

GOOD NEWS

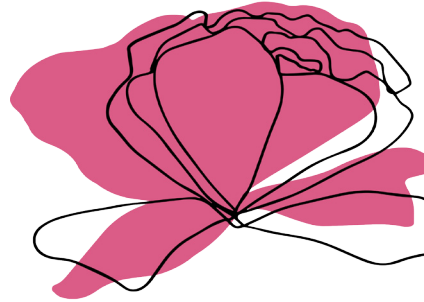
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WINTER/SPRING 2022

GOD USES ALL THINGS

“Believe
in the
Lord Jesus,
and you will
be saved.”

Acts 16:31



“He was filled
with joy because he had
come to believe
in God--he and
his whole household.”

Acts 16:34

ACTS 16:25-34

*“Then they spoke the word of the
Lord to him and to all who
were in his house.”*

Acts 16:32

The Philippian Jailer

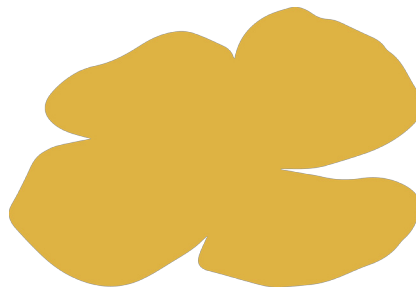
IN OTHER NEWS

TODAY'S WEATHER



SUNNY

Clear skies with high visibility.



EARTHQUAKE

A violent earthquake shook the region of Philippi around midnight last night. Significant damage to the regional prison was reported.

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ACTS 16:25-34

This week we will be studying scripture on how God uses all things, specifically Paul's and Silas's imprisonment and how God used it to bring salvation to others.

I've seen this happen in several ways in several different family members' lives. I truly do believe God uses all things, even though it can be very hard to see at the time.

About 15 years ago, a loved one set out on a course of self-destruction and was almost successful several times. In the midst of the first few years of this, and in what would probably be the darkest time in my life, my father committed suicide and another loved one chose a 12-year path of pain. During all this and in many other ways, I saw God do miraculous things.

In the midst of that self-destruction and imprisonment by the enemy, salvation happened as my loved ones, then future spouse, came to the Lord. They knew God had to be real as they saw how this person was when they walked in the Spirit instead of in their flesh. Jesus had to be real—there was no other explanation.

A few years later this young Christian, along with a sibling, would lead their dad to the Lord as he lay in a hospital bed dying of cancer.

After my dad's death, my mom somehow felt released to start attending church again. She had been imprisoned by (and felt disqualified over) divorcing her first husband for infidelity over 50 years prior. She is now a thriving member of a lovely church. She is grandma and great grandma to many of the young families in it.

A couple of years ago, God used a type of imprisonment by a third party as the catalyst to

finally release my other loved one from the 12-year sentence they had placed on themselves to stay in a very unhealthy relationship. I'm trusting (and seeing evidence) that He is not finished with the restoration He has started in this individual's life.

Beloved Sisters, know I have been praying for you for months for this week's study. I'm sure some of you can relate to having been given salvation in some form or another through someone else's imprisonment. I know there are those of you that have been imprisoned by things that have happened in the distant or not so distant past, or are happening right now. I believe God wants to shed light on and bring His saving grace into those areas. I beg you to allow Him to.

Father God, we lift this week to You. May we have open hearts and minds to what You would do in our lives as we surrender to You, trusting that You do indeed use all things. Amen.

We were introduced to Paul in Lesson 3 (October 7-8) of the fall study. If you participated in the fall study, I encourage you to look back over the lesson to familiarize yourself with the transformational journey from Saul to Paul and his incredible life of following Jesus, the One who showed him no sin was too great for Jesus to cover. If you weren't with us in the fall, I encourage you to listen to the teaching on the lccred.org site under on demand messages, Her Ministry Good News 2021-2022 link for Oct 7th or 8th. The focus of that study was primarily Acts chapter 9. This week we are going forward a few chapters to briefly touch on the end of Acts 15, and then delve into Acts 16 (focusing on verses 25-34) as we see how God uses all things.

