Philippians - May Class

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 11 December 2011

Preacher: Marvin Wiseman

[0:00] Well, I want to thank you all for being here for our May class in Philippians. And I want to remind you that actually we are in Acts chapter 16 dealing with background material that will provide important information for understanding some of the passages we'll be dealing with in Paul's letter to the Philippians.

And if you would open your Bibles, please, to Acts chapter 16. I want to spend just a few minutes in review because we did miss last month's session due to a hospital emergency and someone in the congregation, and I was unable to be here.
So thank you for your patience and being understanding. Upcoming in Philippians, and I hope to be there next time we meet, which will be our June meeting, I think we will have sufficiently covered the important background material to give us the best appreciation for Philippians.
But one of the principal things that I'm really looking forward to dealing with as we open this small epistle is the Apostle Paul's treatment on the subject of prayer.
I do not know of any particular aspect of the Christian life that is more confusing, more controversial, and sometimes more discouraging for believers as a subject of prayer.
[1:31] And I must confess that as a result of our study of Philippians many years ago at Grace, I don't know exactly how long ago it's been, probably 25 years ago, completely revolutionized my ideas regarding the subject of prayer.

And I don't mind telling you that it has afforded me such enormous contentment and satisfaction as opposed to a lot of the questions and frustrations that I had in regard to prayer before that time.
And I'm excited to share some of those principles with you, and I hope they will do for you what they have done for me because it completely revolutionized my whole concept of prayer.
And I think you will appreciate it as well. So if you'll turn to Acts chapter 16, we'll hit and skip through this and a few verses and then encourage your discussion or questions.
And if I have any objection about these groups like this that meet, it is that you are all too content and too prone to just sit there and listen rather than challenge or add something or ask a question.
[2:45] And you're probably too polite thinking, I don't want to interrupt him. Well, feel free to interrupt me. I promise you that won't hurt one bit. And just raise your hand and I'll know that you've got a question or a comment.

We'll stop right there and inject it. It may very well be the most important aspect of the whole meeting. So don't feel that you would be out of place or rude or anything like that.
I fully expect that and I encourage it. So if I make a statement that you don't understand or if I make a statement that you want to challenge, you say, Marv, I don't buy that. I don't believe that.
I don't think, what are you going to do about 1 Timothy what and what? That's fine. I don't take offense to that. We are looking for answers. We're looking for information.
And I know I don't have all the answers. Someone said, I don't even have all the questions. So feel free to challenge anything that I say. And no one will think you disrespectful for doing so because we are looking for truth.
[3:48] And I would benefit from it as much as anyone else. So with that having been said, let's commit this time to the Lord. We're grateful, Father, for an occasion like this, like-minded believers that come together because they are anxious and eager to hear what you have to reveal.

And it's what you have to reveal, not what I have to reveal. Because my mind is no more than that of the average man. And we tend to come to the scriptures and see them to say what we want them to say.
And we want you to help protect us against that and avoid our biases and our prejudices so that we can see the pure truth of your word.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

And we recognize that we come to it with a flawed intellect because everything about us in our fallenness is flawed. But thankfully, that doesn't mean we cannot arrive at any truth.
It just means that all the truth we arrive at needs to be open to investigation and scrutinizing. And we are glad to do that. So thank you for the camaraderie and the spirit that we enjoy here.
[4:58] Thank you for your gracious provision for us in every way. And for the text that is before us for a facility of understanding and appreciating it and its implications. And we'll give you thanks for it in Christ's name.

Amen. Perhaps one of the most striking things about Philippians is that it is the first encounter that Paul is going to have on the European mission field.
Because up to this time, things were pretty much limited to what we call Asia Minor, which in the Bible, of course, is present-day Turkey. And I don't know how aware you are of it, but of the churches that were founded and established in Asia Minor or modern-day Turkey, I am not aware of any with continuity to this day.
The vast majority of that geographical area is today Islamic. And that, of course, did not happen until about the 8th, 9th, and 10th centuries when the Muslim influence began spreading all over Asia Minor.
And today, Christians constitute a very definite minority in modern-day Turkey. And in many cases, they have undergone different kinds and different levels of persecution.
[6:25] And that is even continuing to this day. So, we are looking at Acts chapter 16 in the background material that all began with Paul receiving this Macedonian vision, which was a call to come over into Macedonia and help us.

Macedon, of course, is northern Greek. And it is in that principal area of Philippi. Philippi is named after Philip of Macedon.
And Philip was Alexander the Great's father. And the ancient town of Philippi was named after him. It is a very, very historic region and plays a very dominant role in Paul's ministry at this time.
So, we read in, after having received this vision, we read in verse 11, And therefore, putting out the sea from Troas, we ran a straight course to Samothrace, and on the day following to Neapolis. Neapolis is right on the coast. And from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia, a Roman colony.
[7:36] And we were staying in this city for some days. We pointed out to you in our initial session that it was very significant that Philippi was a Roman colony. That meant for all practical purposes, you could regard Philippi as Little Rome, because it enjoyed perks, advantages, benefits, etc., that the Roman government would bestow upon it.

