

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JULY 12TH, 2026 // BOOK OF ACTS

LOOSED CHAINS (ACTS 16:25–28)

"ABOUT MIDNIGHT..."

Paul and Silas had been arrested, beaten, and thrown in prison for doing good. Despite their circumstances, they were **"praying and singing hymns to God."**

- Anyone can be happy when circumstances are good. To those who believe, God offers joy that is as constant as He is. The joy found in Him is **unchanging, even when circumstances change.**

A STRANGE SOUND IN A DARK PLACE

As Paul and Silas were praying and praising God, **"the prisoners were listening to them."**

- The world is watching and taking note of our reactions to adversity. Do we project a defeatist attitude or one of victory? We don't fake it and pretend everything is okay when it's not, but **we should project confidence in God that confounds the world.**

"And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:7).

A POWERFUL MOVE OF GOD

Luke writes that as they were praying and singing, **"there was such a violent earthquake."** This was not a natural disaster but a supernatural move of God.

- It was focused and intentional, shaking **"the foundations of the jail"** and causing **"all the doors"** to open and **"everyone's chains"** to fall off.

"WHEN THE JAILER WOKE UP"

Under Roman law, any guard who allowed a prisoner to escape on their watch would have to bear the punishment the prisoner was supposed to receive.

- When the Philippian jailer woke up and **saw the doors of the prison were open**, he assumed the prisoners had escaped, so **he drew his sword and was prepared to take his own life.**

"WE'RE ALL HERE!"

Instead of escaping, both Paul and Silas showed great discernment and called out to the guard, telling him not to harm himself because no one had escaped and all were still there.

- They could have escaped to their own freedom, but the lives of others were more important than their own.

"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility consider others as more important than yourselves." (Philippians 2:3)

THE PHILIPPIAN JAILER (ACTS 16:29–34)

"THE JAILER CALLED FOR LIGHTS, RUSHED IN..."

This hardened jailer (possibly the same one who had beaten them hours earlier) ran in and **"fell down trembling before Paul and Silas"** as a sign of gratitude for not leading a mass exodus from the prison.

- The jailer was **moved by the grace and love shown by Paul and Silas** more than he was moved by the earthquake.

CLEAR DEMONSTRATIONS OF THE POWER OF GOD

The grace and love shown towards him, coupled with the fact that they were able to have joy in the face of misery, led the jailer to ask, **"Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"** The jailer desired the kind of life Paul and Silas had.

- God wants us to draw people in. **Does our relationship with God make others want what we have?**

GRACE ALONE, BY FAITH ALONE

To the jailer's profound question, Paul responded, **"Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved."** Believe means to trust in, rely on, and cling to.

- Paul's simple statement about salvation doesn't mention repentance—not because it isn't necessary but because the jailer was already repentant. So, **Paul pointed the repentant jailer to faith in Jesus Christ.**

"YOU AND YOUR HOUSEHOLD"

Paul wasn't saying salvation was automatically imparted to the jailer's household. Most likely, Paul was given divine insight and knew that by the jailer's example and Paul speaking the word of the Lord, his entire household would come to faith.

- The promise of salvation **is extended to everyone but is dependent upon the individual's response** to the message that is heard.

TRANSFORMATION OF AN ENTIRE HOUSEHOLD

This man who had once inflicted pain was transformed into a man who now tenderly cared for others by washing their wounds, inviting them into his house, and feeding them.

- The jailer and his entire household were **reconciled to God and then to his former enemies**—two prisoners who were carefully placed in his ward by God.

LEAVING ON THEIR OWN TERMS (ACTS 16:35–40)

GOD'S PURPOSE REVEALED

Paul and Silas left the prison with the jailer to minister to his household, then returned to the prison to protect the jailer from punishment when the call came to release them.

- **The earthquake was more about the salvation of a Philippian jailer and his household than it was about freeing Paul and Silas.**

AN ATTEMPT TO MAINTAIN THE PAX ROMANA

Most likely, the magistrates' early morning decision to "release those men" was not influenced by anything that had transpired throughout the night.

- The magistrates had likely hoped that a severe beating and a night in jail would be enough to deter Paul and Silas from disrupting the peace any further.

ACKNOWLEDGING THEIR INNOCENCE

The Philippian magistrates had unknowingly made a grave mistake by violating Paul and Silas's rights as Roman citizens.

- When the magistrates became aware of their citizenship, **they tried to send them away without exposing what had happened. Yet Paul and Silas stayed put until the magistrates personally escorted them out.**

"LEAVING THE JAIL, THEY CAME TO LYDIA'S HOUSE"

Paul and Silas would not be rushed out of town until their work there was completed.

- Everything that happened in Philippi culminated in the raising of two church leaders there: Lydia and the prison guard. Paul would later write a letter (Philippians) to this church, showing his joy and confidence in God's work there.

FACING ADVERSITY

- How do we react in the face of adversity?
- Do we still praise and pray in the difficult moments of life? How about the easy moments?
- Our reaction to adversity should confound others and draw them to God.
- Our reaction could be what opens the door for others to be set free.

RESPONDING TO THE SIMPLE GOSPEL

- The jailer recognized he needed saving. Have we come to the end of ourselves, where we're desperately in need of saving?
- Paul made him aware of a Savior. Jesus' work on the cross was sufficient for all.
- He responded to the gospel by believing in Jesus Christ. Do we trust in, rely on, and cling to Jesus?