

4.32 Paul and Silas in Prison

Acts 16:16-34

Unit 7: Good News Spreads “Chain Breaker”

Wed. 4/15 & Sun.

4/19

“So if the Son sets you free, you are truly free.”
John 8:36

The Point: Jesus Breaks Chains

STORY SUMMARY: Paul and Silas in Prison

As Paul and Silas travel around Philippi spreading the word about Jesus, they are followed by an enslaved girl who shouts and cries out, disrupting their message. The girl is possessed by a “spirit of divination,” and her masters are using this to make money by having her foretell the future. Paul commands the spirit to leave the girl in the name of Jesus Christ. Once the girl is freed, her masters are angry because they cannot make money from her anymore as a fortuneteller. They bring Paul and Silas before the magistrates and demand that they be beaten and imprisoned for being troublemakers who have broken Roman law. The magistrates have Paul and Silas beaten and chained inside a cell within the inner most part of the prison. Paul and Silas do not lose heart. Instead they sing praises to God and pray throughout the night. An earthquake rocks the prison and causes Paul and Silas’s chains to fall away and their prison doors to burst open. When the jailer sees that the prison doors are open he decides to kill himself instead of facing the consequences that would be given him. But the two apostles have remained inside their cells and cry out for the jailer not to hurt himself. The jailer asks Paul and Silas for help. After the two apostles tell the jailer about Jesus, his entire household is baptized.

THE POINT: God can even use the imprisonment of the faithful to bring about change in people.

As early apostles spreading the word about Jesus, they encountered many dangers and people who wanted to persecute them. Because Paul freed an enslaved girl from spirit-possession, he and Silas were beaten and thrown into prison. But they did not let this setback break them. In fact, they continued to sing praises to God.

BIBLE NUTS & BOLTS: Translation

When the Bible was first written down, the stories of the Old Testament were originally written in Hebrew and Aramaic, while the New Testament was originally written in Greek. To reach people all over the world, the full Bible has been translated into hundreds of languages, and the New Testament itself translated into over a thousand languages. However, translation always involves interpretation as well, as translators must often choose which modern words and phrases best communicate the intention of the original writings. It can be helpful when studying Scripture to read several translations and study the different meanings of important words and phrases.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE: Service

Sometimes simple actions mean the most. Remembering people who are going through difficult times can be a meaningful expression of service in the midst of dark times.

Spirit & Truth

Hope Youth Volunteer,

Praising in prison, caring for the hurting and proclaiming the good news of salvation, Paul showed us how to walk the Christian life. It can be hard to serve others in during our happiest times but its so challenging at our worst. We get to model what it looks like to serve in the good times and the bad. I am reminded of the song Praise (a hopekids favorite) that says we praise when we feel it and we praise when we don't. We carry on, not because we are good but because God is Good. Press on and finish strong.

Blessings,

Youth Team