THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JULY 12TH, 2026 // THE BOOK OF ACTS

MIDNIGHT (ACTS 16:25–26)

LOCKED INTO INNER PRISON

We remember that Paul and Silas were stripped of their clothes, beaten with rods, then put into the inner prison and secured in stocks.

- They were the victims of Roman justice reserved for non-Romans who would rise up against Roman authority. They were made examples of, and death wouldn't have been unusual.

MIDNIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

Luke points out that Paul and Silas had been in this place for a few hours, experiencing the painful torture of the stocks.

- There would have been no light, no food, and no water. This place was meant to remove all hope from its occupants.
- It was the kind of place where screams of torture were the only thing that escaped the rooms of hopelessness.

PRAYING AND SINGING

It wasn't screams that the other prisoners heard; it was praise.

- Paul and Silas, in captivity, took the opportunity to cry out to God and testify of His character.
- **No hymbooks, no lyrics, no Bibles—just hearts that found a way to praise in the darkness. Could we do the same?**

"EVERYONE'S CHAINS CAME LOOSE"

Suddenly, an earthquake shook the jailhouse until every prisoner's chains were loose and every door was opened.

- Luke doesn't tell us the content of their prayers. Maybe they prayed for freedom or for God to show His power. One thing is for sure: God responded in a big way.
- **What was the greatest miracle—that they praised, or that God broke their chains?**

DELIVERED (ACTS 16:27–34)

THE JAILER DREW HIS SWORD

The earthquake awakened the jailer, and he saw the open doors. Knowing his punishment for allowing them to leave, he decided to end his life.

- Sadly, this was not an uncommon event among those who felt defeated. Just 100 years before, Brutus and Cassius dealt themselves the same fate as Mark Anthony's army overpowered their positions.

"DON'T HARM YOURSELF"

In spite of his pain, Paul called out in a loud voice, "Don't harm yourself, because we're all here!"

- **This is the cry of Christianity and the Holy Spirit to everyone who will listen.**
- **In the darkest hour, people should hear that harm isn't the answer. There is hope for what we are fighting for here—and an even greater hope for eternity.**

"THE JAILER CALLED FOR LIGHTS"

When Paul declared that every prisoner was still there, the jailer called for lights so he could see what he was hearing.

- He rushed in and fell down trembling.
- We don't know if he trembled in awe, fear, or appreciation. But his next recorded words would change his life forever.
- This story about injustice and persecution is about to turn into another opportunity.

"WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?"

Seeing that everyone was still in their places, the jailer walked with Paul and Silas and asked what must he do to be saved.

- He may have been asking about physical danger or his spiritual condition.
- **Whatever the question, the answer is that salvation is made possible through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.**

"BELIEVE IN THE LORD JESUS"

Luke condenses the conversation but makes it clear that salvation is through belief in Jesus alone.

- He also clarifies that salvation is for anyone whofollows Jesus, including families.
- When they "spoke the word of the Lord," they took the time to explain who Jesus is and what He had done for them.
- **There is always more to learn.**

"HE BROUGHT THEM INTO HIS HOUSE"

Much like Lydia, the jailer invited them into his house and listened to their teaching.

- Unlike Lydia, he was not a God-fearer before that day. He was an opponent of Christians.
- He experienced an extreme change because of his encounter with the living God.
- **God can change our families. He can change our friends. He can change our enemies, and He can change us!**

EXPOSED (ACTS 16:35–40)

"WHEN DAYLIGHT CAME"

Much had happened overnight in the jailhouse, but something must have happened at the courthouse too.

- The magistrates had decided to release Paul and Silas, the very men they nearly killed the day before.
- Maybe they didn't have enough evidence for a real trial, maybe they heard what happened, or maybe their citizenship was revealed.

PUBLIC SIN

The jailer was pleased to share that Paul and Silas were free to go in peace.

- Paul chose this moment to reveal their Roman citizenship and expose the illegal beating and torture in jail.
- Paul had not used his position to avoid suffering for the gospel. He also wouldn't allow sin to hinder the mission of the gospel.
- It wasn't about Paul; it was about the message.

ESCORTING THEM FROM PRISON

Paul's message struck fear into the magistrates because they understood that they could now be held accountable for their sin.

- Paul and Silas walked with them in public, revealing their innocence and strengthening the message they had shared with so many.
- These men had suffered for the gospel, and the government had to recognize their innocence.
- They stood for Jesus, and Jesus was validated.

AT LYDIA'S HOUSE

After leaving the jail, they returned to Lydia's house, where they shared their goodbyes.

- They had accomplished their main purpose in going to Philippi—they had preached the gospel, they had laid a foundation for a growing church, and now they were ready to take the message to surrounding cities.
- Paul's pattern would continue. **Are we ready to handle the next challenge?**

PRAYER

- Everyone should pray.
- **It doesn't matter where we are. Pray.**
- **When times are good, we pray easy prayers. When times are bad, we pray hard prayers. When do we think God is listening more? How much does our prayer change between those times?**

CONTENT

- We pray for different reasons.
- **Generally, we are satisfied or dissatisfied.**
- **If we are honest, our dissatisfaction is usually a result of our actions (or someone else's). When we are dissatisfied, how much do our prayers still recognize God's holiness? Perfection? Love? Sacrifice? Power? Sovereignty?**

CONTENTMENT

- We need contentment.
- **Contentment isn't "being ok" with every circumstance—that's complacency.**
- **Complacency is giving up. Contentment brings peace in the present, while allowing us to pray for change that will bring the growth God intends for us and the people around us. The question is: Are we praying for contentment or recognizing God's power in our circumstances?**
- *"I know how to make do with little, and I know how to make do with a lot. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being content—whether well fed or hungry, whether in abundance or in need. I am able to do all things through Him who strengthens me"*(Philippians 4:12–13).