And the Roman government did that out of gratitude and out of trying to keep its far-flung interests under control. They would give people a certain amount of control, a certain amount of leverage for their own affairs.
And Philippi was no exception. And we also pointed out to you that there were women who were recipients of Paul's information on the Sabbath day in verse 13.
And if you're asking, where are the men? We've already concluded from our previous study that the men were gone. They were driven out of town. The men who were Jews were gone because Claudius, the emperor of Rome, had required all Jews to depart from Rome.
And Philippi, being a Roman colony, would follow in suit for whatever Mother Rome does, her colonies do.
[9:01] So you can be sure that they very obediently chased all of the Jews out of Philippi. So there weren't any more. But there were women.

Pardon? Only the Jewish men. Only the Jewish men. Because only the men were considered a significant threat in any way to the government or to stability or anything.
Not to put down women, but this is before the days of feminism. And they just figured that women were not much of a threat at all. But this woman was an unusual woman.
And she is named Lydia. And you are familiar with her. She is referred to as the first convert to Christianity on the continent of Europe.
So she has an enormous legacy. Let's read on here. There is a place of prayer, verse 13. And they went to the riverside. And, of course, they're near water because, being Jews, ceremonial washing and purification is important to them.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

[10:04] So they are located near a place where there is water. Ordinarily, this would be done in a Jewish synagogue in what they called the mikvah, M-I-K-V-A-H.

The mikvah, which is like a baptismal pool or area where the people would go and go through the ritual cleansing and purification.
But you may be sure that there were no synagogues in Philippi that were operative at the time. In order for the Jews to establish a synagogue, they had to have a minion.
That's M-I-N-Y-A-N. A minion. And a minion in Judaism is constituted of a minimum of ten male Jews.
And if you have ten male Jews, you can found a synagogue. But with all the male Jews gone, there was no synagogue, there was no mikvah, there was nothing left but some women.
[11:04] And these women, true to their faith of Judaism, have gone outside of town probably to escape the authorities. And possibly because of the convenience of the water.

And there was a river there. And that's where they gather. Just a group of women probably pining and longing for the absence of their men who were gone. And it must have been a difficult situation of separation.
This is on the Sabbath day. And we were supposing that there would be a place of prayer. And we sat down and began speaking to the women who had assembled.
And a certain woman named Lydia from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics. This was an exquisite kind of garment. It was generally affordable only by the wealthy.
I think it is safe to say that Lydia was probably of the upper income echelons. And she is accustomed to this kind of finery.
[12:09] And the purple fabrics was much in demand by people of wealth and influence. And she was already a worshiper of God. That simply means that she was an obedient, loyal Jew who was responsive to the information that she had at this time.

But obviously it did not contain information about God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Nonetheless, she is there as an obedient Jewess, probably along with several other women.
We do not know how many. We're not given a number. But there are a number of them assembled there. And she is referred to as one whose heart the Lord opened.
And how does the Lord open hearts? He doesn't do it mystically. He doesn't just go presto chango when somebody's heart opens.
He always opens hearts with the entrance of the Word. The entrance of thy Word gives light. And it is with the heart that man believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.
[13:30] Hearing, faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. So, Paul is proclaiming the Word of God, and it took.

It registered. It reminds me of the Acts 2 passage when Peter preached on the day of Pentecost. The text says, And they were pricked in their heart.
That simply means the Word penetrated. It got through. And when it did, hearts were opened and available to the truth. And that's precisely what is happening here.
The Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul. I can assure you, Paul was not talking about how lovely the weather was there in Philippi that day.
He was talking about things that really mattered. And in connection with that, of course, the whole reason for his being there. When she and her household had been baptized, she urged us, saying, If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and stay.
[14:43] And she prevailed upon us. Now, I don't think there is any question. I know some might look at this as a spirit baptism. I don't think that the text justifies that at all.

I think the baptism with which they were baptized here, in my opinion at least, was undoubtedly water. H2O. They were baptized with water.
I think this is referred to in Hebrews chapter 6, where the word there is translated washings. And this baptism was very much akin to John's baptism.
It was John and his message, John the baptizer, that really put the subject of water baptism in a new light. And it did so principally because it was not limited to the priests.
And they are those to whom the water baptism had been administered before. The priests would go through the ritual cleansing, and they would, actually the word is baptisms, plural.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

[15:49] They would undergo many baptisms. Every time they would go to the temple to conduct any kind of a service, they would go through this ceremonial purification and washing.

But you'll recall that way back in the book of Exodus, when the children of Israel were at Mount Sinai, God said through Moses that he was going to make the nation of Israel a kingdom of priests. That is, the whole nation. Now, that is really significant. And it's one of those passages that is frequently overlooked. I think it's 19.6 of Exodus. And let me explain a little bit about what that means and why I think Paul is baptizing here.
This kingdom of priests was a whole new concept because in the nation of Israel, there was but one tribe that was going to be designated as the priestly tribe.
They were the Levites, the people of the tribe of Levi. The same way that Judah would be the royal tribe through which Christ would come, Levi would be the tribe through which the priests would come.
[17:13] Moses was a Levite. Aaron was a Levite. And God said to them, I'm going to make the whole nation. A nation of priests.

