

Putting Feet to Your Faith

Acts 16:19-40

- Paul and his team after receiving a supernatural vision that directed them from going to Asia Minor, and instead traveling into Europe where he ends up in Philippi. Now before they plunged immediately into evangelizing the city they first go out to survey the land. This is important because although they know God had called them here, they knew it is not enough just to know where God wants you to work, we must also know when and how He wants us to work as well.
- In his vision Paul had seen a man but he runs into a group of women, in Judaism, the rabbis said **“it is better that the words of the Law be burned than be delivered to a woman”** but that is no longer Paul’s philosophy, so he shares with them and one of them a woman named **“Lydia”** a successful businesswoman of Thyatira, receives the truth, becomes a believer, leads her whole household into the faith, everyone is baptized, and now there meeting in her house for services.
- **V16-18** all is good until a demonized girl who was a slave and made her masters rich by telling fortunes comes on the scene and begins to follow Paul and the team shouting out truth but drawing attention off of the Lord and unto herself. Paul did not like Demons giving approval of God’s work, neither did he appreciate the free advertising from the Demon, so he cast it out of her, which should have been a good thing right! **V19-22** not for the owners who had no concern for the girl but only in the income that she provided for them, and now that income is gone!
- Here is the heart of man, it’s no telling how long this demon had been tormenting this young girl and now that she’s been set free from her tormentor, instead of going to Paul and listening to what he was offering that releases people from bondage, they arrest him and intend to put him in chains just as Satan had enslaved the girl, again this is the world emulating their master. Notice to strengthen their case against Paul and Silas since they were Jewish they accuse them of teaching things that violated the laws of being a Roman citizen and it infuriated the crowd.
- **V23-24** moved by racial, religious, and economic prejudices the magistrates act rashly before fully investigating the matter and strip Paul and Silas and severely beat them and throw them into a prison cell with maximum security conditions. Jewish tradition gave a maximum number of blows that could be given **40** lashes save **1** which equals **39**, but the Romans had no such limit. Paul would later write how in service for God he’d labored more abundantly > **2 Cor 11:23**.
- **V25-26** instead of complaining or calling on God to judge their attackers, the two pray and praise the Lord, when you’re in pain, the midnight hour is not the easiest time for a praise concert, and yet this is when they begin to praise God. Spurgeon said its easy to sing when we can read the notes by daylight, but the skillful worshipper are those who sing when there is not a ray of light around and yet lift up their voices. Translation: when things look **dark-bleak** this is when **praise-prayer** is most needed, and yet it’s the most difficult time to muster the words.

- Prayer and praise are powerful spiritual weapons; as **V25** says the prisoners are listening to them sing out to the Lord. It's when we're at our weakest that people often pay close attention to our response and that determines for them if we're believable. Of course it's not just the prisoners who are listening but also God, Who responds to His servant's cries and songs and shakes the foundations of the prison and opens all the doors, and looses all the prisoner's chains
- **V27-31** the jailer after seeing that the prison doors were open drew his sword to kill himself which was the penalty for anyone who would allow their prisoners to escape. for if he didn't they would gather his wife and children, kill them before his eyes and then execute him, but if you killed yourself then Roman Law said the family would be spared. Paul cries out to the jailer and tells him "**not to do himself any harm for we are all here**". Paul could have ran to freedom and not care one bit what happens to that jailor, but even in his pain and discomfort he is thinking about the well fare of others, you see he didn't come to **take lives** but to **save lives**.
- This should be our mindset, Paul and Silas our wrongly accused, other people's issues and prejudices have landed them here, what has happened to them is unjust and unfair, and yet they're not looking to get payback or satisfaction from those who have wronged them. Instead they only want to see opportunity for their accusers to come unto the Lord and get saved. The jailor realizing this doesn't just walk in but he runs in and falls down before Paul and Silas and asks "**what must I do to be saved**" this shows that not only were the prisoners listening to Paul and Silas sing praise songs to the Lord but also this Philippian jailor was as well.
- **V32-34** Paul's answer is the simple essence of the gospel of grace "**believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved, you and your household**" I believe this, I truly believe what Paul said is true. **2 Cor 11:3-** says the enemy tries and makes things so complicated that it confuses us and takes away from the simplicity that is in Christ. He has made it simple for us to trust Him and to lead those who we influence into a right relationship with Him as well, but we must truly **believe as if our lives depend upon Him** because it does, for if not, don't expect others to. **Believe** in the Greek is (pistis) means "to **trust in, rely on, and to cling to**".
- You immediately see the fruit of his salvation as he begins to serve Paul and Silas by washing their wounds and since they fed him he feeds them, and he makes sure his household hears the life changing, chain breaking gospel and they all are saved and baptized, and they rejoice. This goes back to the verse that says in **Neh 8:10** "**the joy of the Lord is your strength**". As Paul and Silas suffered, they sang and prayed, God gave them Joy in the midst of their pain, and it strengthened them and led to an evangelistic rally in the jail one that Paul never saw coming or that Demon that was possessing that girl or it would have left Paul alone I'm sure.

- **V35-40** the next day the magistrates send word to let them go, God knew that this would happen so the earthquake wasn't about setting Paul free as that was already going to happen, it was about the jailor hearing the gospel. Paul lets them know after he was beaten, imprisoned, and falsely accused that he is a Roman citizen who has been treated unjustly, and had his civil rights as a Roman violated, this could cause everything that has happened to him to happen to them, this could be his payback for his mistreatment, but Paul allows them to also go free as he knows this was all in God's plan and if he had to suffer some wrong for God's glory then so be it.