Perseverance Spirit's Power

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Preacher: Sean Jenkin

[0:00] Worthy of it all.

That's our Jesus. He is worthy of it all. He's so fantastic, so wonderful. That's why we worship, we praise him, that's why we meet together.
Seeking his presence, delighting in him, the God who is worthy of it all, our Jesus. So wonderful, so wonderful.
Thank you, band. So, if you don't know me, my name is Sean, and I am part of the leadership team here at Harvest Church. And it's fantastic to see you all here.
And as Blaise said, if you are here for the first time, you are especially welcome. If you've been around for any length of time, you'll note that we've been working our way through the Book of Acts.
[1:10] And over the last couple of weeks, two weeks ago, Tim was sharing about Paul and Barnabas having a disagreement with some of the Jews about what was and wasn't expected of the Gentile believers.

They'd headed back to Jerusalem, and there'd been a council and decisions made saying that actually, no, the Gentiles, that is the non-Jews, didn't have to follow the laws and regulations of the Jews, but instead reminding people that actually salvation is free.
It's by grace. It's God's mercy lavished upon his people and nothing we can do, no laws, no regulations can buy that or change that.
It's a free gift from God. So then, having been to Jerusalem, Paul and Barnabas came back to Antioch. And last week, Andrew shared a little bit about the conflict of how Paul and Barnabas had a disagreement about taking someone with them as they went back to the churches to build them up and to share what the Jerusalem Council had said.
And so there was a disagreement, and Barnabas had gone off to Cyprus, and Paul had teamed up with Silas, and they were heading off on what we now know as Paul's second missionary journey.
[2:46] So the idea was that they would start by heading back to the churches that they'd already established, building them up, as I said, and sharing this good news, really, that they didn't have to follow the laws and regulations of the Jews.

So have we got something to come up, Sandy? There we go, yes. So as we're going to look through chapter 16, the whole thing, we're not going to read quite all of it because it is very long, but we're going to read most of it.
But you can see that I've put a title in here, Works of the Holy Spirit. I want to pick out, through Paul and Silas' journey, all the things that the Holy Spirit is doing to further build the church, if you like, to get alongside Paul and Silas.
But actually, this is the works of the Holy Spirit, not the works of Paul and Silas. So that's what we're going to be looking a little bit more at this morning. I don't know how much of that you can see, but this is actually a picture of this second missionary journey I was talking about.
So this is the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea, with the Aegean Sea just above. In the bottom right corner, right down the bottom, Judea, Jerusalem, heading north of that into Syria.
[4:20] And you see the first stop, as it were, Antioch, where this conflict occurred. Then they head off through into Cilicia and Galatia, head through Asia Minor, Mycenae, ending at Troas on the Aegean Sea.

Now, all these names are going to come out in this passage, so I'm just pre-empting this. They then head across to Macedonia, and our chapter finishes in Philippi.
So to give you a little idea, where it says Asia, or Asia Minor it can be called, that's modern-day Turkey. And where it says Macedonia and Achaia, down in the top left, that is modern-day Greece.

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So it gives you a little bit of an idea of where they were traveling at this time. So, we start off, this is a route through Syria, Cilicia, Galatia, Asia Minor, all the way through to Philippi.
And we're going to start by not reading a few verses of Scripture. So we're actually going to just have a quick overview of this little bit.
[5:31] The first two, or the last two verses from Acts 15, and then the first five from Acts 16. So this is what I was saying.

Really, this is covering the first part of their journey, where they're going to the established churches, sharing what the council has said, and strengthening the church.
And during this time, at a place called Lystra, I think in Cilicia, or Galatia, sorry, they meet a young man called Timothy.
And he is added to the team. So we start off with Paul and Silas, and now we have Timothy added. There's a little bit here about circumcision, but we're not going to go into that. But today, so we've got here Timothy being added to the team.
[6:33] So I'm going to kick off with the first work of the Holy Spirit here. And that is the Holy Spirit providing co-workers. So this is a journey they're about to embark on.

They're building churches. They're going to be establishing churches. And the Holy Spirit is bringing in another co-worker. And as we continue through the book of Acts, and also you go and read the book of Timothy, you'll see that actually this young man develops into a strong Christian who's part of the leadership of the early church.
So he's going to have a key role later on, but he's been added in at this time to grow and mature.
So, as I mentioned, works of the Holy Spirit.
The Holy Spirit brings alongside those who can help and encourage, be part of a ministry, bringing different gifts to be able to accomplish important tasks.
The Holy Spirit brings together those who he needs or wants to achieve his goals.
[7:51] Okay, so moving on then. We actually start to read. This is Acts 16, verses 6 to 12. So, verse 6.

