

## Walking Through the New Testament with Paul the Apostle by His Life and Pen

**LESSON NO. 15** - Please again read Acts 16:1-40. **Theme:** The concern of the individual Savior for each individual soul.

- Acts 16:6-10 Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were *forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia*. After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but *the Spirit did not permit them*. So passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. *A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us."* Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, *concluding that the Lord* had called us to preach the gospel to them.
- Acts 16:13-15 And on the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made; and we sat down and spoke to the women who met there. Now a **certain woman named Lydia heard us**. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. **The Lord opened her heart** to heed the things spoken by Paul. And when she and her household were baptized.
- 1 Peter 5:6-7 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for **He cares for you**.

Question: Out of the millions of people on earth during Paul's lifetime, do you think God knew and cared about each one individually? Do you think God cares about you individually and not just a part of a mass of people called humanity referred to as "the world"?

Undeniable Truth and Comfort: - John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Context: Our mind and capacity to understand infinite realities is so limited: We truly cannot even faintly understand the true depth and breadth of words like infinite, forever, unchanging or even the word "world." Think of Almighty Omniscient Omnipotent Holy God sending Paul and Silas across 1000s of miles to one man and one woman with this simple message: - Acts 16:31 So they said, "**Believe** on the Lord Jesus Christ, and **you will be saved**, you and your household."

What was the foundation fact undergirding the message which the Holy Spirit sent by Paul and Silas to the Philippian Jailer and to Lydia? [paraphrased] "I love you individually. I know you and I am emotionally concerned about you. I want the very best for you for all eternity with Me."

- Luke 12:6-7 "Are not five sparrows sold for two copper coins? And not one of them is forgotten before God. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

AW Tozer illustrated this truth in a sermon titled "Each of Us Matter to God" so well.

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\* Following is, AW Tozer's: Tozer Talks "Each of Us Matter to God", February 21, 1954.

"God so loved the world means to me in personal terms, I mean something to God, I matter to Him. God is emotionally concerned about me.

Paradox: An apparent contradiction that really isn't a contradiction at all.

Man's human nature deeply desires significance and desperately wishes to know that somebody emotionally cares about him. Yet, he has deep within him a belief that there isn't anywhere, anybody who is emotionally concerned about him outside of his own narrow little

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family that will die along with him. Man is overwhelmed with the thought that nobody cares and he will die and in a few short years at best, nobody will care. The deep paradox treating at the human heart is this thought, "I don't matter!"

Sin has produced this sad fact. The devil came to Adam + Eve and asked, "Has God said?" The devil was saying in effect, you don't matter to God. Has God said to you, Well, God lied. God doesn't have any emotional connection with you. You don't matter to God and God isn't concerned about you.

Thus, sin came into the world with all its woes and its ugly trail of death along with it.

What can be done? Listen to what God the Son declared: - Matthew 11:27-29 "All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him. Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."

What we find is that God cares perfectly about the individual. God doesn't think in terms of a general species or multitudes, but He thinks in terms of the individual and all these individuals matter to Him.

You are a living, breathing, pulsating human being made in the image of God and the God whose image you are made cares. You amount to something to God. You are a treasure to God. You matter.

The human race is composed of individuals and if you take away the individual, you have no human race. There is such a thing as a crowd, but yet in another sense there is no such a thing as a crowd.

There is Somebody that doesn't change. And there is Somebody that cares, and He's not happy about you. And He'll never be happy about you until you're safe in His bosom. He'll never feel good about you until you, you single, lone you, with all of your discouragement and gloom and weariness; until you have come back into His heart and found your home there, to live and to die there and live again there. That's the Christian message my friends.

There isn't one human being about which God says, "he is no good." In that sense, He says there is none righteous, no, not one. We all must be saved and we will all perish if we don't repent, and we must all be born again. But in the sense of being written off as no good and hopeless, there isn't anybody. Thank God there isn't anybody.

Even though "none are righteous, no, not one" God is emotionally concerned about all people. Everybody matters.

John 3:16 -17 Jesus did not come to condemn the world but that the world might live. And whoever believes in Him, "whoever", is singular, believes in Him, that the individual should not perish but have everlasting life.

