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**Seeks and Draws the True, the Honorable, and the
Devoted of Heart
Acts Chapter Sixteen**

We have been going through the Book of Acts. Chapter Sixteen is tonight's topic. Turn with me in your Bibles to Acts Chapter Sixteen. This Chapter is extremely endearing to me. What it is explaining is the kind of people who belong in the church. There are some people who do not belong in the body of Christ. We know that. It is not that we are standing at the door saying, "You can come in, but you cannot." That said, there is a heart that God is looking for. There is a certain heart that is drawn towards God. It is a heart that is true. John talks about this thing called truth and those who are searching for truth.

(John 3:21) "But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God."

What he is saying by that is there those who desire truth. The word “practice” is often translated in the Greek “celebrate.” If truth is something you celebrate, if the truth is what you are looking for, then Scripture tells us that you will come to Christ. As Jesus says very clearly, (John 14:6) “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.’”

We know that Jesus Christ draws His own to Himself. Jesus Christ draws those who are seeking the truth, and they recognize Jesus as the Truth. What that means is that not only do you recognize that what He says is true, but you recognize that He Himself is genuine and sincere and real. There is nothing false about Jesus Christ. When Christ says that He loves you, guess what? He went to the cross for you. That is pretty real stuff. A person who is looking for something that is real, a person who is looking for true, a person who is looking for something that is genuine, is automatically drawn to Christ if in fact he is presented appropriately. This is why Jesus says,

(John 10:27) “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.”

As we come to Acts Chapter Sixteen, what we see are different individuals who begin to come and are drawn to the church. As we have been walking through the Book of Acts, we have been talking about the business or the acts of the apostles. The word “acts” refers to the business of the apostles or the acts of the apostles. What is the business of the apostles? The business of the apostles is to lay the foundation of the church. What do we have in the Book of Acts? We have the foundation of the church being laid, which is Christ Jesus. The church is to proclaim Christ and is built upon the integrity of Christ, the Spirit of Christ. What should the church look like? Christ. If a church does not look like Christ, then it is doing something wrong because He is what the church is about. The apostles begin to build upon this foundation. We have gone through the first 15 chapters which convey to us what this looks like. What should a church look like? As we look at the plethora of possibilities in the world today,

there is a lot of distortion of what really should be. That is why you have to keep going back to the Bible. What does a church look like? We know that there are various methodologies. For instance, we have Vacation Bible school. There is no verse in Scripture that says you should have Vacation Bible School, but it can be a venue through which the children are reached. Like Paul says,

(I Corinthians 9:20) “To the Jews, I became like 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;”

(I Corinthians 9:22) “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.”

In other words, I try to talk in such a way that each person can understand and comprehend the things that I am saying. Children are very physical, and so, without compromising the word of God, we try to make it very palatable to them so that they will comprehend what we are saying. It would not do us any good to use big words

when they do not comprehend those things. It is our desire to proclaim the message of Jesus as clearly and unambiguously as we can. As we come into Acts Chapter Sixteen, what we see are different individuals who are drawn to the church; and we see the leading of Paul and Silas to specific places. It is interesting how the Holy Spirit draws them. One of the reasons why I love this chapter is because it focuses on the church at Philippi. As you look at the Book of Philippians, we are drawn to this church, small though it may be, which is one of the greatest churches of all time. Before we go into this chapter, there is an emphasis in the title that I want to focus on. We are talking about the church. The title that I came up with for Chapter Sixteen is “Seeks and Draws the True, the Honorable, and the Devoted of Heart.” If a church is a real church, those are the characteristics of people whom it is drawing. It is drawing those people who will be true. It is drawing those people who will be honorable in heart, who will be genuinely seeking, who will be true, and who will be devoted.