So you might think, well, why weren't they allowed to preach or speak the word of God?
So, imagine a region at a time when the gospel is very young. There are no churches.
In fact, there's basically no Christians at all in this region. So, as Paul, Silas, and Timothy come through a region, if they were to start to preach the word of God, realistically, they're looking to establish churches, not just see one or two people saved.
But at this time, it would appear the Holy Spirit's timing was, we're not planting churches in these regions. So, hence why they aren't sharing the gospel at this time.
[9:11] So, you can see that they're heading through. And it's quite funny, in a sense. Paul was a man who liked to share the gospel, and the Holy Spirit's saying, no.

So, you can imagine this guy walking through. Should I share here? No. Here? No. What about if I go over there? No. So, he's walking and traveling through this region, but not actually sharing the gospel, because the Holy Spirit is saying, no.
Okay, so we pick it up again at verse 8. So, they passed by Mycenae and went down to Troas. So, Troas is a significant Roman colony and seaport.
It is on the edge of the Aegean, so they've gone up around the Mediterranean, cut through, if you like, modern Turkey, and ended up on the west coast of Turkey on the Aegean Sea, which, at that time, as I said, it was a significant Roman colony, and it was the gateway, if you like, to Europe.
So, this is where a lot of ships would have been traveling to Europe from. Now, bear in mind, the gospel hasn't gone to Europe yet. It's been in Asia, down to Syria, and obviously in Judea.
[10:33] And just a throwaway comment here. Troas is, you can actually go and look on Google Maps, and you'll see an ancient port that's very destroyed, but it's also very close to the ancient city of Troy.

Okay, so, they've come to Troas, and then it says this, during the night, this is verse 9, and during the night, Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia, standing and begging him, come over to Macedonia, and help us.
After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia. Now, there's another point just to pick up here. So, in verse 7, it says, when they came to the border of Mycenae, and then in verse 10, it says, after Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once.

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So, we've changed from they to we. And the expectation here is that actually Dr. Luke, the man who wrote the book of Acts, and the gospel of Luke, actually joins the team here.
So, we have a further co-worker added in. So, carrying on, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.
[12:01] So, this is into Europe. Okay? So, from Troas, we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace. And the next day, we went on to Neapolis.

And from there, we travelled to Philippi, a Roman colony, and the leading city of that district of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days. So, Philippi, then, again, is another thriving Roman colony.
And it's been estimated that it had about 10,000 inhabitants. So, slightly less than half of Alton, but still a thriving Roman colony.
And it had a very high Roman status and consisted of many retired soldiers and very few Jews.
Okay. So, moving on, then, in our works of the Holy Spirit. We're going to look at two here.
[13:08] The Holy Spirit brings direction. So, just as we've read through this, we've seen the Holy Spirit saying, no to preaching the gospel as they've travelled, no to going into certain regions.

And then, finally, when they arrive at Troas, the Holy Spirit bringing a vision that leads them into taking the gospel into Europe for the very first time.
And I think this is such an important ministry of the Holy Spirit that actually He leads and guides those that are His. And it's a case of listening and being aware.
This is certainly what Paul and his companions were doing. They were listening to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, taking note, being led, and finally ending up bringing the gospel into Europe.
And again, just that second one there, providing another co-worker. So, this is Luke being added into the team who then has first-hand experience in writing for writing some of the book of Acts.
[14:14] And it's interesting, how did Luke turn up in the team? We have to assume that this was a Holy Spirit meeting.

It wasn't like they were on their mobile phones going, hey Luke, can you come over to Troas? We're just about to go into Europe. He is there because the Holy Spirit has led him there and added in to this team that is about to go and evangelize parts of Europe.
Okay. We move on then into verses 13 to 15. It says this, On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river where we expected to find a place of prayer.
Now normally we've probably got used to the fact that the way Paul worked was that on the Sabbath Paul would go to the local synagogue and preach. But it would appear that there is no synagogue here but instead they've gone down to the river expecting there to be a prayer meeting going on as it were.
Now the conclusion from this would be likely that there were very few Jews definitely very few Jewish men in this city.
[15:37] Okay. So where we expected to find a place of prayer we sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia a dealer in purple cloth.

She was a worshipper of God. Now this is quite funny really. You are Thyatira was back in Asia Minor So the Holy Spirit as they'd gone through Asia Minor the Holy Spirit is saying no preaching here and then they get into Europe and the first person that they preach to is someone from Asia Minor.
So Lydia is actually from Asia Minor she's not from Europe. It says this carrying on the Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message.
When she and the members of her household were baptized she invited us to her home. If you consider me a believer in the Lord she said come and stay at my house and she persuaded us.
So they preached the gospel a whole household is saved and there's somewhere for the early church this fledgling church to meet at Lydia's house.
[17:07] Okay so we move on then. Possibly the most important work of the Holy Spirit. It says in verse 14 the Lord opened her heart.

