

Acts 098
Household Evangelism
Acts 16:32-40
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Dr. Andy Woods

Let us take our Bibles this evening and open them to Acts 16:32. The outline for the Book of Acts is in Acts 1:8.

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem [Acts 1-7], and in all Judea and Samaria [Acts 8-12], and even to the remotest parts of the earth [Acts 13-28]" (Acts 1:8).

The Book of Acts has a nice three-part structure. We are in part three, which involves missionary journey number one (Act 13-14); the Jerusalem Council (Act 15), where they were trying to figure out, what do we do with all of these Gentiles that are now believers? Do they have to go under the Law of Moses to be part of the church? Answer: No. That leads to missionary journey number two (Acts 15-18).



Paul's second missionary journey begins with a split between Paul and Barnabas that we talked about at the end of Acts 15. Then the focus is on the ministry in Syria and Cilicia (Acts 16:1-5) and the Macedonian man who waved, for lack of a better expression, Paul into Europe. The first major city that Paul stops at is Philippi. That is where we are, in the middle of studying the Philippian ministry (Acts 16:11-40).

Some major things have happened. Lydia has been converted (Acts 16:11-15). A demonized slave girl has had a demon cast out of her (Acts 16:16-18). This upset the

owners because the demon inside the slave girl gave her the ability to predict the future. With the demon removed, her powers were gone.

- IV. Philippian ministry (Acts 16:11-40)
 - A. Lydia's conversion (11-15)
 - B. Demonized slave girl (16-18)
 - C. Paul and Silas' imprisonment (19-34)
 - 1. Imprisonment (19-24)
 - 2. Jailer's conversion (25-34)
 - a) Timing (25)
 - b) Earthquake (26)
 - c) Jailer's response (27)
 - d) Paul's response (28)
 - e) Jailer's reaction (29-30)
 - f) Gospel message (31)
 - g) Household evangelism (32)
 - h) Results of salvation (33-34)
 - (1) Wounds treated (33a)
 - (2) Baptism (33b)
 - (3) Hospitality (34a)
 - (4) Fellowship (34b)
 - D. Departure from Philippi (35-40)

The owner of the slave girl did not like that, so they had Paul and Silas cast into prison. They are beaten with rods and cast into prison (Acts 16:19-24). That was the plan and providence of God, because now we are going to have another major conversion in Philippi: the Philippian jailer.

It is midnight; there is an earthquake. The prisoners could all get out because God caused an earthquake, opening the prison doors and releasing the shackles. The jailer is ready to kill himself (Acts 16:27) because if you let prisoners go on your watch, your life was on the line. Paul says, "Do not kill yourself. We are all here and accounted for" (Acts 16:28).

You have the jailer's reaction—he falls into fear (Acts 16:29-30). It is at that point that he asks the most important question a human being can ask: "What must I do to be saved?" Paul and Silas give him the gospel (Acts 16:31). You should probably take that verse and commit it to memory.

"He said, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' They said, 'Believed in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household'" (Acts 16:30-31).

You notice that Paul and Silas did not tell the Philippian jailer to tell God that he was sorry. They did not tell the Philippian jailer to repent of all of his sins. They did not tell the Philippian jailer to invite Jesus into his heart. They did not tell the Philippian jailer to

invite Jesus to take over. They did not tell the Philippian jailer to confess Jesus before man. They did not tell the Philippian jailer to walk an aisle. They did not tell the Philippian jailer to fill out a card.

They did not tell him anything that you typically hear today in modern-day Christendom concerning how the gospel is presented. They did not give him the ABC method: number one, admit you are a sinner; number two, believe in Jesus; number three, call on the Lord (or some say to confess the Lord). They did not tell him anything like that.

What they told him to do is the one verb that the lost human being is responsible for fulfilling in order to be made right with God, which is to believe, period. Trust in what Jesus did for you on the cross through His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension. Trust in that and that alone for the safe keeping of your soul, the forgiveness of sins, eternal life. If you do that, then you are saved.