Not just the tribe, but the whole nation. Now, that's a whole new concept. If Levi was to be the priestly tribe, and by the way, a priest is a go-between between man and God.
A prophet is a go-between between God and man. And if a priest for the nation of Israel as a Levite is to be in priestly function for the other 11 tribes, for whom is the whole nation of Israel as a nation of priests, for whom are they priests?
And the answer is for all the rest of the world. He is going to raise up the nation of Israel, the whole nation, to be a light to the Gentiles.
Now, so far, Israel has never gotten with that program. They never have. The time is coming when they will. But the important thing I want you to know is when John the baptizer came on the scene, that was marked as the beginning of the fulfillment of there being a nation of priests.
[18:49] This is why John was baptizing everybody. He didn't ask them whether they were qualified, whether they were priests, etc.

People came from all around, and they believed John's message, which was, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. In other words, it was, Israel, get ready.
God is about to do his thing. And he was going to do it through the arrival of the Messiah. So John's message was, Israel, heads up, get ready.
Prepare yourselves morally and spiritually for the coming of the king. And how were they to do that? They repented of their sin and were baptized for the remission of sin.
And that was John's message, John's fulfillment. Christ replicated that as well as his apostles, although we are told that our Lord didn't actually baptize, but his apostles did.
[19:47] And this was the coming thing. So, on the day of Pentecost, when Peter preached his sermon and 3,000 came to faith, what did they do?

They were baptized. With what baptism? With the same baptism with which John baptized them. I know that the party line is, and I know the party line well because I taught it and preached it for several years, much to my dismay and embarrassment.
But the party line is, this in Acts 2, is Christian baptism. There isn't a shred of evidence, not one single verse that would give us an indication that it is Christian baptism.
It is the baptism with which they had been familiar up to that time, and it was John's baptism. And it was only logical that Peter and the 12 encouraged them to do that.
So, we've got, I think, the same thing here. They are in this mode of the anticipation of the kingdom, which is made quite clear in Acts chapter 3, where if the Israel, if the nation of Israel will repent, God will send Christ back again, and the kingdom program will get underway.
[21:03] We know, however, that the whole kingdom program was interrupted because of Israel's unbelief. They were set aside, and as a result of their being set aside, God has raised up a whole new entity called the church, which is Jew and Gentile on the same level, making the two one new man.

But this message of the kingdom was not going to die out quickly because it was still the very heart and soul of Israel, and that's what they anticipated and looked forward to.
Matter of fact, loyal Jews to this day still do. They have no idea that the kingdom is now held in abeyance and that one day it will come in when Christ returns.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

So, the baptism with which they were baptized here in Acts chapter 16, I would suggest is not at all what is commonly referred to as Christian baptism, but it is the same kind of baptism that was administered in Acts chapter 2, same kind of baptism that John administered in the Gospels, and it was the only logical thing to do.
So, having come to that conviction and having submitted to baptism, by the way, this idea of women being baptized, that too was out of the question.
[22:31] But there's no indication that John did not baptize women. I think he did. There's no indication that they were only men. However, the baptism that existed prior to this time was for the priests only, which included men only.

But now, this door is open, and it appears that baptism is as legitimate for women as it is for men. And this is exactly why Lydia is participating and why Paul is baptizing.
And she says in verse 15, If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and stay. And she prevailed upon us. And it happened that as we were going to the place of prayer, a certain slave girl, having a spirit of divination, met us, who was bringing her masters much profit by fortune-telling.
Following after Paul and us, she kept crying out, saying, These men are bondservants of the Most High God, who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation.
Now, as I recall, when we had our February study, we spent quite a bit of time dealing with this and the subject of divination and this poor girl who was demon-possessed.
[23:50] So, unless you have questions that you would like to raise, and if you do, I encourage you to do that, I'm just going to move right on through this, and anybody who wants the material can get the previous disc because it is on that.

She continued doing this for many days, in verse 18, But Paul was greatly annoyed and turned and said to the spirit, Interesting, he didn't say to the girl, but he said to the spirit, This is an angostromuthos demon.
It is the demon that indwells the individual and controls their vocal cords and speaks through them. That is precisely what is happening here. Christ encountered this kind of spirit as well that we find recorded in the Gospels.
And Paul said, I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her, and it came out at that very moment. But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the authorities.
And when they had brought them to their chief magistrates, they said, These men are through throwing our city into confusion, being Jews. By the way, I just have to inject something here.
[25:07] It seems that the only time Paul received any opposition, it was always because of one of two things. With the Jews, it was always because of religious issues.