Let's start with a few headlines leading up to today's top story. Turn to Acts 15:36-41 and Acts

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16:1-15 to read the full details!

1. **Paul and Barnabas part ways over John Mark.... (Barnabas and Mark sail to Cyprus).**
2. Paul chooses Silas; they go through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.
3. Timothy (well spoken of by the brethren) joins Paul and Silas in Lystra.
4. **Paul, Silas and Timothy are forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia.**
5. Vision of a Macedonian man's plea for help appears to Paul during the night.
6. Paul, Silas, Timothy (and Luke?) quickly make their way to Philippi with smooth sailing.
7. Small Jewish congregation meets by the riverside. Jewish women hear the gospel.
8. Lydia, wealthy seller of purple, becomes Europe's first convert as the Lord opens her heart.
9. Lydia and her household are baptized; Paul and company are persuaded to stay at their house.

#1 and #4 above could easily be perceived as negative, but they actually turned out to be very positive. Pick one of them and:

1. Describe how a negative-looking event actually turned out to be a positive one.

2. Compare that to an event you have experienced in one way or another and how God did a similar thing.

In the first two headlines, we see that Paul and Barnabas part ways over John Mark. Acts 15:39 tells us the contention between them became so sharp that they parted from one another. At first glance, that sounds negative—they had been on mission

trips together in the past; they were brothers in the Lord and they hardly parted on good terms.

However, when I look at the bigger picture, I see that the Lord did a couple of things here: first, He doubled the amount of territory that could be reached with the gospel. Neither of them stopped doing ministry... they simply continued ministry with other people. Second, we see growth and reconciliation in 2 Timothy 4:11 when Paul asks for Mark (John Mark) to be brought to him as he is useful to Paul for ministry (and I'm sure beloved by him).

I started attending Little Country Church in 1992, not too many years after there was a split in the church. I've never been through a church split, so I cannot imagine how painful that was to go through. It certainly had to have been seen as a very negative thing at the time. I've heard a few details over the years, but have never really asked/wanted to know about it as from my point of view it didn't matter what had happened.

I walked into a Wednesday night service in Palo Cedro and immediately knew I was home. Pastor Bryan was a young pastor with a haircut and sense of humor my husband could relate to, and that was something God used to help bring him to church and to Himself about six months later, and he has been serving at LCC on the maintenance staff for 20 years! I have since found out that several different churches were birthed out of that split. Just like with Paul and Barnabas, their division led to more growth in God's kingdom and as I hear Pastor Bryan talk about pastor friends in town, I am sure there has been reconciliation just as there was with Paul and Mark. God sees the whole story of our lives. He knows the end from the beginning. Paul and his companions are perfect examples of letting God use all things for His glory and their good (and in the lives of others, such as the Philippian jailer who got saved).

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ACTS 16:25-34

Now let's turn our attention to some not so good news that lands Paul and Silas in prison.

not lawful for us, _____, to _____ or _____."

Please read Acts 16:16-24 NKJV.

3. Where were Paul and the others going?

11. Who rose up against Paul and Silas?

4. Who followed them?

12. What did the magistrates do them? What else did they command be done to them?

5. What did she bring to her masters?

6. As she followed them, what did she cry out?

The masters of the slave girl made very vague accusations against Paul and Silas, and yet the multitudes and the magistrates rose up against them and had them beaten with rods. As we learned earlier, there was a very small Jewish community there, yet anti-Semitism abounded. They made very clear distinction from "these men being Jews" to "us being Roman."

7. Fill in the blanks in verse 18. "*And she did this for _____ . But Paul, _____, turned and said to the spirit, 'I _____ you in the _____ of _____ to come out of her.' And he came out that _____ ."*

13. Can you think of a time when you were treated unfairly based on your looks or your beliefs?

Paul did not want the association with, nor the approval of, this demon. Jesus often told demons to be silent, even when they told the truth about Him (Matthew 8:28-34, Mark 3:11-12) and He cast them out in His own authority (Mark 5:1-13). Paul knew as believers we have authority in the spiritual world as well, but only by the authority of the name of Jesus.