By the way, the Bible tells people to do this 160 times. Why the big struggle then? Why is everybody confused about this? It relates to the good old-fashioned pride of man that always wants to do something to curry God's favor. This is why the gospel is called an offense (Galatians 5:11).

There is absolutely nothing you can do to curry God's favor. In fact, Isaiah 64:6 tells us that our righteous deeds (notice it is our righteous deeds, and not our unrighteous deeds) are a filthy garment or rag. God is not interested in accepting people before Him on the basis of their righteous deeds. That is an offense to man and his pride, because he always wants to do something to earn something from God. Religion says, "God did 90%, so let me do 10%. God, You bought lunch, so let me leave the tip. Let me do something." God says, no.

"Therefore they said to Him, 'What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?' Jesus answered and said to them, 'This is the work that you believe in Him whom He has sent'" (John 6:28-29).

Prideful man does not like to hear that, because prideful man always wants to take credit for something. This is why the gospel is designed to be an attack on human pride. God designed it this way. This is why first-century Israel tripped right over Christ (Romans 9-10). They tried to get to God through self-righteousness, and God does not allow people to come before Him through self-righteousness.

He allows people to come before Him through imputed or transferred righteousness, alien righteousness, righteousness that is not your own righteousness but that is transferred to you as a gift at the point of faith alone in Christ alone.

If a person does not want to come that way, then they cannot come. It does not matter how upset they get. If you do not like it, you can go sit in the corner with Cain who ended up murdering his brother. Cain had a Frank Sinatra approach to religion: I did it

my way. God does not allow that. You do it His way, which means He did everything, and you receive it as a gift, or else you cannot come.

It is just a staggering and stunning thing how something so easy gets messed up in God's church by so many people that should know better. I am trying to give you an explanation as to why this whole issue on the simplicity of the gospel, the clarity of the gospel, is always a tug of war once you get into the apologetics of trying to defend the pure gospel.

You have there in Acts 16:31 a beautiful summation of the purity of the gospel. There is only one verb that has to be met for the lost person to be saved, and that is faith alone in Christ alone—no emotion, no feeling bad about yourself. If you want to feel bad about yourself, you are free to do that, but that is not required.

There is no filling out of a card, no raising of a hand. He does not even tell him to close his eyes and pray a prayer. "With every eye closed, if you believe this or that, then pray this prayer," or "If you really mean it, I need to see a show of hands. I see that hand back there. I see that hand back there." There is nothing like that here at all. It is just "believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved."

There are no conditions to be made right with God. When He calls you into discipleship as a Christian, that is different. That is where the conditions come in, but we are not dealing with that right here. We are dealing with one-on-one evangelism related to what unbelievers have to do, which is to believe.

This is what the Philippian jailer does. What does it mean here, "*Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, you and your household*" (Acts 16:31)? What does that even mean? Acts 16:32 tells us:

"And they spoke the word of the Lord to him together with all who were in his house" (Acts 16:32).

It is not a situation where he believes and then everyone else in his family is automatically a Christian. That is not the context of this. The context of it is that he got saved and Paul and Silas shared the gospel with everyone else in his house, and they also believed and got saved.

God has no grandchildren. You cannot get into heaven on the basis of what your parents believed. Everyone has to have their own faith. That household evangelism happens in Acts 16:32, which helps us explain the clause at the end of Acts 16:31: "*Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.*"

Then you go to Acts 16:33-34 and you see the results of this salvation. What was the byproduct of this man, this Philippian jailer getting saved? We do not teach this concept here that if you are really a Christian, then we need to see good works. A lot of

churches teach that. We do not teach that, because I could show you in the Bible people that are in heaven who have no good works as far as I can tell.

First Corinthians 3:15 is a case in point. A guy stands before the Lord, and he is unrewarded, but he is saved *"as though fire."* He is saved as one escaping through the flames. Meaning that his entire life was wood, hay, and stubble as a Christian. He had no good works at all to show for his faith, but he is still in heaven.