With the Gentiles, it was always because of financial issues. these people, these people, could care less about what Paul preached regarding religion, gods, deities, whatever.
It didn't make any difference to them. They didn't care because they were polytheistic and they had room for as many gods as you want to crowd into the room. The Jew did not. So, Paul had to be very careful when he had a Jewish audience as to what he said, but the Gentiles would never give him any flack for religious reasons, always for economic reasons.
And every time Paul came into conflict with a non-Jewish crowd, it almost always involved money in some way, shape, or form. So, in some ways, things haven't changed, have they?
So, but they can't come back and say that in verse 21. They can't say these men throwing our city into confusion being Jews and they are proclaiming customs which it is not lawful for us to accept or observe being Romans.
[26:29] That's all smokescreen baloney. That's all they're doing is trying to cover up their greedy aspects here by blaming this onto they are upsetting and they are causing people to believe things that are not true, etc.

Lawful to accept being Romans. That's not it at all. The problem is they got into their pocketbook. This woman was a source of income for them and it has been cut off and now this is their response and they are using this as a pretext.
The crowd rose up together against him and the chief magistrates tore their robes off them and proceeded to order them to be beaten with rods.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

When they had inflicted many blows upon them, we're not told how many but plural, they threw them into prison commanding the jailer to guard them securely and he having received such a command threw them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.
I'm not going to elaborate on the need for security here as these prison guards saw it because I think we did that on our previous session so I'm just going to skip over this but this was very important as to why this man secured them as he did and in the Roman law and Roman army tradition those who were assigned to guard prisoners if they were allowed to escape the guard had to serve whatever sentence the prisoner would have served.
[28:09] You can see that completely eliminated the problem of bribery. You're not going to bribe the guards with that. So that's what was involved here and this is why he is putting them not only in the inner prison we're told that they're in the prison and then in verse 24 they are in the inner prison and then they are in stocks in the inner prison.

This is a triple kind of security. No way they're going to get out of that. At about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God obviously because they just didn't know any better.
It's always amazing to note the presence of mind the peace and serenity of soul that believers can have in extraordinary circumstances and there are times when a believer may be facing really difficult times be in a crisis mood so that the average person would just completely fall apart but God has a way of infusing peace in the midst of that turmoil and he does that with his spirit bearing witness to our spirit.
There is a calmness a quietness and there may be a deep deep sadness at the same time but there is not that sense of falling apart.
grief it may be great grief but it is an ameliorated grief because you know it is being ministered to through the spirit of God and there is a peace that passes understanding.
[30:08] A number of you know exactly what I'm talking about because you've been there and so have I. We fail to be able to adequately explain it but if you've been there you know what I'm talking about and I think that that is exactly what Paul and Silas were enjoying.

It was just a sweet abandonment to the will of God knowing that he does all things well no matter how bleak and dark the circumstances look he is in charge and he knows what he's doing regardless of what's happening around you.
That is a priceless thing a commodity that is available only to those who are in Christ and I am satisfied that Paul and Barnabas said imagine there's no indication that anybody had treated their wounds we don't know the size of these rods with which they were beaten but I can assure you they weren't little switches they probably hurt might have even been on the verge of breaking bones causing contusions and welts and opening of the flesh and the infection possibilities and all of this the misery that would go with it and then placed in the stocks in addition to that and yet these men are just so completely relaxed in the will of God and resigned not necessarily resigned but affirming the will of God that they just actually were enjoying the circumstances can you believe that can you imagine what kind of an impression that must have made on what is it with these guys are they nuts or what well they're either crazy or they really know something and in their case they really knew something didn't they midnight they are praying and singing hymns of praise to God and the prisoners were listening to them you know
I can't help but escape the idea that as I just mentioned it was not a resignation to the will of God and I want to park there for just a moment because if you don't need this now I can promise you you will need it later and that is resigning oneself to the will of God it's a concept that I never really considered until I read a little booklet put out by InterVarsity Press several years ago and the author of this little booklet was Paul Little some of you are familiar with his name he had authored a number of books and one was How to Give Away Your Faith excellent little book on evangelism he was for a number of years the president of InterVarsity
I believe it was and he was killed in an automobile accident in Canada several years ago but he published a little book called Affirming the Will of God and it changed my outlook on the will of God for the rest of my life I'm just glad I came across it at a young age but the distinction that Paul Little made and here in Acts is a beautiful illustration of it even though it doesn't even use the term or the concept the concept is there and he said so many times when believers are put into a very difficult situation they kind of sigh and say well obviously it is God's will and I just have to accept it and they resign themselves to the will of

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

[34:29] God but what that means and hidden under the surface is this yes I resign myself to this as the will of God I accept this as the will of God but if I could change it I would in a heartbeat any of you been there and done that I sure have I sure have I can't change this thing but if I could I would I had that fleeting thought April 12 2006 or March 12 2006 when I was lying beside