Yes she believed in God but she'd never heard about Jesus. The Holy Spirit came and revealed the truth into her heart which she readily accepted.
Not just her her whole household was saved and added in. See it makes it clear here that this wasn't about Paul.

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Paul didn't come up with this great incredible sermon that just everyone went wow yeah Paul we've got to follow you. It wasn't about any miracles that were carried out at the river.
Simply the Holy Spirit came and revealed the truth of Jesus into the heart of this woman and her whole household and in that the first church in Europe is born.
[18:25] So we move on. Verses 16 to 18. once when we were going to the place of prayer we were met by a female slave who had a spirit by which she predicted the future.

She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune telling. She followed Paul and the rest of us shouting these men are servants of the most high God who are telling you the way to be saved.
She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so annoyed that he turned around and said to the spirit in the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her.
At that moment the spirit left her. This is very similar to something that happened to Jesus in Luke. There's Dr. Luke again.
Chapter 4 verse 41 where Jesus rebuked the demons for reclaiming him as the son of God. Why do you think this was happening?
[19:32] I guess part of it could be that the enemy was trying to trap Paul and his companions. There was in a sense what was going to happen we'll see but by casting this demon out Paul and his companions were going to get into trouble.

That was the expectation that's potentially what the trap was and I think there was something of that in that Paul ignored this going on for a few days but finally he didn't want the gospel contaminated by this demon speaking through this woman so he dealt with the demon freeing the girl but in so doing in full expectation I imagine knowing he was creating trouble for himself so then our next work of the Holy Spirit spiritual warfare so in casting out a demon Paul was engaging in spiritual warfare but it wasn't through Paul's ability Paul's name wasn't his command authority over the demon but actually if we were to turn back to
Matthew 12 28 Jesus said this it is by the spirit of God that I drive out demons and then the kingdom of God has come upon you so Jesus himself when he cast out demons acknowledged that it was through the power of the spirit of God and this is what Paul was doing through the ministry of the Holy Spirit Paul was casting out this demon from this slave girl okay so we're not going to read the next lot but basically verses 19 to 24 this is the trap sprung if you like this is the trouble that Paul probably expected in that the owners of the slave girl are not overly impressed that their way of making money through her fortune telling has been taken away from them I mean the slave girl is probably pretty happy but the owners aren't so they drag
Paul and Silas off into the city where they make accusations against them and they end up being beaten stripped and beaten and then imprisoned in the centre of the prison and it's interesting that we find we know we find later on but we know this already that actually Paul and Silas being Romans stayed silent you see if they said something if they said no we're Romans they wouldn't have been beaten they wouldn't have been imprisoned but then everything else that goes after that wouldn't have occurred so I think there's something in the Holy Spirit here saying stay silent endure it something better is coming so we pick it up again verses 25 and 26 so they are in the stocks in the centre of the prison it says this about midnight
Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God and the other prisoners were listening to them suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken at once all the prison doors flew open and everyone's chain came loose so here they are in the stocks they've been beaten they are bleeding they're probably hungry what are they doing are they moping oh no this is terrible we've come all this way to Europe and we've got a beating people why did God bring us here maybe Silas saying Paul why did you cast out that demon no of course they're not they are singing praises they have joy in the Lord they're praying out loud and the whole prison is listening to what's going on and then we read that there is an earthquake now obviously earthquakes are quite common but generally speaking earthquakes that open all the doors in a prison generally flatten it and earthquakes definitely don't shake chains off or open the stocks so this is clearly a supernatural earthquake to basically all the doors flung open all the chains fell off of all the prisoners and we must assume the stocks sprung open as well so another work of the
[25:06] Holy Spirit supernatural works so they've kept quiet about being Romans they've had their beating but now they're not quiet they're praising God and the Holy Spirit is at work again with a miraculous earthquake and they've been freed so you think okay let's get up and run no again the

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Holy Spirit is saying stay put don't run something else is coming stay where you are so moving on then verse 27 to 34 the jailer woke up as you would do with an earthquake that shakes the prison and when he saw the prison doors open he drew his sword and was about to kill himself so basically as the jailer he was responsible for all of these prisoners and if they escaped then he would end up in their place so clearly he didn't want to be in prison and was going to kill himself but

