

## ***First Impressions, Part III***

**TWO WEEKS AGO**... Paul and Timothy get to Philippi

- 1) The work of the gospel is **powerful** *Timothy & family; Lydia & family, the jailer & family*
- 2) The work of the gospel is **personal and particular** *Lydia and the jailer of Philippi!*

**LAST WEEK...** Paul and Timothy in Philippi

- 3) There is **a price to pay to get in on it** *Timothy's circumcision! Paul's arrest and torture!*
- 4) Paying that price **demonstrates the power of the gospel** *"Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"*

No wonder then that Paul was still reminding Timothy about **this price to pay**, this great commitment, years later...

**2 Timothy 2:3-6** **Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier** of Christ Jesus. No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may **please the one** who enlisted him as a soldier.

Also if anyone competes as **an athlete**, he does not **win the prize** unless he competes according to the rules.

**The hard-working farmer** ought to be the first to **receive his share** of the crops.

**THIS MORNING...** Paul and Timothy's experiences in Philippi come to a conclusion, and so does our introduction to II Timothy.

**Acts 16:35-40** Now when day came, the chief magistrates sent their policemen, saying, "Release those men." And the jailer reported these words to Paul, saying, "The chief magistrates have sent to release you. Therefore come out now and go in peace." But Paul said to them, "**They have beaten us in public** without trial, men who are Romans, and have thrown us into prison; and now are **they sending us away secretly? No indeed!** But let them come themselves and bring us out." The policemen reported these words to the chief magistrates. They were afraid when they heard that they were Romans, and they came and appealed to them, and when they had brought them out, they kept begging them to leave the city. They went out of the prison and entered the house of Lydia, and when they saw the brethren, they encouraged them and departed.

### **5) The work of the gospel calls for great discernment**

Compare **Acts 22:25** But when they stretched him out with thongs, Paul said to the centurion who was standing by, "Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman and uncondemned?"

**And also...** **Acts 25:11** "... if none of those things is true of which these men accuse me, no one can hand me over to them. I appeal to Caesar." **This is just like Acts 16:37!**  
*Here is Paul interacting with his fellow Romans, for the sake of getting the gospel out.... EXCEPT THAT HERE, PAUL SUBMITS TO THE BEATING FIRST (for leverage?)*

Yet compare **2 Corinthians 11:23-26** ... labors ... imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death. Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned... I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen..." **This is nothing like Acts 16:37!** [*Here is Paul interacting with his fellow Jews, for the sake of getting the gospel out*]

Similarly, on the subject of circumcision... on the one hand, Paul writes and preaches and takes a stand against it ... but on the other hand he insists that Timothy goes through with it!  
 How are we to understand these complicated, and apparently contradictory, actions?

### **1 Corinthians 9:20-23**

To the Jews I became as a Jew, so that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law though not being myself under the Law, so that I might win those who are under the Law; to those who are without

law, as without law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ, so that I might win those who are without law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak; I have become all things to all men, so that I may by all means save some. ***I do all things for the sake of the gospel ...***

So a soldier might charge --- or retreat;  
an athlete might train harder --- or take an extended break;  
the hard-working farmer might plough the field and sow it heavily --- or plough the field and leave it fallow...  
and they do it because they are greatly committed to military victory, and a gold medal and the success of the farm.

“Great discernment” is a part of the great commitment.

**2 Timothy 2:7** Consider what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything.

**Mark 12:30** AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, **AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND**, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.'

**2 Timothy 2:15** Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.

**2 Timothy 3:14** You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them

“Great discernment” is a part of the price we are called to pay. So we should prepare ourselves to really study hard!

And so is suffering hardship.

**2 Timothy 1:8** Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel ...

**2 Timothy 2:3** Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.

**2 Timothy 2:12** If we endure, we will also reign with Him...

**2 Timothy 3:12** Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

“Suffering hardship” is a part of the price we are called to pay.

But it's never hardship for its own sake. It's always **for the sake of the gospel**. It's always for the sake of “pleasing the one who enlisted you as a soldier.” It's always for the Lord Jesus: for His glory and the fulfillment of His mission to save particular persons and so to build His church.

**2 Timothy 2:8-10** Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descendant of David, according to my gospel, for which I suffer hardship even to imprisonment as a criminal; but the word of God is not imprisoned. For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory.

It's always for the sake of the women like Lydia and the men like the jailer who the Lord is intending to call to Himself through our commitment to the work of the gospel.

**2 Timothy 4:17** ... the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was rescued out of the lion's mouth. (!)

## **6) The work of the gospel *calls for great diligence***

And how can we argue, or quibble, or try to pretend that there is no price to pay?

**2 Timothy 2:8,9** Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descendant of David, according to my gospel, for which I suffer hardship even to imprisonment as a criminal...