

Acts 16:25–34 (ESV) About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, 26 and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's bonds were unfastened. 27 When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. 28 But Paul cried with a loud voice, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here." 29 And the jailer called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas. 30 Then he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" 31 And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." 32 And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. 33 And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family. 34 Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God.

Why does God allow his servants to suffer?

Review

- Acts was written by Luke - it's somewhat of a sequel to the Gospel of Luke
- Acts forms a bridge between the four Gospels and the rest of the New Testament, showing how the apostles carried on Christ's work and providing a historical background for Romans through Revelation. The Acts of the Apostles is the second of two New Testament books written by Luke.
- Like his Gospel, Acts was a letter to Luke's friend Theophilus, written sometime in A.D. 62–64.

- Theme: An historical narrative of the expansion of the gospel into the Gentile world, empowered by the Holy Spirit resulting in lives transformed and churches planted.

Section 4: Acts 12:25-16:5 - The expansion geographically to more Gentiles (and the Jerusalem council)

(Acts 16:5 ESV) So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and they increased in numbers daily.

Chapter 16 overview

1. This is Paul's 2nd missionary journey
 - You never retire from being on mission.
2. We are introduced to Timothy for the first time in the Scriptures:

Acts 16:1 (ESV) *Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek.*

Why did Paul circumcise Timothy - especially after Acts 15's Jerusalem council?

Vs 3 Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him, and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.

The Jerusalem Conference agreed that Gentiles would not need to be circumcised to be Christians. In other words, Gentiles would not be required to become Jews in order to be Christians. The converse was also true: Jews would not be required to abandon their Jewishness in order to become Christians.

"The marriage of a Jewish woman to a non-Jew was considered a nonlegal marriage; and in all instances of nonlegal marriages, the lineage of the child was reckoned through the mother.

Paul always worked through the Jewish synagogues where possible. To have had a member of his entourage be of Jewish lineage and yet uncircumcised would have hampered his effectiveness among the Jews. It was at the very least a matter of missionary strategy to circumcise Timothy," Polhill, J. B. (1992). *Acts* (Vol. 26, p. 343). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

Paul had no missionary companion more thoroughly involved in his subsequent work than Timothy. Paul considered him a "son" (cf. 1 Cor 4:17; 1 Tim 1:2). Not only did he address two letters to him, but he also listed him as cosender in six others (2 Cor 1:1; Phil 1:1; Col 1:1; 1 Thess 1:1; 2 Thess 1:1; Phlm 1). He considered him his "fellow worker" (Rom 16:21; cf. 1 Cor 16:10) and, indeed, as much more—"as a son with his father" in the work of the gospel (Phil 2:22)

- Disciples of Jesus make disciples of Jesus who make disciples of Jesus (Disciples making disciples).

2 Timothy 2:1–2 (ESV) *You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, 2 and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.*

3. Paul is given a vision to go to Macedonia

Acts 16:9 (ESV) *And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing there, urging him and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us."*

- Believers are led by the Spirit to be on mission.

4. We here Luke use the pronoun “we” for the first time as he includes himself as a companion on mission with Paul.

Acts 16:10 (ESV) *And when Paul had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.*

- Believers are on mission together with other believers (scatter).

5. Lydia is saved and uses her home for the church to gather in.

Acts 16:13–15 (ESV) *And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to the riverside, where we supposed there was a place of prayer, and we sat down and spoke to the women who had come together. 14 One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul. 15 And after she was baptized, and her household as well, she urged us, saying, “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.” And she prevailed upon us.*

- Believers open up their home and lives to other believers (gather).

Review conclusion: The chapter has highlighting discipleship, hospitality, mission, evangelism, prayer, worship and suffering.

Acts 16:16–24 (ESV) *As we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by fortune-telling. 17 She followed Paul and us, crying out, “These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation.” 18 And this she kept doing for many days. Paul, having become greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.” And it came out that very hour. 19 But when her owners saw that their hope of gain was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers. 20 And when they had brought them to the magistrates, they said, “These men are Jews, and they are disturbing our city. 21 They advocate customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to accept or practice.” 22 The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates tore the garments off them and gave orders to beat them with rods. (2cor 11:25) 23 And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely. 24 Having received this order, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.*

Why would God allow this kind of suffering for HIS servants that are doing good?

Joni Erikson Tada and her article “Reflections on the 50th Anniversary of My Diving Accident”

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/reflections-on-50th-anniversary-of-my-diving-accident>

Joni and Friends reach the world for special needs people, she has written over 45 books and has used her story to inspire millions.

*** "God permits what he hates to accomplish what he loves." ***

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The miracle served not to deliver them but rather to deliver the jailer.

A clear observation of our current culture is that we are not like Paul and Silas. Actually, when we suffer a fraction of what they suffered, we retreat and complain rather than pray and evangelize. All the while remaining in a prison of self-consumption that shackles our feet from being the feet of good news.

We are far more interested in seeing ourselves safe than we are seeing others saved.
We are far more concerned with our comfort than others' conversion.

I'm just never happy...things around me are never good enough...I constantly have committee meetings in my mind about the people intruding in my personal life....I'm restless, unsatisfied.

An orphanage is home to undernourished children and overworked caregivers.

What is God permitting in your life that you hate so much? Are you holding it against him? Are you running from Him and his people?

Paul and Silas got exactly what they wanted - the gospel to awaken lost people in Philippi - but it came with great cost.

"I really would rather be in this wheelchair knowing Jesus as I do than be on my feet without him," Erikson Tada.

God loves people and he may permit your current suffering to love his future children. Do we give in to the temptation to escape or obey his voice to evangelize?