8. What did her masters "see" when the demon left the girl?

14. In vs. 23-24 we meet the jailer. Please fill in the blanks: "*And when they had laid _____ on them, they _____ them into _____, _____ the _____ to keep them _____. Having _____ such a _____, he put them into the _____ and _____ their _____ in the _____."*

9. What did they do to Paul and Silas, and who did they bring them to?

They were brutally beaten and put in the inner prison (the darkest dungeon) with their feet in stocks. This was a log or timber with holes in which the feet, hands and/or necks of prisoners were inserted and fastened with narrow strips of leather. I think Paul and Silas give us an incredible example of what can happen when we look to Jesus instead of

10. Fill in the blanks in verse 20b-21: "*...These men, _____, exceedingly _____ our city; and they _____ which are*

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our circumstances. They believed God uses all things and they lived it out.

Let's answer some questions from verses 25-26:

15. What were Paul and Silas doing?

16. When were they doing it?

17. Who were listening to them?

18. What suddenly happened?

19. What was shaken?

20. What was opened?

21. Whose and what were loosened?

Now look at verses 27-29 in NKJV.

22. Who was awakened?

23. What did he see?

24. What did he suppose?

25. What was he about to do?

26. Who cried out in a loud voice?

27. What did he say?

28. Who called for a light?

29. How did he approach Paul and Silas?

30. This is such a powerful piece of Scripture on so many levels. What do you find most amazing about this whole situation? Why?

For me it's not Paul and Silas, nor the jailer...it's the other prisoners. Verse 25 tells us they were listening to Paul and Silas praying and singing hymns to God. This is the only time in scripture this specific word is used for listening. They were listening intently to Paul and Silas. They were locked in the dungeon of the prison, either awaiting trial or execution. Dark and smelly, there was ungodly pain and misery there and yet when the earthquake happened, the doors opened and their chains fell off, and not a single one flees. I can't help but think the jailer wasn't the only one there who was saved that night.

We have no idea who is watching and listening to us as we go through challenges in our lives. No idea what an impact praying and praising God (regardless of the circumstances) might have on those around us.

31. Can you think of a time when God used your praise or obedience amidst difficult circumstances to minister to or help bring someone to the Lord?

From the list of headlines on page 12, the final headline reads:

10. Philippian Jailer (and Household) Saved!

32. Fill in the blanks of verses 30-31: "*And he brought them out and said, '_____ , what must I do to _____ ?' So they said, '_____ on the _____ , and you will _____ , you and your _____ .'*"

This could seem like the Bible is saying that if we believe, then our family is saved as well. That is not what this is saying. Let's look at verse 32:

33. What did Paul and Silas speak?

34. Who did they speak it to?

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The entire household was saved because they all heard and trusted the Word of God and the saving grace of Jesus Christ it revealed.

35. Just like Lydia who received salvation when they first came to Philippi, the jailer was eager to serve Paul and Silas. Lydia begged them to stay at her house. What did the jailer do the same hour of the night according to vs 33?

36. What happened to him and all his family?

37. When did it happen?

38. Where did he take Paul and Silas?

39. What did he set before them?

40. What did he do then?

41. Why?

A truly repentant heart is one of the holiest and loveliest things to behold.

In my research, it was proposed that this jailer could have not only been the one to put them in stocks and in the dungeon but he easily could have been one of the ones who beat them so badly earlier.

And yet, within a matter of hours we see an incredible transformation...from possibly a brutal jailer to a man ready to commit suicide on his sword (under Roman law and custom guards who allowed their prisoners to escape received the penalty of their escaped prisoners), to a man humbling himself on his knees before Paul and Silas, tending their wounds, serving them food and rejoicing in the salvation of him and his family. All because two men chose to praise God in the midst of suffering and when the opportunity to run was given to them, they

chose to love instead.

42. Can you think of a time when you could have run but chose love instead? What was the outcome?

43. Looking back over this week's lesson, what do you most closely identify with as far as God using all things in our lives?

44. Lastly, is there an "all things" happening in your life right now that you cannot grasp what possible good could come out of it? I've been there more than once, but God has never failed to use every one of those "all things" for His glory and my (and others') good. I encourage you right here and right now to lay it at the foot of the Cross, asking Jesus to take it and trusting He will do what is right in the situation in His perfect timing.