In the Old Testament in First Samuel chapter 22, look at the ragtag group that followed David. Sometimes those who have that sort of heart are unrecognizable by virtue of the fact that the world has distorted everything. In many respects, they rebelled against hypocrisy. They rebelled against the inconsistencies in the world. They rebelled against those who were unjust and the inequities that they have to deal with. It is understandable that many of the people you will see in this chapter come from very strange places. They were called of God. In the Gospel of John, Jesus chooses people with individualistic natures. Examples would be when Jesus talked with Nicodemus or with the woman at the well or with the guy at the Pool of Bethesda or with the blind man or the woman caught in the act of adultery. These individuals are the ones with whom He talked. We look at them and go, "Gee, that does not look like the called." Jesus passes Jerusalem and goes into Galilee. We see Him talking with people like fishermen, a tax collector, and even a zealot. We look at a Jewish tax collector and wonder how he got

into the position of being a traitor to his own people by collecting taxes for the Roman government. How did that happen? I am sure that Matthew probably would shrug his shoulders, too. He probably also wondered how it happened. You find yourself in places where you never thought you would go, doing things you never thought you would do; these are still real people. When Jesus comes into Matthew's presence and calls him out, it is as if he says, "I have been waiting to hear that voice all my life." He might have had to deal with hypocrisy. Clearly, there was hypocrisy amongst the Pharisees and the Sadducees in Jerusalem. He had to deal with these inconsistencies all his life. But when he hears the voice of Jesus, as John tells us, say, "Come," he recognizes it as something special. The genuineness of Christ is incredible. He says, "I have never seen anybody so genuine." You even have a zealot who at one time probably was willing to murder for the sake of Judaism; yet he will turn and follow Christ. Simon the Zealot will be one of the twelve disciples. As you look at the list, you have people who are

perceived to be a confused and dazed group, perhaps by hypocrisy, people who are disenchanted by the superficiality of the world. I would say they were people who appear to be a bunch of misfits. That is also what you have in First Samuel chapter 22 with the men who follow David. They number around four hundred. It says they were disgruntled; they were those who did not know where they were going; and they began to gather around David. Looking at Second Samuel chapter 15, you see that these men are still hanging in with him at his darkest hour when he is leaving the city. He is unwilling to fight against his own son. He is in great sorrow. These men have become mighty warriors. These mighty warriors walk out, and they refuse to pick up their swords because their king does not want to fight. They are willing to march in shame with him. It is the same group of men in Second Samuel chapter 23 where the Philistine garrison surrounded them. There is a well in his hometown of Bethlehem, and he longs for a drink of water. He mentions it, and three of those men go into the midst of the Philistine camp to get

some water for David. They risk their lives for him only to get water. These are devoted men. You would say, “Well, they did not look devoted when I first saw them.” You are right. They did not always look devoted. But the reason why they are where they are is because they have been so wronged, and the world has so twisted and distorted things that they are going, “You know what? I do not want to have anything to do with the facades that are out there. I am looking for something real.” Therefore, what looks like rebellion is actually a disdain for the false. What we see is God calling them out.

In First Chronicles, David pulls his son aside as he is dying and passing the baton to Solomon. David turns to him and says, “Son, this is what is really important.” If you are about to die and about to hand over your kingdom to somebody, what do you tell him?

(I Chronicles 28:9) “As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve him with a whole heart and a willing mind; for the Lord searches all hearts, and understands every intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him,

He will let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will reject you forever.”

Did you catch that phrase? “A whole heart and a willing mind.” In John chapter 4, Jesus talks to the woman at the well. He asks her, “Do you know what the Father is looking for? He is looking for someone who will worship Him in Spirit and in truth. The word “worship” literally refers to serving. For whom is it that He is looking to serve Him? Who is it that He is looking to bring into His kingdom? The answer is those who are sincere, those who are genuine, those who are real. God is looking for those who will serve Him in Spirit and in truth. What you see is the same advice that David gave his son. He says, “What God is looking for is a whole heart and a willing mind.” The whole heart and willing mind are scary to people. They muse, “I think these Christians are really serious.” Yes. We are serious. We believe that either there is a God or there is not. Either He is worthy of us following, or He is not. I cannot comprehend how it would be appropriate to go halfway. How insulting that would be to a God who is Lord

of lords and King of kings. How insulting that would be! He says, “You need to serve Me with your whole heart and a willing mind for the Lord--look at the phrase here. The Lord does what? He searches. He searches our hearts and understands every intent of our thoughts. Do not think that you are fooling Him. “Oh, yes. I am going to church.” I am not really sure that He is pleased with that. What He is looking for is the genuineness, the sincerity of your heart, and God sees that. God rewards according to your heart every time in Scripture. It is not a reward according to your deeds, although deeds are often mentioned in the text; but it is always according to the heart. It is always according to your motivation; God will judge the intent of your heart, Scripture tells us.