Does God want good works to follow salvation? Of course He does, but we do not teach it as some kind of automatic thing. Then we turn ourselves into being fruit inspectors seeing if So-and-so has enough good works to prove they are a Christian.

In our belief system—coming from 1 Corinthians 3:15 and many other passages, there are examples of people in heaven that have no good works to show for it whatsoever—good works after you get saved, determine rewards. The only thing that determines whether you get into heaven is the good work Jesus did for you, and your willingness to receive it as a free gift.

In this case (and it is not true in every case, but in this case) some good works immediately showed up in this Philippian jailer's life. Those are described in Acts 16:33-34. There are four things he did: number one, he treated the wounds of Paul and Silas (Acts 16:33).

"And he took them that very hour of the night and washed their wounds, and immediately he was baptized, he and all his household" (Acts 16:33).

Why did Paul and Silas need their wounds washed? Because they had just been flogged and they had been beaten very severely. Remember earlier that their garments were taken off of them so that the blows could be inflicted in a more serious and intense manner. Here they are in this condition. They have been in the stocks; they have spent most of the night in jail. Now I guess this Philippian jailer has remorse on them, so he washes their wounds.

This reminds me of the story of the Good Samaritan. Do you remember that one?

"and came to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them; and he put them on his own beast, and brought them to an inn and took care of him" (Luke 10:34).

The Good Samaritan is extolled for that, and that is what the Philippian jailer is doing here with Paul and Silas.

The second thing that this Philippian jailer does is to get baptized (Acts 16:33):

"and immediately he was baptized, he and all his household" (Acts 16:33).

You will notice a pattern in the Book of Acts, every single time baptism occurs—when we talk about baptism, we talk about immersion in water—it occurs after a person has believed or trusted in Christ. It never comes before the other. There are no examples anywhere in the Bible of an infant being baptized.

As we like to say here, "We will baptize any infant that can come forward and give us their testimony on how they got saved. If you can do that, then we will baptize an infant." This rules out the infants because they cannot talk yet. They can cry a lot, though. We baptize people who are already believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, because baptism is an outward symbol of an inward reality. Baptism has no power to do anything. The only thing that has the power is Jesus, who saves at the point of faith alone in Christ alone.

Then why get baptized? Because it is a symbol for what one has already done. What if a person never gets baptized, do they go to hell? No, they do not.

Jesus was nailed on the cross between two thieves. One was penitent, in other words, he trusted in Christ at the last moment of his life. Jesus did not say, "Throw water on this guy before he dies so he can go to heaven." Obviously that did not happen. There is not a lot you can do when your hands and feet are nailed to a cross. You cannot get down and get baptized and all of these kinds of things.

Baptism is a step of obedience. It is a step of growth. It is a step towards full rewards at the Bema Seat Judgment of Christ, but it does absolutely nothing in terms of salvation. It symbolizes salvation that has already transpired.

Here are some verses in the Book of Acts which very clearly show you this order. Some of these I have given to you before.

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19).

You see that the making of a disciple comes first, and it is presumed that you cannot disciple someone that is not a believer. Baptism is mentioned second.

In Acts 8:12 there are the Samaritans that believed:

"But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, men and women alike" (Acts 8:12).

In this verse you will see the word "believe" first and the word "baptized" second.

Later on in that same chapter, at the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch, it says:

"[...And he answered and said, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.'] And he ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch, and he baptized him" (Acts 8:37-38),

"Believe" is in Acts 8:37 and "baptize" is in Acts 8:38. Baptism comes after believing. There are no infants being baptized anywhere in any of these passages.

In Acts 10:42-45 we have the conversion of Cornelius.

"Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives the forgiveness of sins.' While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message" (Acts 10:43-44).

They also believed and they received the indwelling ministry of the Holy Spirit. Later on in the paragraph it says:

"Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit as we did, can he?" And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 10:47-48).