Barbara in that hospital bed in the intensive care unit the hospital in Columbus Riverside Methodist Hospital and Tim and Lori were there and Barbara and Daryl my grandson David and Bill and Lynette and it was about 3 o'clock in the morning on a Sunday and her breathing became more and more shallow and I had that fleeting thought this is obviously the will of God would I change it if I could and you know because of that little booklet and the truth that it conveyed way back when I could honestly say no I wouldn't do I want this beloved woman to be taken from my presence of course not but I came to the conviction that God does have a will and it cannot be improved upon no matter what scenario I would think would be preferable to that and when you resign yourself to the will of God you are saying this thing has come upon me God has allowed it to happen but I would change it if I could that's nothing more than saying God's will is really not the best my will would be preferable to his in this case at least but you know that's human arrogance speaking and rather than resign ourselves to the will of
God we need to affirm the will of God and there is a vast difference affirming means this is painful it is hurtful it certainly is not a path that I would choose but it is one that God has laid out and he has his reasons and do you know what he wants from me more than anything else he wants me to trust him to believe him to confess that he really does know what he's doing I think that's exactly the attitude that Paul and Silas had when they were in stocks in this prison and that's what enabled them in joyful abandonment to just sing praises to God because he is there and he knows what he's doing and are we going to demand or ask God or demand that
God release us from the situation no they're just rejoicing in it God had plans to release them but they didn't know that they didn't know that and they were just living in the presence and fellowshipping and worshiping the Lord in these really incredibly difficult circumstances knowing that God really does do all things well and those aren't just words so you keep that in mind the next time and it's coming I know it's coming because I know you're a human being so you can't escape it unless the Lord comes and takes us all out of this so it's coming for all of us times of hurt and pain and that we would change if we could just remember you do the responsible thing you respond in the most responsible way you know how whether it's call 911 or whether it's do whatever you take responsible steps and when you have gone the extent of your limit that's when you just rest and relax and trust in him he really does know what he's doing and
[40:07] I'm sure this was a breakthrough situation for Paul and Silas amazing and suddenly there came a great earthquake verse 26 so that the foundations of the prison house were shaken and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were unfastened and I would just assume that this is just simply a supernatural intervention it's not likely that a simple earthquake would unfasten everybody's chains but that's exactly what happened maybe they were chained fastened to the wall and the walls caved in and cracked and all the rest and by the way this to this day is still an earthquake prone area it was then and it still is Greece Greece in general and that whole area has had more than their share of earthquakes over the last couple of thousand years compared to the rest of the world it's very prone to that and when the jailer had been roused out of sleep and had seen the prison doors open he drew his sword and was about to kill himself supposing that the prisoners had escaped and you can understand why he was going to do that because he feared that he surely would be executed by the authorities and would be considered responsible for letting them escape and really it was beyond this poor man's control but he didn't reason with that kind of rationale at the time he's ready to take his own life and Paul cried out with a loud voice do yourself no harm we are all here he called for lights rushed in and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas and after he brought them out he said sirs what must I do to be saved and as we pointed out before we do not know to what extent this man is making legitimate spiritual inquiry and he's concerned about his soul or whether he's really concerned about his hide and saving it and how he can be delivered from what appears to be a punishment for this

I suspect that prior to this time Paul and Silas had made quite clear why they were there and perhaps had had a good opportunity to preach to this man or talk to this man and others there in the prison as to why they were there in Philippi and who sent them and why they were sent and all the rest of it and they may have heard what Paul and Silas said dismissed it as a couple of religious

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

fanatics and threw them in the stocks and that was the end of it well that's a possible scenario and if that's exactly what happened then when this earthquake took place this jailer was having second thoughts about how he had dismissed the message before and if that's what he was thinking he asked the legitimate question and they said believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved you and your household some people use this to teach what I think is a biblically erroneous idea of household salvation and that is the idea that and there are a number of people who believe this that if the head of a household comes to faith in
Christ then he provides as it were an umbrella for all the remaining members of the family and that his faith suffices for them and this is a verse that they use to justify that but I think all that the text is really saying is you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved you and your household if they believe in the Lord Jesus Christ they too will be saved I think it is a kind of a universal not just one believe for others because there is no proxy salvation someone has said that God has many children but he has no grandchildren salvation is an individual personal decision and they are being encouraged to make that here and they spoke the word of the Lord to him together with all who were in his house and he took them that very hour of the night and washed their wounds and immediately he was baptized he and all his household why was he baptized
I think for the same reason that Lydia was they are still anticipating and looking forward to this message and by the way when the book of Acts concludes let's just turn over there for a moment to the very last chapter of the book of Acts I want you to see an important concept here and I could be off base with what I'm teaching about this but it's the only way that I can understand it and I think that we are on safe ground here we are looking at the last chapter of the book of Acts actually we're looking at the last verse too because here this is in verse 30 of Acts chapter 28 Paul stayed two full years in his own rented quarters and was welcoming all who came to him these are this this is a villa a villa that
Paul was able to rent while he was in Rome because he was a Roman citizen he wasn't in prison and he couldn't be put in prison until he had his day in court his Roman citizenship protected him from that so until he was going to be able to appear before Caesar which was the right and privilege of a Roman citizen he was allowed to stay in his own hired quarters and there he had round the clock guard chained to his wrist and he is able to invite Jewish brethren in Rome and there were a lot of them a lot of Jews had fled and there were a lot of Jews here in Rome at this time because they had come back now earlier they had been chased out but Jews had been chased out and returned to a whole lot of places all over the world and this was no exception and they are bringing in these
[46:31] Jews and by the Jews and verse well back in chapter 28 again verse 23 it says they set a day for him I call this Paul's Bible conference day and they came to him at his lodging in large numbers and he was explaining to them by solemnly testifying about the kingdom of God and trying to persuade them concerning Jesus from both the law of Moses and from the prophets from morning until evening now it goes without saying these are all Jews Gentiles didn't know about this and they didn't care about what Moses said they had their own religion but here these are all Jews and verse 24 says some were being persuaded by the things but others would not believe and then Paul goes on and gives this famous quote from