(I Chronicles 29:7) “Since I know, O my God, that you try the heart and delight in uprightness, I, in the integrity of my heart, have willingly offered all these things; so now with joy I have seen Your people, who are present here, make their offerings willingly to You.”

That is the same formula, is it not? This is reiterated in another favorite verse of many people.

(II Chronicles 16:9) “For the eyes of the Lord move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His...”

You begin to understand and comprehend exactly what God is looking for on the earth. He looks for those whose heart is completely His. I do not know about you, but I like that “strongly support” stuff. What is God looking for? The person whose heart is wholly His. You often hear people say, “What about the people living far off in a distant land? What if they do not know about God? First of all, I want to remind you that we are on a ball, so we are not going anywhere. Then know that God is sovereign and omnipresent. There is no place you could go that could be away from His presence. Even more than that, He is searching throughout all the earth, and He can see every heart that would be devoted to Him. He will find you. Jesus will say,

(John 10:16) “I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock with one shepherd.”

He does not say, “They will come get Me.” He says, I will go get them.” In Acts chapter 16, God is saying, “I found you.” It starts off with Timothy. He could not have been a better guy to find because, according to the text, he is a very honorable young man. God saw that and brought Paul into His sphere. We will not have time to go through all the cities and read every single verse in the chapter because what we are trying to do is summarize and help you see the importance of each chapter. What we will see is the pattern and the thread that goes through the whole chapter. The Lord knows those who are His. The eyes of the Lord have been searching. He will find you. If your heart is right, if you are searching for truth, if you long for a real relationship with God, He will find you. How magnificent it is that He brings people into our lives who begin to proclaim that wonderful message of the Gospel, it is not an accident. If you have heard the Gospel, it is not

an accident. It is not an accident that you are where you are. We will see Paul visit a city where there is no church. In the next city, there is a church. Some cities and/or churches they visit; others they pass. God knows where the people are who are sincere. God knows who is genuine. In this text, the Spirit of God will actually tell Paul not to go into Mysia. That probably does not mean anything to us; but if you go to Asia Minor, a bit further, towards the west, you would be in Mysia territory. In that sphere, the Holy Spirit says, “I do not want you going there.” Paul might have thought, “But there are hundreds or thousands of people there who do not know You.” God says, “Not there.”

When it opens up in Chapter 16, we know that Paul has already been in Lystra. This is the hometown of Timothy. This is where Timothy lived. Remember that this is where Paul had been stoned to death. These young men saw him being stoned to death. The text reads that he was perhaps dead, but he was dead. The emphasis of the text is that they perceived him as dead. The reason why it reads that

way is this: when the Jews stoned him to death, it was a legal transaction. They were stoning him because he had done something that they felt was illegal under their law. They stood over him and made sure that he was dead. It is like having a doctor who comes in and pronounces you dead. That would be the same as perceiving you as dead. You are dead. But the text emphasizes that he is not dead in God's eyes because God is not finished with him. So, Paul was resurrected and lived again. You can imagine young Timothy's surprise. Paul gathers the young guys together and says, "Okay. Here is the deal. It is really hard getting to heaven. Through many trials, we must follow the Lord." They say, "I guess you are right." Then Paul probably says something like, "So you want to follow Him?" Timothy goes, "Yes." Timothy is one of those whom the Lord is looking for. He begins to follow the Lord. This area is still a hostile place to the Gospel. Even so, some of them are standing firm in their faith. Paul hears of this young man who has a reputation of being honorable.

(Acts 16:1) “Paul came also to Derbe and Lystra. And a disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer; but his father was a Greek,”

(Acts 16:2) “and he was well spoken of by the brethren who were in Lystra and Iconium.”