Here it is the same order: believe (Acts 10:43), and baptism (Acts 10:48). You baptize people that have already believed.

The conversion of Lydia, which we studied earlier in this chapter:

"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. 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" (Acts 16:14-15).

Notice that she responded (Acts 16:14) and then she was baptized (Acts 16:15).

Now, the passage that we are looking at here:

"They said, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved'...and immediately he was baptized, he and all his household" (Acts 16:31, 33).

We have "believe" in Acts 16:31, and "baptized" in Acts 16:33:

"Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his household, and many of the Corinthians when they heard were believing and being baptized" (Acts 18:8).

Believing is mentioned first; baptism is mentioned second.

In spite of the clarity of this, my wife and I were at a conference recently, and someone came up to our table and gave us a big, thick packet of information trying to get across the point that you have to be baptized to get to heaven. Obviously, they are going to need a big pack of information to erase the simplicity of the Scripture. Drown people in quotes and footnotes and confusing language to explain away something that the Bible clearly teaches.

My wife said, "You do not even need to read this." It went right into the circular file, shall we say, which is another way of saying the trash can. I just do not have any time to read a bunch of nonsensical false doctrine. If you are that convinced that you have to be baptized to go to heaven and you will not listen to the counsel of God's word, then there is really not a lot I can do for you. You can email me, you can send me voice messages, you can send me packets of information, you can text me, and you can do all kinds of things, but if you will not listen to the Bible, I just do not have anything else I can do for you. Have a nice day.

I think that is what the Lord was talking about in Matthew 10 where He says, "If you go into a village and they will not receive you, then at some point you have to shake the dust off your feet and move on." There are people that will sit on social media all day long and argue and banter. I used to get sucked into that, but I do not get sucked into it anymore.

Part of the reason I left all of that is because I was all heated up one day fighting with people on the internet, and the Holy Spirit impressed upon me, "Look at all this energy you are pouring into this, and how many converts do you have?" I had to think to myself, "I do not have a single one." You know why there were no converts? Because these types of arguments create strife and they create pride. If someone is teachable and humble and really wants to know the truth, I for one will do anything I can to help them. But there are people out there that are not interested in truth or interested in winning an argument.

There is a big difference between pursuing truth and pursuing victory. If a person is only interested in pursuing victory and if they will not listen to the Bible, why in the world would they listen to me? Therefore, it is a waste of my energy to be in constant conflict with them. I could take all that energy that it takes to do that, and I can pour it into productive pursuits.

What happened with the Philippian jailer? He got baptized after he believed. What else did he do? He showed hospitality.

"And he brought them into his house and set food before them, and rejoiced greatly, having believed in God with his whole household" (Acts 16:34).

You will remember that Lydia also did that when she got saved.

"If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and stay.' And she prevailed upon us" (Acts 16:15).

Here the Philippian jailer is doing the same thing. "Come on into my house," which is basic Christian hospitality. This is something that we as Christians should be involved in. We should be hospitable people.

"Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it" (Hebrews 13:2).

That is an interesting verse. You could be hospitable to somebody and find out in hindsight that it was an angel. I do not think you have to be hospitable to the devils, by the way—people that are there to hurt or maim or injure. You obviously use discernment, but basic hospitality is part of the Christian's walk. One of the gifts that the Holy Spirit has placed into the body of Christ is the gift of hospitality. You will see it mentioned there in the various gift lists.

That is what this Philippian jailer does, and they enjoy fellowship together:

"...and rejoiced greatly, having believed in God with his whole household" (Acts 16:34).

There is a commonality of believers and they are rejoicing together. You will notice that that verse, along with Acts 16:32, helps explain Acts 16:31:

"Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household" (Acts 16:31).