"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28).

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MY EVANGELISM JOURNAL

“Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of His return is drawing near.”

Hebrews 10:24-25
NLT

THE RETURN OF THE LORD IS DRAWING NEAR!

We spent our Fall semester writing letters to answer a “Dear Abigail” column, to help us understand how to share the GOOD NEWS! Now we are putting into action what we have practiced.

Answer the following questions each week and share in your group time that you may encourage one another!

1. Pray and ask the Lord to put someone on your heart that needs to know about the GOOD NEWS! (It may be a stranger that will cross your path.) Write their name here.

2. *Each* morning, pray that God will open your eyes to opportunities. Write any opportunities you had this week.

3. What have you learned about yourself this week as you shared the GOOD NEWS? Was it easier than you thought? More difficult? Did you miss an opportunity?

4. *Praise* the Lord for what He taught you about evangelism this week. Would you have changed your approach? *Continue* to pray for those you shared with, and *trust* the Holy Spirit to continue the work. *Confess* if you felt afraid or weak or if you avoided sharing altogether and then *start afresh* next week. He is FAITHFUL!

WORD SEARCH

THE PHILIPPIAN JAILER

R Q N P N Y A B N B R X M I D N O S I R P H F I
P M M U N S P M M V O U B E X R T J O L R M X I
H U W B P J J K E Z A A S A G L Q B F J B N T U
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P V W C D Z I J N T J R L T W J I T W H W W W T
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T E D X Z L S Z N E I C S Q C E G I B A P E J D
W W D W U V E A B G O G I U B K H E Z F M A V S
L T E W M D G N V L I E V A J X L J D B B L L Y
F A Q K J K S R V E P X G K D I P J L E R W F Z
J A D O X Q T R A H D N V E E F W I T L Z K A Q
F E I W E S R K G F M O L V V Q N V Q P A S G M
G R M S Y H L L I G H T E Y Z G X Y U M T H V Y
S D S I R I W S B B H E G S R J S U N B L Y U F
N W T C C Y T W T G E Z A I S S C I H I K O F I
I T L W W H D O A T W N G N I C I O J E R A F I
A V W A W J Q R H N O B U V I J F W M G Y J Y A
H O B I K O P D E Z A J G M Q Y K I Q P U R T D
C Y F V B L I Y U B V Z Q N B G M O G M H M G Y
G N W C Q H E U W Y M Q C Q L K H Q F T R X N Y
I B A D L N L Q L P N J P Z E B P A U L Y R R A
C F K N I I E Y I C O X J G W D W L D Y K F V S
S U R F T Q E K V A H W U T F Q U A U P V D F C
C I V T S N I U E I T V M Z A L I F F H P J T R

REJOICING

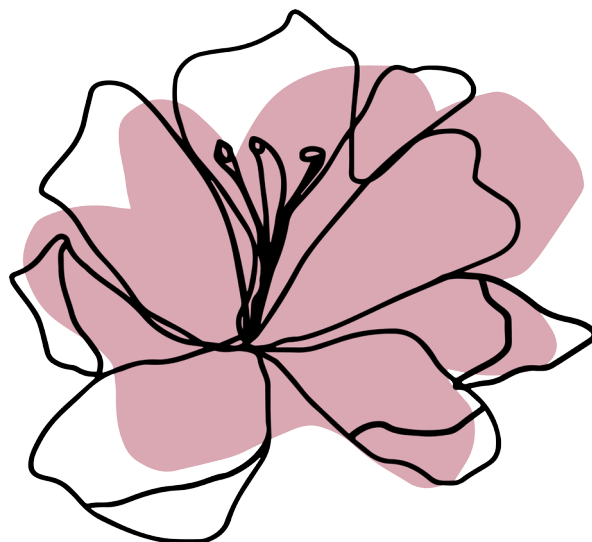
BAPTIZED

SAVED

BELIEVED

TREMBLING

LIGHT



SWORD

CHAINS

PRISON

EARTHQUAKE

SILAS

PAUL

Answers are on page 107