He was well spoken of; he was an honorable guy. Paul turns and says, “I want this guy with me.” Can you imagine in Timothy's wildest imagination that this retired Sanhedrin Supreme Court Justice would turn to him someday and say, “I want that guy?” Would you think that in his wildest imagination that the Spirit of God would speak through him and perform many great wonders? Who even knows this guy? Timothy is a young guy, a nobody. His dad is not even a Jew. Did Paul question the integrity of this heart? This is why it is so important that your heart is right. If your heart is right, God will work in you. We were talking the other day about opportunities. All you have to do is get your heart right. God will bring opportunities to you. The mission field will come to you. It is an amazing phenomenon. People will come to you if

your heart is right. There is no reason why God would send you people if your heart was not right, if it was not genuine. You do not have to look for ministry. It will come. In this passage, it will start off that way. It will start off with God finding the honorable. It is interesting in Chapter 16 whom God picks out and how God begins to move Paul away from certain places and into another region.

Dropping down to verse 5,

(Acts 16:5) “So the churches were being strengthened in the faith, and were increasing in number daily.”

(Acts 16:6) “They passed through Phrygian and Galatian region, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia;”

Mark well the phrase “having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit.” They were in Asia Minor which is now Turkey.

(Acts 16:7) “and after they came to Mysia, they were trying to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them.”

Once again, there are thousands of people in these regions. Why would God not permit him to go to them? Don't you think that is strange?

(Acts 16:8) “and passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas.”

God tells him in a vision that he has to go through that territory and ultimately cross the water to get to Greece. Would it not have been easier to have gone a little further north than to go over to Mysia? And there are a lot of people there. But God says, “No.” I do not know exactly how the Spirit of God thinks, but I can tell you this. When the Spirit of God says no, it is pretty clear. There have been days when I have tried to do something, and it is like God is saying, “No.” I am not getting anywhere. Finally, God opens up a door; and you think, “That was so easy.” God says, “Yes, it is easy if you take the right door.” It is very clear when the Spirit of God begins to move you. To be perfectly candid, we are not always in the best of spirits when God is moving in our hearts; but God is gracious enough to keep moving us where He wants us to

go. The other day, I was a little frustrated with myself because I had bought the wrong thing which meant that I had to go back. Have you done that? I do not mind going back to a place if it is not too far away. But if it is on the other side of town, I get a bit more upset with myself. Albeit frustrated, I headed back. When I finally arrived, lo and behold, there was Brad Bellows. I see this kid who had lived with us many years ago, except he is not a kid anymore. Within a few days after he and I had previously talked, he had been hired at this place. Just that day, he had been talking to his brother who had recently received the Lord. He told his brother that he needed to return to church. He kept saying, "You have to stay. I got some more questions. You have to stay." I realized that this was not an accident. Now I might physically fight the moving of the Spirit of God when the Spirit of God says go. Believe me, you do not miss it if your heart's desire is to serve. God knows your heart's desire in spite of the fact that you might resist what He wants you to do. God knows your heart's desire. If God were to whisper in my ear, "We will

help somebody.” I would respond, “Okay. I am ready for that.” God knows where our hearts are. God is gracious, and He moves us. How He moved Paul, we do not know. But we do know that He told Paul to not go where Paul wanted to stop. Paul has a vision. It is very interesting that Alexander the Great had a similar vision when he was going into the region of Jerusalem. He was preparing to take the city because he was literally wiping out everything that was in his way. But his general looked at him and said, “I do not think I would do that. I think what I would do is try to talk to the priest in there and try to work out something amiable. I would ask if maybe I could sacrifice to their God.” Alexander agrees. He sends a guy in there, and the priest says no. He refuses to make a sacrifice for Alexander the Great. Alexander the Great goes, “Fine. They are dead. I will wipe them out.” The general comes back and says to the priest, “You need to pray for Alexander the Great.” He begins to pray for him, and Alexander the Great receives a vision that convinced

him that he needed to bypass Jerusalem. You almost see that whole scenario being played out in this situation.

(Acts 16:9) “a vision appeared to Paul in the night; a man of Macedonia was standing and appealing to him, and saying, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.”