It is not dealing with, as many people teach, automatic salvation into the home of somebody just because they became a Christian. Rather, his household got saved because he was the leader. In the Greco-Roman world, the father had a great deal of authority. Everybody else said, "If the father can believe, that takes any hindrance away from us believing, and so we believe too." It is very clear here: *"having believed in God with his whole household."* (Acts 16:34). There are no grandchildren here; there are only spiritual children. So they are fellowshiping together; they are rejoicing together.

"Not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near" (Hebrews 10:25).

This idea of Lone Ranger Christianity and thinking, "I do not need the body of Christ. I can worship God under this tree. I have my Bible and I am just fine," is not how the Christian life is designed to be lived. We need to be in fellowship with each other, preferably in fellowship in a local assembly.

When I say that, I get a lot of emails from people saying, "We cannot find a church." My response is, "Start one. Start a church." If you cannot find a church, then start one. You do not even have to call it a church. You can call it a Bible study. We put all of our material on the internet. You are free to use our stuff as you see fit and until you see fit for someone else in your group to start teaching.

You need to be around other Christians at some point during the week, midweek, and preferably Sunday, the Lord's Day. You need to be in fellowship with each other because God has designed the Christian life to be lived in community.

The truth of the matter is, I have gifts that you need and you have gifts that I need. We are all gifted differently. I need you, and you need me. It is a different perspective on conflicts with Christians. It is hard to be in conflict with a Christian when you need them and they need you for growth. God has done a really sneaky thing on us. He has made us interdependent on each other. It means that whatever differences we have, we need to work them out because we need each other in the body of Christ.

This Lone Ranger mentality is outside of the New Testament norm. We encourage people to be in fellowship. Obviously, what it looks like from person to person differs, but there is a biblical maxim that we should not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as is the habit of some (Hebrews 10:25).

These are the results of Philippian jailer's conversion: he treated the wounds of Paul and Silas, he got baptized, he started showing basic Christian hospitality as his household was in faith, and they were rejoicing together, meaning they were worshipping together.

Then you come now to the end of this chapter, which is the last part of the Philippian ministry, where Paul and Silas depart and head off to Thessalonica (Acts 16:35-40). This departure is very interesting, how these guys left Philippi.

It started with a decision from the rulers (Acts 16:35-36)—the timing of the decision (Acts 16:35) and the jailer's report (Acts 16:36). Notice, if you will, Acts 16:35, and compare that to Acts 16:25 where they were singing praises to the Lord at night in prison, having been beaten and fastened in the stocks. In the inner room of the prison, this miracle occurred where the earthquake transpired and the doors were opened.

- D. Departure from Philippi (35-40)
 - 1. Ruler's decision (35-36)
 - a) Timing (35)
 - b) Jailer's report (36)
 - 2. Paul's defense (37)
 - 3. Leader's response (38-39)
 - a) Fear (38)
 - b) Escort and beseeching (39)
 - 4. Paul and Silas' comfort and departure (40)

That happened at midnight (Acts 16:25), and if that happened at midnight and daybreak was at 6:00 a.m., a full six hours had elapsed. The timing is given (Acts 16:35) and that leads to the jailer's report. The jailer reports something to Paul and Silas:

"And the jailer reported these words to Paul, saying, 'The chief magistrates have sent to release you. Therefore come out now and go in peace'" (Acts 16:36).

Apparently these decision makers reached a ruling, saying, "We should not have jailed these guys and we should not have flogged these guys. Let us get them out of here as fast as we can." The jailer was probably relieved that that was the ruling of the city council. He relays that to Paul and Silas, but watch Paul's response here. Look at Paul's defense:

"But Paul said to them, 'They have beaten us in public without trial, men who are Romans, and have thrown us into prison; and now are they sending us away secretly? No indeed! But let them come themselves and bring us out'" (Acts 16:37).

