



# #SHARK SERIES

## PART 3: HOW TO SURVIVE A SHARK ATTACK

Everyone has thought about it. “How would I respond if I were attacked by a shark?” But the truth is that all of us have been attacked at some point in our lives. While we may not be assaulted by an actual predator from the ocean, we have faced crisis situations where we needed desperately to escape.

In this message, we look at a story of a biblical attack where Paul found himself in the middle of a full-on feeding frenzy. And as we see how God led Paul’s escape, we discover what it takes to not only survive an attack in our lives, but also what it takes to thrive after one.

**BIG IDEA: Suffering is not an obstacle to you being used by God. It’s an opportunity to be used like never before.**

1. Chris said that most of us are swimming in shark-infested waters, and eventually, you will be attacked. Do you agree or disagree? Why?
2. *With the Bible or Bible App, read Acts 16:12-15.*

*From there we reached Philippi, a major city of that district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. And we stayed there several days. On the Sabbath we went a little way outside the city to a riverbank, where we thought people would be meeting for prayer, and we sat down to speak with some women who had gathered there. One of them was Lydia from Thyatira, a merchant of expensive purple cloth, who worshiped God. As she listened to us, the Lord opened her heart, and she accepted what Paul was saying. She and her household were baptized, and she asked us to be her guests. “If you agree that I am a true believer in the Lord,” she said, “come and stay at my home.” And she urged us until we agreed.*  
Acts 16:12-15 (NLT)

3. How does God open the doors for the Gospel and the church to spread to Europe and the Roman colony of Philippi?
4. God opened Lydia’s heart to pay attention to the message of Jesus (v. 14) How did God open your heart in a similar way?
5. Lydia opened her home to the missionaries (v. 15). How can your home be a place of ministry? What excuses are you using to open up your home to being used by God? “It needs cleaning.” “It needs a renovation.” It doesn’t matter the status of your house—what matters is opening it up to be used by God.
6. *With the Bible or Bible App, read Acts 16:16-21.*

*One day as we were going down to the place of prayer, we met a slave girl who had a spirit that enabled her to tell the future. She earned a lot of money for her masters by telling fortunes. She followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, “These men are servants of the Most High God, and they have come to tell you how to be saved.” This went on day after day until Paul got so exasperated that he turned and said to the demon within her, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.” And instantly it left her. Her masters’ hopes of wealth were now shattered, so they grabbed Paul and Silas and dragged them before the authorities at the marketplace. “The whole city is in an uproar because of these Jews!” they shouted to the city officials. “They are teaching customs that are illegal for us Romans to practice.”*  
Acts 16:16-21 (NLT)

7. What spiritual, social, and religious attacks do the missionaries meet in Philippi? (v.16-24)

*These two women—Lydia and this slave girl—typify all of humanity. Everyone is either liberated and made free by Jesus Christ or enslaved by Satan.*

8. *With the Bible or Bible App, read Acts 16:22-34.*

*A mob quickly formed against Paul and Silas, and the city officials ordered them stripped and beaten with wooden rods. They were severely beaten, and then they were thrown into prison. The jailer was ordered to make sure they didn’t escape. So the jailer put them into the inner dungeon and clamped their feet in the stocks.*

*Around midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening. Suddenly, there was a massive earthquake, and the prison was shaken to its foundations. All the doors*



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*immediately flew open, and the chains of every prisoner fell off! The jailer woke up to see the prison doors wide open. He assumed the prisoners had escaped, so he drew his sword to kill himself. But Paul shouted to him, "Stop! Don't kill yourself! We are all here!" The jailer called for lights and ran to the dungeon and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, along with everyone in your household." And they shared the word of the Lord with him and with all who lived in his household. Even at that hour of the night, the jailer cared for them and washed their wounds. Then he and everyone in his household were immediately baptized. He brought them into his house and set a meal before them, and he and his entire household rejoiced because they all believed in God.*

*Acts 16:22-34 (NLT)*

9. What is the scene in the prison just before and after the earthquake? (v. 25-28)
10. Paul and Silas' setback of being thrown into prison was just a set up for God using them to share Jesus to the Philippian Jailer. During the message, Chris said, "*Suffering is not an obstacle to you being used by God. It's an opportunity to be used like never before.*" Do you agree with that statement? Why or why not?
11. The miracle of the earthquake served not to deliver them out of their problems, but served to deliver the Philippian jailer and his household. Paul and Silas had no idea that the final result of them being beaten and thrown into prison was the Philippian jailer and his family coming to Jesus. What problems and set backs that you're going through now can God be setting you up to be used by God like never before?
12. Have you ever been used by God *because* of the pain you've experienced? If so, what happened? How did the experience change you?
13. Are you struggling with pain and loss right now? If so, what can you do this week to begin to look beyond your pain and live with earnest expectation of you being used by God? How can this group support you?

## FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. When you face pain and loss, do you tend to seek out other people or isolate yourself? How do you think that tendency affects your ability to navigate pain and loss well?
2. Think about a time when you faced pain and loss. Did it draw you closer to God or push you away from him?
3. *With your Bible or the Bible App, read 2 Corinthians 4:16-18.*

*That is why we never give up. Though our bodies are dying, our spirits are being renewed every day. For our present troubles are small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever! So we don't look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever.*

2 Corinthians 4:16-18

4. How difficult is it for you to see your troubles as small and temporary? Do you think that's a reasonable perspective? Why or why not?

## MOVING FORWARD

When we face shark attacks by others, pain and loss? They change the story we had planned for our lives. They end dreams. They change our perspective. They alter our desired destination. Pain can knock us back on our heels and make us wonder how we can even make sense of our lives. What do you do when difficult circumstances challenge your perspective on life and God? What does pain look like when we try to see the world as God sees the world, and to do as God says?

## WHAT WILL YOU DO?

Suffering is not an obstacle to you being used by God. It's an opportunity to be used like never before. When you face pain, look beyond that pain, live with earnest expectation, learn to see something new in your normal, and employ scare tactics. It will help you see as God sees, and to do as he says.