Paul goes immediately. He has the desire to go wherever God wants him to go. He goes to Philippi, which was a military garrison. It was a colony of largely Roman populace in this town in Greece. We know that it was a fairly good-sized town, but there were no Jews to speak of. Paul's natural venue was to go into the Jewish synagogues. One of the titles of the synagogue was a place of prayer. Paul enters Philippi, looking for a place of prayer. That is where he usually goes. He is a Jew. He cannot find one. There were none. There had to be ten Jewish men in order for there to be a synagogue; since there were not enough men, there was no synagogue. You are thinking, “Wait a minute. There was a guy in Macedonia who was crying out that he needed Paul to come. Where is he?” On the Sabbath day, he goes outside

of the city looking for a place of prayer. He finds a place where women are by the water, probably doing their laundry. There was this lady named Lydia. He started to talk with them. As he talks, the passage says that Lydia listened and opened up her heart. What we see is, if I could put it this way, that true and honorable and genuine heart that God is looking for. It is like Luke telling us about the different soils where he talks about the good soil.

(Luke 8:15) “But the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance.”

What God is saying is that this is what He is looking for.

(Acts 16:14) “A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul.”

After that, her entire household responds. She seems to be the breadwinner of the house; it seems that there is no man in the house.

(Acts 16: 15) “And 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.’ And she prevailed upon us.”

She is a wealthy woman. Her home becomes a church. They begin meeting in Philippi. As you read the Book of Philippians, they are writing to the church that is meeting in Lydia's home. Lydia begins to open up her home. God saw this woman's heart and how she would gravitate towards Him. As Paul was going one day to the place of prayer to meet with this group of people, a young girl that was demon-possessed begins crying out, “Bond-servants of the Most High God, bond-servants of the Most High God!”

(Acts 16:18) “She continued doing this for many days. But Paul was greatly annoyed, and turned and said to the spirit, ‘I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her!’ And it came out at that very moment.”

Wow! Paul casts the spirit out. That was not something he should have done because this girl was being used by

people who made money from her prophecies. These salespeople used her demonic abilities to gain money from what she did. Paul messed up their income, and they were pretty assertive. They called the police on Paul. The Roman guards came and severely beat both him and Silas with rods. I do not know exactly where Luke is at this point. But Luke is there. Luke does not go to prison. Paul and Silas were imprisoned after they had been beaten.

(Acts 16:23) “When they had struck them with many blows, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to guard them securely.”

When Scripture says many blows, guess what? It is not exaggerating. Obviously, they were not treated rightly. The Roman guards commanded this jailer to guard them securely.

(Acts 16:24) “and he, having received such a command, threw them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.”

What we know is that their feet were more than just fastened. It is a very convoluted, twisted thing, and it contorts their bodies. The text seems to infer that this jailer was inflicting pain on them. You would say to yourself, “How did this guy get the job of jailer? “Jail” is often translated “torture”, by the way. How does someone get that job? Can you imagine filling out a job application and trying to figure out what school you went to? School of pain, Suffering? I do not know. But how do you get a job like that? We do not know; but he finds himself in this job. What we know up to this point is that he looks like he belongs there, but he does not. What Scripture is wanting us to know in this small, wonderful chapter is that God is moving heaven and earth to get this guy because he is the man who was crying out in Paul’s vision. This is the Macedonian who was saying, “Help me.” Up to this point, we have met only ladies. We only have women. This is the Macedonian.

(Acts 16:25) “But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them;”

(Acts 16:26) “and suddenly there came a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison house were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone’s chains were unfastened.”

They stayed up all night singing praises to God. Not only is the jailer hearing this, but the other prisoners as well. The text actually says there are other prisoners, which is a very interesting point because when the earthquake comes and shakes all the doors open, Paul turns and says, “None of us have left” which seems to convey that Paul and Silas even had an influence on the prisoners. Otherwise, why did they not leave? This guard was more honorable than the guards in Matthew to whom the Pharisees and Sadducees gave some money so they would lie about what happened. He could have easily lied about the circumstances of what had happened. However, this guard goes, “I’ll just kill myself and save the tax gatherers.”

