

Soul Business – Celebration

Introduction

Paul and Silas, who are Roman Citizens, have landed themselves in prison after being stripped and beaten. As Roman citizens, it was illegal for them to be beaten and imprisoned without a fair trial – yet here they are naked, wounded, and suffering. Yet, we don't see either of them yelling "this isn't fair!"

In the middle of a Roman prison, where their legs are shackled to the floor in awkward, painful positions. Where inmates are shoved into one room at night, for maximum security and maximum discomfort. Where the sounds and the smells that mingle together make a person want to lose the stale bread and water they may have eaten for dinner. smack dab in the middle of this less-than-ideal circumstance, we hear prayer and praise rise from the dirty floor. A hymn of praise echoing from a place of humiliation.

Do you wonder what hymn they were singing? What psalm had they set to music? How did God bring them to a place of celebration in these painful circumstances? Celebration isn't something reserved only for the happy times in our lives; celebration is the humble response of a Child of God, trusting that even the circumstances we find ourselves in can be used to know Christ and make Him known.

Read your Bible

- Acts 16:16-34

Apply God's Word to Your Life:

1. From the scripture, what are the results of the prayer and praise of Paul and Silas?

2. How do you think the prayer and praise of Paul and Silas impacted the others in prison?
3. Paul and Silas had physical chains and stocks keeping them locked up. What are some of the “prisons” people find themselves in today? How about you?
4. What would it look like to “pray and praise” your way through the prison that surrounds you?
5. How might the people in your life be impacted by your response of prayer and praise in the middle of your circumstances?
6. How can your group pray for you this week?

Reflecting on the Text:

1. Who are the people in this account?
2. What is going on in this account? Take this opportunity to retell the scripture.
3. When is this account taking place?
4. Where is this account taking place?
5. Why? What questions do you have from this passage?

Pray

Lord God Almighty, you have shown your power through the words of this text. You are the God who can make the earthquake and free prisoners and you are the God who can transform hearts in the midst of the hardest circumstances. Would you tune our hearts to sing your grace, through the good and the bad of this life; that our heart cry would not be one of “that’s not fair,” but one of “to the glory of God.”
Amen