Isaiah about these Jewish brethren and he is lumping them with them and many of them believed and many of them did not and then in verse 28 he says let it be known to you therefore that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles they will also listen in other words you wouldn't dispute among themselves there is an old saw among the Jews that wherever you have three Jews you have four arguments and they really do know how to argue and how to differ and they're having a big flap here big controversy because there are Jews lined up on both sides some say you know this guy's right everything he says checks out with Moses and the prophets he's right on and others say you're crazy it can't be that way God would never allow his Messiah to be crucified that's ridiculous and they would argue about this back and forth so we see that in verse 31 the way this thing closes out the book of
Acts closes out is he is preaching the kingdom of God and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus with all openness unhindered can you not see how this was a front burner item this kingdom of God this is what John the Baptist began preaching this is what the twelve continued preaching repent for the kingdom of God is at hand this is what Christ himself is preaching and now with the crucifixion and the resurrection and the ascension where is the kingdom of God it never did happen is it ever going

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

to happen what happened what is going on is that promise ever going to be fulfilled I think this had to be in the heart and mind of every Jew because if Jesus was the king why didn't he bring the kingdom where is it we continue to be an oppressed people the
Jew throughout the world we are told that the kingdom of heaven is going to be established and the Messiah is going to rule and reign the whole earth in righteousness and Israel is going to be the centerpiece of it all where is it what happened why aren't we there is there not going to be a kingdom is is God not making good on it has he reneged has he withdrawn his promise because of the disobedience of Israel what's happening I can see very easily why Paul is talking about the kingdom because it had to be in the heart and mind of every Jew what's happened to the kingdom where is it and you know the loyal orthodox Jew today does not see the kingdom as postponed never having been offered because the only one who could offer it would be the Messiah and he has never come yet so that's where they're coming from and
I can understand Paul dealing with these issues because they are wondering and asking what's going on where is the kingdom and exactly how Paul is introducing the concept of the church and what appreciation or understanding they had of that in connection with Israel being set aside and God moving through the church which is neither Jew nor Gentile but both combined in one new man exactly how well they understood that we don't know but Paul is making it very clear when he writes his Ephesians epistle and also here in the book of Acts and questions or comments we've covered a lot of material and we're going to consider ourselves finished with the Philippian background and you are aware how they are released from prison and we'll start next in our next session for June we'll begin with Philippians 1-1 and we'll move on to the prayer subjects that we were talking about
[51:41] Mike well I think that I think that is entirely possible because this I've often made the point that there are two criteria there are two prerequisites for the establishment of the coming of the kingdom of God or the kingdom of heaven to earth this by the way is found in what is commonly referred to as the Lord's prayer and Christians by the jillions pray this all the time and many of them don't even understand the implications and that is thy kingdom come thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven that is a very literal prayer invoking or asking

God to bring the kingdom of heaven to earth two things have to take place before that kingdom can ever be realized or established on earth number one requires the death of the Messiah because it is the death of the Son of God that balances the scales of heaven in enabling God to justly reverse the penalty and the power of the curse that is really important so in Acts chapter 3 Paul makes it clear that that has happened that has already taken place and I'm looking at verse 18 of Acts chapter 3 where Peter is preaching and he says but the things which
God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets and here it is that his Christ his Messiah should suffer he has thus fulfilled in other words God has done his part he sent the Messiah and the Messiah died for the sins of the world God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself God has fulfilled his part now what is your part Israel next verse repent therefore and return return to whom return to the God you've left return that your sins may be wiped away in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord and that he may send Jesus the Christ appointed for you send him when send him now if you repent as a nation this is a national message that has to be kept in sight this isn't an individual message although it's true that nations are made up of individuals but when John the baptizer preached his message it was a national message to the nation of Israel invoking them to repent of their sin individually and get the nation in place for receiving the king we know of course they did not now many are of the opinion that when Israel was instrumental in crucifying Christ their Messiah that that was the end of the offer God wrote them off that was the end of Israel's opportunity that was
Israel's final answer I don't think that's true at all because for one thing when Christ was on that cross and he prayed Father forgive them for they know not what they do I think the Father did it's inconceivable to me that that prayer would go unanswered I think the Father did give and what that means is the opportunity was extended beyond the death of Christ beyond the resurrection and the opportunity is extended in Acts chapter 2 when Peter is preaching to the nation of Israel in the temple and here in Acts chapter 3 same thing we know they are not going to respond nationally and it seems to me that their final answer was with the stoning of Stephen carried out by the Sanhedrin itself which was the leadership of Israel