Why is Paul saying this? Why doesn't he just leave town? Arnold Fruchtenbaum gives this explanation:

"What had been done to them was illegal by Roman law. In fact, it violated two specific sets of laws. The first one is called Lex Valeria, which was passed in the year 509 BC. The second set of laws was called Leges Porciae. Issued between 248 BC and 195 BC, these laws exempted Roman citizens from shameful forms of punishment, such as whipping, beating, or crucifixion. They also guaranteed that Roman citizens had the right to appeal to the tribunes of the plebs. In his speeches against the corrupt governor Gaius Verres, Cicero wrote: 'To fetter a Roman citizen was a crime, to scourge him was a scandal, and to slay him—parricide.' It was a crime to inflict blows on a Roman citizen, and the law protected a

Roman citizen from scourging for any reason whatsoever. At the same time, it was a capital offense to make a false claim of Roman citizenship."¹

If you are not a Roman citizen and you say, "I am a Roman citizen," that was a capital offense. It was also a capital offense to be treated as Paul and Silas had been treated without any trial whatsoever. In fact, scourging them and all of these kinds of things went against two sets of Roman laws, which had been passed much earlier in time. That is why Paul says, "We are not leaving right now."

"The crowd rose up together against them, and the chief magistrates tore their robes off them and proceeded to order them to be beaten with rods" (Acts 16:22).

Paul says, "You did that in broad daylight, and now you want to cause us to leave town privately? No, it is not going to work that way. In fact, you are violating my rights as a Roman citizen."

Notice that Paul used his rights as a Roman citizen to advance the cause of the gospel. At a conference we were just at, I had a chance to meet two attorneys who were originally from California originally and who had migrated to Idaho. Both of them were younger, so I encouraged them in their chosen profession, because we need Christian attorneys out there to understand the rights that we as Americans have. We have a ton of them, and we need to be skilled enough to use those rights, whether it is freedom of speech or whatever, to advance the cause of the gospel. That is what Paul is doing here.

Something else I want you to see is that Paul did not have a philosophy of "you obey the government no matter what they tell you to do." He said, "No indeed!" (Acts 16:37). This was a big deal when Covid hit and they shut down the churches, keeping people six feet apart. But the casino can stay open because the virus is really smart, right? It knows how to work in a church, but not in a casino. Put your mask on, keep your mouth shut. For Thanksgiving or Christmas, we are going to cap how many people you can have in your house.

Once churches started opening up there were regulations on if you could sing, and how loud you could sing. Suddenly the government is an authority on hymnology in the body of Christ. You would not believe the number of churches that just rolled over, played dead, and quoted Romans 13:1-7. You know those verses where Paul says that we should submit to authority.

"Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of

¹ Dr. Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Book of Acts*, 355-56.

God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves. For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same; for [government] is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for [government] does not bear the sword for nothing; for [government] is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil" (Romans 13:1-4).

The government says something, and you roll over and play dead, right? Many churches took that view during Covid. I was on quite a number of Zoom and Skype calls with other pastors, and I could not believe the number of pastors quoting Romans 13, saying that everything the government tells us to do during Covid, we have to do because Romans 13 says to do it.

I would try to interject in these calls, "What about Acts 16? How come nobody is quoting Acts 16:27 where Paul says to the authorities when they are trying to rush him out of town, 'No indeed!'" The guy who wrote Romans 13:1-7 is also the guy that told the authorities no in Acts 16:37. When you are putting your doctrine of civil disobedience together, you cannot just look at one verse or one set of verses, you have to look at everything that the Scripture has to say on the topic.

During that time period, everyone was quoting Peter:

"Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right" (1 Peter 2:13-14).

Andy Stanley, Joel Osteen, and all of these woke pastors during that era were saying, "The government has said we cannot meet as a church, so we cannot meet." All of a sudden they started quoting the Bible—Romans 13:1-7 and 1 Peter 2:13-14.

When I was on some of those calls, I said, "What about Acts 5:29? Do you want to know what Peter, the guy who wrote this, did in Acts 5:29 when they were told not to preach anymore in Jesus' name?"

"But Peter and the apostles answered, 'We must obey God rather than men'" (Acts 5:29).