Paul says no we're all here it's interesting you think obviously Paul and the jailer were stood in front of each other but that's clearly not what is going on because otherwise he'd have walked through the whole prison and seen they were all!
he was at the entrance thinking they'd all escaped and Paul shouts out so again there's something of the Holy Spirit here inspiring what Paul is saying don't kill yourself we're all here so the Holy Spirit again engaging in what Paul is doing carrying on from verse 28 but Paul shouted don't harm himself we're all here the jailer calls for lights rushed in as I said he wasn't face to face rushed in and fell before Paul and Silas he brought them out and asked sirs what must I do to be saved they replied believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved you and your household then they spoke of the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house at that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds then immediately he and all his household were baptized so they share the gospel the jailer and his household are all saved again the household has been saved and that's before the wounds are cleaned up so
Paul and Silas are standing there with the blood still running proclaiming the gospel which is received then it says their wounds were healed then they were baptized in verse 34 the jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God he and his whole household so after they were baptized!
again more salvation so Paul's only been in this city a short while but he's already seen two households at least saved so all of this stemmed from the trap the enemy had set in that Paul and Silas had stayed silent about their status been gone endured severe beating and struggle carried on worshipping God and now another household is saved again a work of the Holy Spirit ok so 35 to 40 as we starting to draw to an end now when it was daylight the magistrates sent their officers to the jailer with the order release those men the jailer told
[29:45] Paul the magistrates have ordered that you and Silas be released now you can leave go in peace but Paul said to the officers 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 so now Paul finally declares their citizenship and you see what happens when they do that continuing no let them come themselves and escort us out the officers reported this to the magistrates and when they heard that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens they were alarmed so you can see that actually if they proclaimed this before the beating things would probably have been different but then the jailer his household and possibly some of these or all of the prisoners would not have heard the gospel no beating no prison no prison worship no earthquake no salvation sometimes keeping quiet and enduring sees tremendous spiritual results so continue in verse 39 this is the magistrates they came to appease them and escorted them from the prison requesting them to leave the city after

Paul and Silas came out of the prison they went to Lydia's house where they met with the brothers and sisters and encouraged them then they left so a church has now been established we don't know how big it is!
but a fledgling church established through the ministry of the Holy Spirit through Paul and Silas and the team and so we come on to our final works of the Holy Spirit which is encouraging others so despite their ordeal the beating the imprisonment the Holy Spirit leads Paul and Silas not to leave as directed immediately by the magistrates but to encourage and strengthen the fledgling church so what do we do with this what do we conclude clearly Paul was a great man but he did nothing in his own strength wisdom or abilities it was and still is the
Holy Spirit at work in men and women that builds the church I'd like to invite the band to come back up please could I have that back up please Sandy the last slide please thank you there's a lot in here these are just some of the works of the Holy Spirit but they bring a challenge and an opportunity to us to consider how we work with the Holy Spirit what he does in our lives whether it's through providing co-workers or direction for our life salvation for those we know and love help in the spiritual battles for the miraculous maybe healing or even an earthquake the releasing of chains both physical and spiritual and to enable us to encourage others please do pray quietly this is where we have a come to a point before

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God where we need to say well where am I at with the Holy Spirit what do I see him doing in my life am I willing to let him do more that his will would be done in us I think this is time to make a statement if you long to know more of the works of the Holy Spirit in your life could be one or all of those things I'd like to invite you to stand as we pray this is about allowing the Holy Spirit to have do more in our lives maybe you know someone that you've been praying for for a long time and you long for them to be saved maybe you could even now start to consider them maybe you're engaged in spiritual warfare and you just need more of the
[35:27] Spirit working in you and through you maybe you want to be able to encourage others maybe you've been looking for direction you keep asking you need God to clearly direct you I'm just going to pray for us but actually I want to say if you really want to deal with some of these things that something has come up in this that is actually really speaking into your heart I'd even like to invite you to come up to the front and we want to just pray for you that you might know the Holy Spirit doing a greater work within your life this is a step if you like a declaration before God please do come up we're going to be worshipping for a little longer we can pray for you but I'm just going to pray now and then hand back to

Jason Lord Jesus I thank you for this incredible salvation that you paid for on the cross how you died in our place that our sins might be forgiven that our relationship with our creator God could be reestablished and even when you ascended back into heaven you promised your Holy Spirit to not leave us to never be from us pouring out your Spirit upon your children more and more and we pray Lord Holy Spirit would you come and invade our lives would you transform us to be all that you want us to be to be on our own missionary journeys for you for folk to be saved that we're praying for for direction for our lives for help in spiritual warfare for all that you have for us
Lord we pray help us to receive and be guided by and open to your Holy Spirit I pray

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