He prepares his sword to kill himself. He believes that this is the honorable thing to do. The prison doors are all open. Is it his fault? No. It is not his fault. There was a great earthquake. He believes that the honorable thing to do is to kill himself. So, the Roman jailer takes the sword to kill himself. Paul says, "Do not!" The wonderful thing about this is that this man realizes what he has been missing all of his life. He falls down and says, "What do I have to do to be saved?" How does he know to ask that question? The answer is pretty simple. Paul and Silas have been sharing the Gospel all night long. They have been singing the Gospel. They have been praising with the Gospel. They have been proclaiming the Gospel all night long. Therefore, he knows exactly what to ask. He cries out, "What do I need to do to be saved?" They answered, "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, you and your household." The text says that he does exactly that, including his whole household. What an interesting phenomenon! He takes them out of the jail. He takes him to his house. He starts washing off all those wounds, many

of which he had inflicted on them. In humility, he begins to wash them. While they are in the water, he turns and says, “How about baptizing me and my whole family now?” And the whole family was baptized. After that, what we understand according to the passage, is that they all returned to the jail.

The next morning, the magistrates sent word to release Paul and Silas. Paul at this juncture said, “No. I do not think you will release me.” Remember that Paul is a Roman citizen, and we know that you do not beat or do anything to Roman citizens unless they have had a trial. Paul is a Roman citizen. Apparently, Silas is, too. They have not had a trial. The Roman guards had beaten them erroneously, and now they were in big trouble. Beating a Roman citizen without first having a trial was punishable as a capital offense. What is interesting to me is that when Paul and Silas were beaten, they did not throw that out. They did not say, “Wait a minute. We are Roman citizens. We know our rights.” They did not throw that out. Why did they not say anything? Because at that juncture, they

counted it as their privilege to suffer for the name of Christ. Why now will he throw that out? Because he will protect the church and the Roman jailer. He turned to the officials, and said, "I will not leave. You beat a Roman, a Roman citizen. That was wrong." They then begged them to leave. You can see that Paul had them right where he wanted them. Paul and Silas left the prison and went to the house of Lydia where he strengthens the church. What is endearing to me about this whole thing is how God has literally moved heaven and earth to save the jailer, to save Lydia, and to save and bring Timothy along. As these are individuals, we ask what about the masses? God says that we will skip with the masses because this one has a genuine heart. The church is drawn to those with genuine hearts, and those who have genuine hearts are drawn to a church that is real. This is the heart of God. This is why you see in the Gospel of John that Nicodemus comes to Jesus at night. He is drawn. There is something about this Jesus. The woman at the well is drawn to the truth. Jesus spoke the truth to her, and she was drawn to

the reality of that. She heard this rabbi say these things, and she was touched by it. All the way through, you see the genuine being called out in very strange places because you would not suspect these individuals.

Now I want to close with a passage in the Gospel of John chapter 9. It is a wonderful and interesting passage in which Jesus heals a blind man. I want to leave you with a fundamental truth from the situation where this man is healed from his blindness. The Scripture tells us that this man was born blind. Immediately the disciples asked the question, "Who sinned, this man or his parents?" The nature of man is to try to figure out why somebody has the difficulties that they have and why somebody else does not. Jesus does not really answer them. There is a reason for that which we will see. Jesus' fundamental answer is basically this. "I have a job to do. You are trying to figure out things that you will never understand. Why does God do what He does? You will never understand that. But I will tell you this. I am working and My Father is working, and We are doing a work that is for the purpose

of causing God to be manifest in and through that person. In other words, We are working to save you. We are working to save men.” Now the text tells us that Jesus does something quite interesting. I do not want to do a hermeneutic study on this text because then we will go into the next day. But the way that He heals him is telling us everything about the work of God. So, I want you to take special note of how He heals this blind man. His statement is,

(John 9:4) “We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no man can work.”

(John 9:5) “While I am in the world, I am the Light of the world.”