If you want to quote 1 Peter 2 that is fine, but you ought to throw into the mix Acts 5:29 also, so that we can get a complete picture here. If you want to quote Romans 13:1-7, that is fine, but I think we need to throw into the mix Acts 16:37 to get a complete picture on this subject of civil disobedience.

I do not think—I did not think then, and I do not think now—that the biblical position is that you just roll over and play dead no matter what the state tells you to do. Why would I say that? Because we have a book in the Bible called the Book of Daniel. It was written while the nation was 350 miles to the east of Israel in a place called Babylon (modern-day Iraq), under the Babylonian captivity where they had to function under Gentile powers.

The Book of Daniel is organized chiastically. The information in Daniel 2 is repeated in Daniel 7; the information in Daniel 3 thematically is repeated in Daniel 6; and the information in Daniel 4 is repeated thematically in Daniel 5. That means that Daniel 3 and Daniel 6 go together. What do Daniel 3 and Daniel 6 have in common? The subject of civil disobedience.

God's servants in Babylon, outside the land of Israel, told the state no. The first account is of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who were cast into the fiery furnace because they told Nebuchadnezzar, "We are not going to bow down and worship your image." Then in Daniel 6 is the account of Daniel in the lions' den, where the Persian government passed a law saying there was no more public prayer. Daniel went out and prayed anyway, with his windows open, his face towards Jerusalem, as was his habit, as was his custom.

In Daniel 3 and Daniel 6 you have four of God's choicest servants—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, whose Hebrew names were Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, and Daniel, whose pagan name had been changed to Belteshazzar—told the state no. They disobeyed what the state said.

You look at a book like that and you say, "The biblical position is not to submit to the government no matter what it tells you to do." Paul did not, and he wrote Romans 13. Peter did not and he wrote 1 Peter 2.

Here are four principles for when I think civil disobedience is appropriate. Number one, there must be a clear conflict between the laws of man and the laws of God. For me, when the state says, "Do not meet as a church," you are telling me to violate Hebrews 10:25.

Number two, you should exhaust all creative legal remedies, meaning that civil disobedience is not a first resort, it is a last resort after you have tried your best to cooperate with the authorities that exist.

Number three, when someone engages in civil disobedience, they have to be willing to pay the price, which can involve severe fines, penalties, or jail time. That is what Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego said as they were about to get cast into the furnace.

"If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire...But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O King, that

we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up" (Daniel 3:17-18).

"God can protect us from being burned to death, but He might not, so we are willing to pay the price."

Number four, as civil disobedience is engaged you always maintain respect for civil authorities. Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego never got nasty. They never got into name-calling with the authorities. They kept referring to Nebuchadnezzar respectfully as, "O king."

In my view, when these four elements are met, then civil disobedience becomes appropriate. Here Paul is involved in civil disobedience. "Hey, out of here." "No. We are not going to leave you. You come in here and you take us out publicly because it is not right that you violated our rights as Roman citizens, and we want everybody in Philippi to know it. Number two, it is not right that you give us a public beating in violation of our rights, but you want to dismiss us privately."

In Acts 16:37, Paul is tipping his hand for the first time in the Book of Acts, to a strategy that he will use all the way until the end of the Book of Acts in order to get to Rome. He will keep insisting on the right to a trial before Caesar. As a Roman citizen, he had a right to that. He will keep using that, particularly on the fourth journey (Acts 27-28).

A lot of people say that was not a missionary journey because he was in chains. No, it was a missionary journey because he knew exactly what he was doing. God told him to preach the gospel in Rome. Paul says, "Here is how I am going to get the gospel to Rome. I am going to keep insisting on a trial before Caesar. Caesar is in Rome, and I will keep insisting and insisting and insisting on it until the gospel makes it to Rome."

When you get into that section, there are many opportunities for Paul to be tried and to receive his trial early. He keeps saying, "No, I want a trial before Caesar." That is a legal maneuver that he used to get the gospel to Rome. He used his rights as a Roman citizen to advance the cause of the gospel. That is what we as Americans need to be more skilled at doing, and our example is none other than Paul.

