

## Are You Annoyed Yet?

### Opening Text: Acts 16:16-19

Are you annoyed yet? Have you come to that point when you've had enough of the enemy? You can't take it anymore and you are tired of being sick and tired? You are fed up with your circumstances and lack of progress? Well, you don't have to take it anymore. You are probably on the brink of your greatest victory if, like Paul, you identify, confront, and take authority over the enemy.

**Background:** This interesting story comes from one of Paul's missions' trips to the city of Philippi. Since there were hardly any Jews there and no synagogue to preach at, Paul started preaching by the Gangites river (at first to women) and there he also baptised some early converts (v.14-15). That is where the church of the Philippians was born.

In **verse 16**, we read that, as Paul (with Silas, Timothy and Luke) were going to a prayer meeting by that same river, they were met by a slave girl.

She was a slave in more than one way:

- She was someone's property and used for the financial gain of her masters.
- She was also a slave in the spiritual sense: she was possessed by a spirit of divination. Her whole personality and body were taken over by an evil spirit that would cause her to speak in a trance what people believed to be the oracles of Apollo (the Greek god of prophecy). He had a "*spirit of divination*" – in the Greek "*pneuma python*" – the spirit of a snake that according to the Greeks could speak messages from the gods.

Paul and his team had seen this young lady before. This was a girl who for many days (v.17) kept chasing them, shouting as she went, that these men were "*servants of the Most High God proclaiming to us the way of salvation*".

Obviously, the devil was not trying to help the Gospel:

- This was simply one way to get people's attention and distract them from Paul's message – in fact she was the one doing the talking and therefore making her 'divination' the focus, not the preaching of Paul.
- This could have also been an attempt to get people to believe that she was part of that group, and that their power was from the same source. There are 'talk sows' today where they interview people with occultic powers, and they attribute them to God – like the sorcerer in Acts 8:9-10 – "*this man in the great power of God*".
- Also, by declaring who Paul was and what he was doing there, she was literally 'blowing their cover' – leaving them exposed, at a time when they could be persecuted. In fact, the rest of the story shows how that is exactly what happened: Paul was put in prison.

**Proverbs 11:30** says, “*he who wins souls is wise*’. It takes wisdom to win souls.

Jesus also said: in **Matthew 10:16** – *Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.*

Paul is winning souls in a place outside the city, by the river (v.13): he is not trying to get the kind of attention that could get him into trouble with the Romans. He is trying to do the wise thing, but this girl is blowing his cover.

**V.18** – “*And this she did for many days*”

This wasn’t just a one-off thing but a constant, persistent occurrence wherever Paul went. We get here a glimpse into how the enemy works: he bombards, he tempts, he tries over and over again until we are worn out and ready to give up.

The word ‘satan’ is the translation of the Greek word *diabolos*. This is a compound of two words: *dia* and *ballo*. *Dia* carries the idea of penetration and the word *ballo* describes the repetitive action of hitting something again, again, again and again until it can be penetrated. Thus the name *satan* denotes what he does: he strikes repeatedly, again, again and again trying to break our spiritual and mental resistance.

**V. 18b** - ... “*But Paul being greatly annoyed, turned*” ...

This was the turning point. This is where things started to turn around for him. He had enough. He was annoyed! Are you annoyed yet? That indicates the moment Paul went into a place where we sometimes don’t go in prayer. Sometimes our prayers are too passive. The hour Paul got annoyed and took authority over that evil spirit, it left – *that very hour!*

**V.18-** *And this she did for many days. But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.” And he came out that very hour*

“*Many days*” of unrelenting disturbance, again and again and again, ceased in a moment – in “*that very hour!*”

What was the turning point? – Paul was greatly annoyed. Are you annoyed yet? If you had enough, if you feel greatly annoyed know that you are probably closer to your greatest victory!

How do you get annoyed like that? so annoyed that you finally become effective? A quick 4 clues:

### **1. Praying**

Sounds kind of basic but every victory happens in the context of prayer. Notice that the story we read today, starts like this:

**V.16** – “*now it happened, as we went to prayer*”

Prayer gets you in that zone where God speaks to you, discernment comes, and you know that you have the backing of heaven to do what you need to do (authority).

## 2. Walking in the Spirit

What Paul had in that moment was discernment of what he really was up against. This wasn't just some lunatic person shouting, this was a spirit of divination. The constant disturbance he experienced happened over many days. Why didn't he act the first time it happened? Well, perhaps he lacked discernment at that point. However, the moment discernment came he acted on it.

There are nine gifts of the Holy Spirit according to 1 Corinthians 12:7-11

- Tongues, interpretation of tongues and prophecy (Vocal Gifts)
- Word of wisdom, word of knowledge, discerning of spirits (Revelation Gifts)
- Faith, healing, and miracles (Power Gifts)

Here, Paul functioned in the gift of discernment of spirits. God showed him something in the spirit that went beyond the natural. He saw an evil spirit behind the situation – no wonder he got greatly annoyed.

This is how you get annoyed enough to be dangerous to the enemy: Praying, walking in the Spirit and thirdly,

## 3. Having no tolerance for evil

The moment Paul realised that he was dealing with evil, he confronted it. He put up with many days of some young lady shouting after them but the moment he realised that he was dealing with a *python spirit*, he commanded it to leave the young woman.

- **Acts 17:16** - *Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him when he saw that the city was given over to idols.*

There it is again an example of something that left Paul greatly annoyed. Paul was grieved to see a city given over to evil forces. He had no tolerance for evil and what it could do to people.

Another example of Paul getting 'greatly annoyed' was how he dealt with Elymas a false prophet.

- **Acts 17:8-10** - *But Elymas the sorcerer (for so his name is translated withstood them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. 9 Then Saul, who also is called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him 10 and said, "O full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord? 11*
- He wrote in **Ephesians 5:11** - *And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.*

## **Could it be that sometimes people accommodate things they should be annoyed about?**

The realisation and rejection of evil in all its forms should annoy us to the point that we start praying some dangerous prayers and breaking the siege of the enemy!

- That is how we are going to see addictions broken,
- Spiritual slaves free in Jesus,
- Our homes become impenetrable fortresses that the enemy can't defeat.

### **Conclusion**

**Are you annoyed yet?** - Have you come to that point when you've had enough of the enemy? You can't take it anymore and you are tired of being sick and tired? You are fed up with your circumstances and lack of progress? You have run out of options and even your patience has run out? Well, you don't have to take it anymore. You are probably on the brink of your greatest victory if, like Paul, you identify, confront, and take authority over enemy.

Remember that it is going to take **prayer, walking in the Spirit** and **having no tolerance for evil!**