When God says in His word that He loves me, He means He loves me. Do you not think that the Thief on the cross had a mother? He was not an old man. He was a young man. And do you not think the Thief on the cross, when he was dying there, was in the tender heart of his mother? And do you not suppose that that mother thought that I've failed him? And society has failed him, and he's failed society and he's dying a criminal, crucified on a cross, my boy, my boy. But what she didn't know was that the One who cared was within touching distance. What she didn't know was that that outcast, that young rebel and traitor, turned his eyes to the One

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who cared and said, "Remember me when Thou comest in Thy kingdom And He said, "this day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

And her hair was grayer and her face more tired and her wrinkles deeper and her gloom heavier. When the day was over she knew her boy was dead, but what she didn't know was that Somebody in that universe beside her, cared. And that boy mattered to Somebody beside his mother. That there was Somebody that wasn't happy about that thief dying a criminal and going to hell. That there was Somebody who was emotionally wrought up about this. That man meant something. He had gone there from a cell, a number, and had gone to the execution. But now, he matters. Suddenly, he becomes significant and there isn't an angel in the winged choir above more significant than he. His name sounds yonder in God Almighty's heaven, because the Christian message says, God so loved. And that love is not the love for a species, but a love for individuals. And it was people that He loved. Jesus lover of "my" soul, not Jesus, lover of the human race, but Jesus lover of my soul. In one strict sense, there is no human race.

Because, it's unbelief that tells you, at the same time, you're hard to swallow with pride, another part of your heart says, it's no use, I'm no good. And God Almighty went to all the trouble to say you are, **not** that you're good morally, **but you're some good to God**, because **God's going to make you over**, and **He's proved that He cares by sending His only begotten Son**, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

When God says in His Word that He loves, He means He loves me, one single, solitary individual with an eternal soul and a forever destiny.

After you've said to yourself, I believe it's true, I matter. I'm a sinner. I'm on my way to hell, but I know God cares tremendously about me. And after your heart believes that, for that's part of the Christian evangel, then you will begin to pray. Faith comes by hearing and faith becomes perfect by praying, O God, I believe I matter to Thee.

- John 3:16-17 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not **perish** but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the **world through Him might be saved**.

If you're not a Christian. We're not going to fix you up and tell you that everything's all right. **It isn't all right**. That word "perish" is in John 3:16. Don't overlook that. Perish is there. But it's there after the word "love." Perish, that's there. So, it isn't all right. If you have sinned, and you haven't come to Christ in believing surrender, it isn't all right. You shall perish most surely.

But no matter how bad or how far away from God, and how often you have failed Him, and how many lies you've told Him, or how terrible you've been, or how no good you feel you are; I have the word for you. You do matter. God is concerned. God isn't happy about you. He says, "Come home, and let whoever heareth and say, "come, whoever will, let him come." - Revelation 22:17

Why come? Because, there's One to whom you matter so much, that He gave His only Son that you may."

(AW Tozer. Tozer Talks, *Each of Us Matter to God*, February 21, 1954.)

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Romans 10:14 How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?

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How far is the Holy Spirit willing to go to declare the love of Jesus Christ for sin-filled mankind and his eternal soul and forever destiny?

- Hebrews 7:25 Therefore He is also able to save to the **uttermost** those **who come to God through Him** [Jesus], since He always lives to make intercession for them.

To the uttermost! Even it means sending his messengers across continents to declare the love of Jesus Christ to one woman named Lydia and one nameless man identified as only as the Phillipian jailer.

- Psalm 19:1 The **heavens declare** the **glory** of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork. - Psalm 97:6 The **heavens declare** His righteousness, And all the peoples see His **glory**. - Romans 1:20-22 For **since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen**, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that **they are without excuse**, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools

None are without excuse. To these, the Holy Spirit sent Paul across continents to reach one man and one woman to tell them the Greatest Love Story Ever Told!

What about us? Are we willing to be sent by the Holy Spirit to declare this Love Story to whomever He has marked out?

Will we answer like Isaiah? - Isaiah 6:8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: "**Whom shall I send**, And who will go for Us?" Then I said, "Here am I! **Send me.**"

Jesus said to them, "Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!" [John 4:35-36]

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We recognize persecution will also come to us as it did to Paul when we proclaim our love for Jesus Christ, who died and took our place in death. Are we so overwhelmed by the love of Jesus Christ that we will Tell Somebody about Him today?

One way we can tell others the incredible sure hope we have in Jesus Christ is to write down the day and events of our salvation just as Paul recorded his own "new-birth" in Acts 9. Please send your Story to us so we may rejoice with you and glorify God's great work!

We love to receive your questions. Your questions can be sent to [write2stm@gmail.com](mailto:write2stm@gmail.com) or [WasItForMeRom832@gmail.com](mailto:WasItForMeRom832@gmail.com). All our love to you in Christ - Jon + Philis