The magistrates and the police said, "Get out of Dodge. Get out of Philippi." Paul says, "No. You come and pull us out because I want this to be public." Civil disobedience.

Notice the response of the leadership at Philippi:

"The policemen reported these words to the chief magistrates. They were afraid when they heard that they were Romans" (Acts 16:38).

They understood. "We have flogged these guys illegally and we have jailed these guys illegally. Now what we have done is about to become public. We are afraid." That is why they are fearful.

Arnold Fruchtenbaum says:

"Verses 38-39 reveal the response of the leaders. The serjeants gave the report to the rulers, with the result that the magistrates feared when they had heard that they were Romans (v. 38). They became afraid, because now their own lives were at stake for what they had done to two Roman citizens. Apparently, Emperor Claudius once deprived the city of Rhodes of its freedom for having crucified a Roman citizen. So, the magistrates' fear was indeed justified."²

What is their second response? They give these guys an escort and keep encouraging them to leave:

"And they came and appealed to them, and when they had brought them out, they kept begging them to leave the city" (Acts 16:39).

Apparently they did what Paul asked: they made it public. It was now known that they had violated the legal rights of Paul and Silas. Paul leaves and his departure is recorded in Acts 16:40:

"They went out of the prison and entered the house of Lydia, and when they saw the brethren, they encouraged them and departed" (Acts 16:40).

Now you see the switch from "us" and "we" to "they."

"Following after Paul and us..." (Acts 16:17).

"So putting out to sea from Troas, we ran a straight course..." (Acts 16:11).

Here in Acts 16:40 it does not say "us" and "we" anymore; it says "they." What just happened? We left a "we" section. In the Book of Acts there are about three "we" sections: Acts 16:10-40; Acts 20:5-21:18; and Acts 27:1-28:16. What is a "we" section? A "we" section is when Luke, the author, joins the group.

Apparently Luke was with Paul, Silas, and Timothy in Philippi, but now Luke is left behind as Paul, Silas, and Timothy leave Philippi. That "we" section ended and will not start up again with another "we" section till we hit Acts 20:5-6, which will say:

² Ibid., 356.

"But these had gone on ahead and were waiting for us at Troas. We sailed from Philippi after the days of Unleavened Bread, and came to them at Troas within five days; and there we stayed seven days" (Acts 20:5-6).

That is the significance of the switch from "we" or "us" to "they" or "them." What just happened? Luke broke away from the party and stayed behind in Philippi. What was Luke doing in Philippi while the other three kept moving to Thessalonica? He probably went to Lydia's home, where the believers were gathered, and ministered to them.

What you see developing here is the beginning of the church of Philippi. Paul, ten years later from Rome, is going to write a letter to the church at Philippi. Where in the world did the church of Philippi come from? It came from the conversion of Lydia and those within her household (Acts 16:15); and it came from the conversion of the Philippian jailer, because he believed, shared the gospel with his family and household, and they got saved (Acts 16:30-31).

That is how the church at Philippi got its start, and it eventually grew and developed into a church that Paul felt the necessity to address by way of a letter from Rome about ten years later. That is why there is an emphasis on the brethren:

"They went out of the prison and entered the house of Lydia, and when they saw the brethren, they encouraged them and departed" (Acts 16:40).

Where did these brethren come from? The conversion of the jailer and his household, and the conversion of Lydia and those associated with her. These tremendous examples of evangelism that we see in this chapter gave birth to the church at Philippi.

Apparently Luke stayed with that group to be their pastor, because the "we" section ends there. Then Paul, Silas, and Timothy kept moving to Thessalonica.

That takes us to the end of the Philippian ministry. We have seen the conversion of Lydia, the casting out of a demon from a slave girl, the imprisonment of Paul and Silas leading to the Philippian jailer's conversion, and then the departure of, not Luke, but Paul, Silas, and Timothy for Thessalonica.