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

[56:47] Mike there's no indication that the nation of Israel understood that their Messiah would have to die to pay for sins is it no in fact the whole idea was very nonsensical and unacceptable to them yet Isaiah 53 makes it very very clear that he was wounded for our transgressions he was bruised for our iniquities the chastisement of our peace was upon him and Jews even to this day have real difficulty with Isaiah 53 and most of them say well that's speaking of the whole Jewish nation but it isn't it's speaking of an individual and speaking of the Messiah and Psalm 22 makes it very clear too it's a graphic Psalm 22 so and when

Peter preaches this message in Acts chapter 2 the Pentecostal message he said that you in ignorance wicked and cruel hands with ignorance have crucified and slain the Lord of glory no they did not know but Peter made it very clear that that's exactly what happened that's exactly what they did and you know what when he did that there were 3,000 Jews and the light bulb came on in their head and they said you know what this guy's right this all fits we really blew it and 3,000 of them believed yes ma'am in in in Luke 17 verse 20 well the question is Jesus answers the kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation well
I think what I think what Jesus is saying here and other translations bring this out I think what he is really saying is that the kingdom of heaven is among you how so it was there in his presence now there is a sense in which the kingdom of heaven is within us because when Paul wrote to the Colossians he talked about having been transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his dear son now that's a spiritual kingdom and it's obvious he's not talking physically this is not the kingdom and there is a spiritual kingdom and every believer belongs to that but when he says the kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of
God is King James translates it within you some have taken that to mean that it is spiritual I think in the context what Jesus is saying is that the kingdom of God is among you and it was there in his presence because Christ was the embodiment of that kingdom and everywhere he went he brought kingdom conditions with him because in the kingdom death as we know it isn't going to exist so he raised the dead in the kingdom violent weather is not going to take lives like tsunamis and earthquakes so he took authority over the elements and he calmed the sea and the waves and so on he gave sight to the blind because there isn't going to be any blindness in the kingdom and he opened the ears of the deaf and he healed the maim and enabled them to walk because those things are not going to be in the kingdom so everywhere
Christ went he brought with him kingdom conditions and they constituted his badge of authentication he was able to back up who he said he was by what he did and that all ties in together in my estimation and in the context here in that Luke 17 passage these are kingdom conditions that are prevailing all around and he's saying the kingdom of heaven is right here in his own person and indeed it turned out to be that way yes John footnote that says in the midst of yeah that's that's another rendering of the Greek preposition yeah other translations also make that quite clear yes go ahead no finish your thought so when we pray the Lord's prayer we say by kingdom come what you're saying is we're praying for God for Jesus return yeah essentially that's that's exactly it yeah and very few look at it that way or understand it that way but that's that's probably that's probably the very essence of the prayer of devout
[62:34] Jews of Israel because when when the kingdom of heaven comes to earth then God's will will be done on earth as it is done in heaven and death and disease and war and famine and crime and all of these things that are so dreadful to humanity are all going to be done away with but this is not it we know that Marvis a couple things one is that the whole idea kind of does away with replacement theology in that I know some folks that say well you know God did away with the Jew because they crucified Jesus and they didn't follow what they were supposed to do well problem being Isaiah prophesied that the Messiah would be crucified so he had to be crucified so the Jews it had to happen that way and I the whole the whole idea of replacement theology just doesn't make any sense if you really read the scripture

I couldn't agree more and everything hinges upon the quality of the promise that God gave to Abraham Isaac and Jacob I mean everything hinges on that was it a conditional promise or was it unconditional in other words when God promised to Abraham Isaac and Jacob that through their seed all nations of the earth would be blessed and that a Messiah would come out of the out of that blood line out of the line of Judah which we know to be fulfilled in Mary who of course was of the tribe of Judah and the direct descendant of Nathan the son of David in the same way that Joseph was a direct descendant of Solomon the son of David and that that would be the fulfillment of that