Here again, I could talk long about verse 5. It goes all the way back to John chapter 1. The emphasis, of course, is that He is the Light, and what is His desire? To answer that, back up to Jesus’ answer to the question “Why is this man born blind?” It is so that the works of God might be displayed in Him. That is what verse 3. It was in order that

the works of God might be displayed; or another way of putting it, that God might be made manifest in and through Him. Jesus continues from verse 3 to verse 5, “while I am in the world, I am the Light of the world.” After He said this, watch what He does.

(John 9:6) “When He had said this, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and applied the clay to his eyes,”

There is nothing about this that is sanitary, and there is nothing about it that makes sense related to healing. You especially do not want to put dirt in your eyes. See? Nothing here makes any sense. Right? Wrong. Everything about it makes sense. You have to go back all the way to Genesis which displays the creative act of God when He molded a man out of clay. We know because John tells us that the Creator is at work here. He is at work together with the Father. What is He at work doing, and why is He doing what He is doing? First of all, I want to talk about dirt. What is dirt? It is dirty. Can we put another word in there? Filth. Christ is picking up the filth of the earth.

What is spit? Go back into Numbers chapter 12 verse 14 where it talks about spitting. In fact, Christ was spit on when He hung on the cross. Spitting in and on something was a curse in and of itself. It was a display of that which was shameful. You were literally marking something as shameful. Here, you have a combination of two things. What are they? Filth and shame. What God does in His miraculous plan is He begins to mold the filth and the shame of this world. It is a part of your life. It is a part of my life. He uses and molds it for the purpose of making it clear to us that we do not want to be living with it or in it anymore. God, how can You do that? How can you enliven somebody in a way that gets them to think, “I do not want this filth. I do not want this shame anymore.” You put it right where they can see it. What God has been doing in all of our lives, what God has been doing in the lives of Nicodemus, the woman at the well, the man who has been sick for thirty-eight years, the woman who is caught in the act of adultery, is molding the filth and the shame in their lives so that they will come to the point where they

will admit, “I do not want this anymore.” It is the very thing that He has been working in your life. We find ourselves in strange places. We find ourselves in predicaments where we have rebelled against the lies of the world. It is as if there comes a point in our life where we go, “You know what? I am just sick and tired of the filth and the shame of this world.” Jesus says, “You are about to see.”

(John 9:7) “and said to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam’ (which is translated, Sent). So he went away and washed, and came back seeing.”

Siloam is translated from the word *apostello*, which means apostle, which means sent. What the text is revealing is that God then sends an apostle or one sent from God. God sends One to proclaim the message. The Word washes us clean. He begins to proclaim the truth, and the blind man’s eyes were opened. God is working in our lives; Christ is working in our lives. They are both at work. Everything that has happened in our lives--the difficulties, the problems, the shame, the heartaches, the

pain--are all part of God's creative act of molding us so that we will begin to think, "You know what? I think I need to wash myself. When you begin to wash and obey, you can see clearly for the first time in your life. God is taking these different individuals in the Book of Acts and placing them in interesting situations. We do not know why Lydia was where she was, but we know that she had been searching. We do not know how that little girl became demonically possessed and then got in the position that she was in. We do not know how this jailer got into the position that he was in. Yet, every one of them was a creation of God, and He knew where they were. In each person's life, God had been molding the situation around them so that when they heard the Gospel, it was as if water had washed out their eyes. God was cleansing them to bring them to Himself. How wonderful it is that God is working in our lives, and how wonderful it is that God would send one man all the way over thousands of miles to Greece for only one person's salvation. God is not willing that any should perish.

Prayer

Father, we give You thanks that You see us where we are, that You are looking for the genuine heart. Your eyes are moving, searching to and fro, looking for the heart that is, can be wholly Yours. As Scripture so aptly puts it, He will find You. Father, You found me. You molded the situations of my life, and You caused me to become frustrated. You caused the dirt to become irritating. It was a day in which the shame became real to me, and You said, "Today, we will wash it all away." I replied, "I am ready." It is Your grace that has molded these things. So, we come to You tonight. We give You thanks for the things that have been a part of our lives, whether it has been our families, our parentage, the background that You have given us, or whether it be the circumstances or the experiences that we have had or the difficulties that have come into our lives. All has been molded that we would now come to You. We give You thanks for Your love for us in Jesus' name. Amen.