, and threw us into prison. And now do they want to get rid of us quietly? No! Let them come themselves and escort us out." The magistrates then came to appease and escorted them out (16:37).

1. Paul was a Roman Citizen. Many of us are United States citizens. What are some rights we are privileged with as United States citizens?
2. The first amendment of the Bill of Rights reads, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech..." Have you experienced or witnessed a violation of these rights? Discuss.
3. We are also citizens of the Kingdom of God (PHIL 3:20). Our focus should be on things of heaven, not earthly things. What are the things of this earth? (ROM 12:2). What are things of heaven? (COL 3:23)
4. The enemies of the cross have a different goal, god, and a different glory than Christians. Their basis for making decisions is different than that of a Christian. Similar to the magistrates, they may "want to get rid of us quietly". But Paul said "No!". Provide some examples today where "Kingdom Citizens" need to say "No"!

Visitation/Restoration in 2021

Digging Deeper in God's Word: Life Lessons

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 17:1-9

In the opening verses of chapter 17 we read of Paul's ministry in the Macedonian city of Thessalonica. Thessalonica was a major port and an important commercial center strategically located on trade routes. It is the modern-day city of Saloniki in Greece. The Holy Spirit used this place to radiate the Gospel in many directions. In Philippi, there was no Jewish synagogue; however, in Thessalonica there was a synagogue. As typical, Paul made his first stop at the synagogue (ROM 1:16). Paul did not necessarily preach in the synagogue, he reasoned with, explained, and proved Jesus was the prophesized Messiah as described in their Old Testament scriptures.

1. The Greek word for reason is "dialegomai" meaning dialogue. Paul's style was to have a dialogue (question/answer, give/take, back/forth) regarding the scriptures. Describe how this might be similar to our growth group environment. What are the benefits to this type of style? (PROV 27:17)
2. Reason should be balanced with wisdom and discernment. As you share and study the good news of Jesus, how might you reason with wisdom and discernment? (PROV 3:5-6)
3. Paul provided divine revelation that the Messiah had come, suffered, and rose from the dead. However, the Jewish people were expecting the Messiah would provide political liberation (Acts 1:6-7). Why was it important for the Jewish people to understand the Messiah came first as the Lamb of God? (John 3:16-17)
4. Read Isaiah 1:18-19. Scarlet suggests hands full of blood (1:15), while the image of snow pictures removal of sin through forgiveness (PS 51:7). God offered to cleanse their sins and make them white as snow, but the key is in verse 19, "If you are willing". They could choose to obey and be blessed or rebel and be devoured. This is the same choice we have today. (1 John 1:9) How is this reasonable?
5. The gospel is reasonable. Rejection of the gospel is unreasonable. The only reason some might reject the gospel is Satan who has deceived them and is holding them captive so they cannot reason. What are some ways we can reach those who are deceived and held in bondage? (EPH 1:17-20)

Applying God's Word

What did you learn from this study and how does this personally speak to you? Discuss with your group.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 17:10-17

The Bereans learned how to receive divine revelation and received the word with all readiness, willing to hear out Paul rather than condemning him immediately for his doctrine. They then searched the scriptures to find out for themselves if what the apostle taught was really true—an approach every Christian should take.

1. How might you take the approach of the Bereans when reasoning with others?
2. The apostle and his companion were engaged in the business of turning the world upside down, but the reason for this was that through sin, the world had been turned wrong side up. So, when the gospel was preached and men believed it, things were completely reversed. How might you turn the world right-side up for Christ?
3. Paul did not wait for the people to come to him, He waded in the marketplace of ideas in Athens armed with God's truth. What are some ways you might go to the "marketplace" this week to convey the gospel of Jesus?

PRAYER

Lord, how precious are Your ways. Thank You for being with us wherever we go. Thank You for Your forgiveness and that we have been made white as snow through You. Lord, Your word says that we should call to You and You will show us great and mighty things which we do not know. We are calling out to You now and asking You to show us great and mighty things. Thank You for Your boundless love and grace, and Your mercy that endures forever. In Jesus name, Amen.

"Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know." (JER 33:3).