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

promise and that
God was going to bring that to pass with or without the obedience of Israel and we know that it was without their obedience but he made good on that promise so everything hinges upon whether that promise was conditional or unconditional now replacement theology which is the majority of Christendom they take the position that Israel was at one time God's chosen people but because of their disobedience and rejection of their Messiah God has rejected them permanently and he has replaced them hence the term replacement theology he has replaced Israel with the church and because of Israel's disobedience he brought a whole new entity onto the scene and it is the church which is the body of Christ and our contention is that
God fully intends to make good on his promise to Abraham Isaac and Jacob it was not a conditional promise it was unconditional it was never dependent on the faithfulness of Israel it is dependent on the faithfulness of God to make good on his word so what he has done is he has not replaced Israel he has set Israel aside in unbelief and he has raised up a whole new entity not to take the place of Israel but to fill this gap if you will called the church age and the thing that is so striking about the church is that there is no distinction in it between Jew and Gentile and Paul says there's neither Jew nor Gentile bond or free male or female you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus so the Jew and the Gentile are put together on the same plane of equality and there is no superiority in the body of
Christ they are all together one Jew and Gentile together and that was really dramatic in fact it was so dramatic that the Jews of Paul's day simply could not accept that and they didn't they didn't for the most part there were of course some that did but most of them did not other comments or questions anybody yes Mike I understand that there's a minority today that believe that we are in the kingdom now yes well I wouldn't I wouldn't go so far as to say that it's a minority I would say that we probably are the minority and it's the majority that believes that we are in the kingdom now and the kingdom is within each believer and therefore that's all we can expect yeah well it's a problem of interpretation really we take the scriptures from a literal approach and they take and by they [68:16] I'm talking about the reformed theologians and for that matter the whole Roman Catholic Church from which the reform came they take the same position and that is that the church and for those of you with a Roman Catholic appreciation they believe that it's the Roman Catholic Church that has taken the place of Israel and that all of the promises that God made to Israel all the blessings that God promised to Israel are being fulfilled in the church because Israel through their disobedience forfeited their opportunity so God is fulfilling it in the church instead and the whole idea of of replacement theology is based on that premise and this is the majority view our view is the minority view and when you consider that virtually the whole

Roman Catholic Church and added to that Protestants such as the Church of England or Episcopal Church the Presbyterians and there are exceptions because not all Presbyterians are replacement theologians and virtually all of the Church of God which originally was Methodist and most of the Methodist denomination pretty much into replacement theology as well so we are the minority really and we ought to recognize that you should write this down this explanation of what the kingdom means and all its implications well I appreciate that I would not be opposed to doing it but the only thing that makes me reluctant to do it is because there already exists really good things in writing and it's highly doubtful that I could improve on them because there are some really well
I don't know there is a great deal of literature out there that deals with this very issue that we're talking about and it's a real I guess I'm confessing that I didn't know that yeah well it's probably not all that well known but it is out there and we need to recognize that we do serve a minority viewpoint and I don't want to be of the flesh and take pride in the fact that we are a minority because frankly I'd be a lot more comfortable with the majority you feel more secure when you have more people believe the same thing you do and when you know you're swimming upstream against the tide it's not a terribly comfortable position to be in but it always boils down to this you have got to go with what you are convinced in your heart is right and it doesn't make any difference how many are in line with you or how many are not
Noah and his family constituted a pretty specific minority but they were right anything else before we dismiss yeah I can't cite this but I think I remember reading where the salvation and grace was given to the Gentiles in order to make the Jews jealous do you remember reading that or where that would be Romans Romans 9 10 and 11 those three chapters those three chapters really explain what God is doing as regards the Gentiles and the Jew and that's the most wonderful commentary

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

that anybody could ever undertake is Romans 9 10 and 11 and if you read those three chapters it really spells out what's happened with God's people whom he has set aside in unbelief but he has not just written them off and kicked them out that's the way people do things but that's not the way God operates God makes good on his promises he it's time he's you're right absolutely to be part of the kingdom absolutely you're right you're right and Ephesians Ephesians 2 really let me just close let me just close with this and I promise I'll let you go then but since you brought that up Ephesians 2 addresses this very issue as Paul writes to Gentiles and in chapter 2 he says in verse 2 in which you you you Gentiles you in the audience there at Ephesus you formerly walked according to the course of this world according to the prince of the power of the air the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience among them we too all formerly lived in the lust of our flesh indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind and were by nature children of wrath even as the rest but [74:04] God being rich in mercy because of this great love with which he loved us even when we were dead in trespasses and sins and then come down if you will to verse 11 therefore remember that formerly you the Gentiles in the flesh who are called uncircumcision by the so-called circumcision which is performed in the flesh by human hands remember that you were at that time separate from Christ excluded from the commonwealth of Israel strangers to the covenants of promise having no hope and without God in the world that was your plight before but now in Christ Jesus you who were formerly far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ for for he himself is our peace who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall wow and then in verse 15 that he might make the two that is

Jew and Gentile one new man thus establishing peace and might reconcile them both Jew and Gentile in one body to God through the cross by it having put to death the enmity oh my that is and then verse 19 you are no longer strangers and aliens you're no longer on the outside but you are fellow citizens with the saints and are of God's household wow wonderful wonderful and with that we conclude so thank you so much for being here today and the good Lord willing and the creeps don't rise we'll be here for I don't know if I can bring myself to say June but that's what it's going to be isn't it wow okay thank you all have a great day

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host