

Serving God by Proclaiming Jesus

Biblical Examples

Foundation

Bible passage : Acts 16:16-17

In Acts chapter 16 we read about a strange incident of a slave girl with a “spirit of divination”. We are told that she made money for her owners by telling fortunes. Having a spirit sounds a bit scary, and pictures often suggest so, but Luke doesn’t say she was suffering. That is unlike the incidents Luke records in his gospel (4.33 & 8.28) where people were suffering. In all three situation the people were set free from the spirits who are just creatures, and Jesus has power over them.

Luke tells the slave girls encounter with Paul led to the spirit being cast out of her. This infuriated the girl’s owners who lost a good source of income. They stirred things up in the city leading to Paul and Silas being arrested.

What interest us is what the spirit said through the girl about Paul and his team. We see

“These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation”
Acts 16.17

in the gospels times when evil spirit see the spiritual reality behind things which are not seen by people. The same thing seems to have happened with the slave girl.

*Paul and the Slave Girl.
Oil painting
c. 1860,
outside the
Basilica of
St. Paul in
Rome.*



Luke, who was part of Paul’s team in Philippi, records first hand what happened when they encountered the girl:

“As we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by fortune-telling. She followed Paul and us, crying out, “These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation.”

The spirit knew what was going on. To many in Philippi these men had a strange message which was causing trouble and upsetting their religion and their income. But they were doing what Jesus had sent them to do, to tell people about Him, and in so doing, they were serving God, the Most High God, as the spirit said.

Of course they were also serving people, by telling them how to be saved from power of sin, death and the judgment of God. This was the most most important thing they could ever do to serve others.



Telling other people about Jesus is a way of serving God, and serving them by revealing to them how to be saved.

Worship Notes

This is a suggested way of leading the worship.



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Ideas

Explore

The introductory notes could be used by some classes to think more about different ways we use the words serve and service.

Prayer

Some units will include a prayer which can be used in the worship.