

## **Acts 16:11-40 – The Gospel comes to Europe**

### **A. Introduction**

- **Acts 16:6-10** - God clearly guides Paul through the closed door (6-7) and the passionate cry for help (9). “We” indicates that Luke is present.
- **Acts 16:11** – With a new team, a new vision, a new direction and a new passion, Paul crosses over into Europe.
- **Acts 16-18** describe the arrival of the gospel on European soil.
- Europe has been dominated by the Christian gospel for over a thousand years. Since 1900 the emphasis has moved to the global South and East
- Europe is the “prodigal continent”, but the gospel is still powerful to change people and nations (Romans 1:16-17)

### **B. The gospel can open any heart (11-15)**

- **16:12** – Philippi was a Roman colony with Roman laws and customs. It had a reputation for anti-Semitism
- **16:13** – there is no synagogue - Paul visits a women’s prayer meeting.
- Lydia is an exceptional woman who had succeeded in her business dealings. At the same time she is spiritually hungry.
- **16:14-15** - God opens her heart through Paul’s preaching. God can open any heart by the power of the gospel. She opens her home

### **C. The gospel can break any bondage (16-24)**

- **16:16** – the slave girl is completely different – Lydia is in control this girl is controlled by an evil spirit and by her masters. The “spirit of python” has given her some clairvoyant ability, but is crushing the life out of her.
- **16:17** - she confuses Paul’s hearers by using the title “*most high god*” – a title used of Zeus. They are only speaking of “a” way of salvation.
- **16:18-19** – By the power of Christ this bondage is overcome and she is set free. Her owners are furious at the loss of an economic asset.
- **16:20-24** – The gospel leads to conflict and imprisonment.

### **D. The gospel can penetrate any place (25-34)**

- **16:25** – Even though they are in the centre of God’s will, Paul and Silas are suffering. However at midnight they are praising God because they are confident that God is with them in the darkest place.
- **16:26-29**– God uses an earthquake to set them free. The jailer was probably a retired Roman soldier. He is ready to kill himself as part of the soldier’s honour code. However Paul has not run away - he sees that the earthquake was designed not to save him but to save the jailer.
- **16:30-31** – the man asks the best question and receives the best answer. The gospel consists of a command (“*believe on the Lord Jesus*”) and a promise (“*you and your household will be saved*”). Faith involves knowing the truth, believing the truth and trusting a person.
- **16:32-34** – the man gives evidence of his conversion.

### **E. The gospel crosses every barrier (35-40)**

- **16:35-40** – Paul is vindicated and leaves the church in a stable position.
- The gospel can cross every barrier of gender, class, race, age and religion (Galatians 3:28).
- People come to Jesus in many different ways – it’s only possible to come to God through Jesus (John 14:6).