



Mission

Prison at Philippi

Acts 16:16-40

Teaching Aim

To show we can trust God to be with us in all circumstances.

Setting the Scene

Paul and Silas finally got over to Macedonia as we saw in our last lesson. They were faced with many trials and difficulties along the way, but now they are in Philippi and face to face with the forces of darkness.

Paul heals a slave girl

Paul was greatly annoyed at a slave girl, possessed with a spirit, following them. He turned and said to the spirit, *“I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.”* It came out of the girl and, when her masters saw that they could no longer make money from her, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to the authorities. The Magistrates ordered them to be stripped, beaten and put into prison with their feet put in the stocks.

What happens when something terrible happens in your life? Paul's and Silas' only crime was preaching the Gospel. They could easily have asked the question, “Why?” but, instead, they focused on prayer.

Paul and Silas Pray

Paul and Silas focused on prayer and, in the midst of this dark situation, they were not forsaken by God. They were praying in a crisis, but not simply because of the crisis - they were praying because prayer had become the normal thing for them to do.

Prayer ought to be the normal thing for every Christian to do in every situation of life, both the good and the bad. Prayer is the great privilege the Christian has of talking over every detail of life with God. Most would pray if they were in as desperate a situation as Paul and Silas, but it would only be a prayer of desperation. We need to learn how to pray when times are good - to develop a strong daily prayer life, where we learn how to communicate with God and how to hear His voice. When the hard times come, we will be able to effectively call on God and receive grace to help in time of need.

Their prayer, however, was not a lament but a prayer of worship and praise. They were not only focused on prayer, but they were full of praise. Far from being depressed about their situation, they were full of thanksgiving. They knew God had not forsaken them and that somehow God was going to do a mighty work in the midst of this terrible situation. They saw in this obstacle an opportunity. They had become optimists.

But *“about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the*

prisoners were listening to them.”

Why were they singing? - They knew they were at the centre of God’s will.

The commitment of Paul and Silas

They were stripped, beaten, imprisoned and put in chains. Their backs were lacerated, bloody and swollen and they were in severe pain. Yet, they continued to be strong witnesses for Christ.

First of all they prayed. They probably asked God for strength to help them, to forgive their persecutors, to use their suffering to reach others for Christ.

Secondly, they praised and thanked God for the privilege of suffering for the name of Christ Jesus. Would we pray and praise God in the midst of our dilemmas? All of this took place at midnight and they sang so loud the entire jail could hear them. They were not ashamed of the Lord and we need to be committed to God in every situation.

God moves in mysterious ways

God can move in our lives through nature, a tragedy, an event in someone’s life, by death or by the Gospel. God moves to prepare the souls of people for salvation. In this case the jailer was being prepared for salvation. He was confused for the earthquake had opened all of the jail doors, making it possible for the prisoners to escape. The penalty for allowing prisoners to escape was death and the jailer drew his sword to kill himself. Paul, sensing the jailer was about to kill himself, shouted to him that they were all there. The jailer heard and it saved his life and ultimately he became a believer.

Summing Up

People were changed because they saw a difference in the lives of Paul and Silas. They will be changed if they see a difference in our lives. Never apologize for being different. We have not been called to be like other people but to be like Christ. We must allow Christ to live His life in us and through us. It will be a life full of power, full of praise, full of Jesus. People will see that you are different and they will want what you have.

Resources

Memory Verse

“Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved.” Acts 16:31

Activities

- Under 8s Activity Sheet “Prison at Philippi - 1”.
- Over 8s Activity Sheet “Prison at Philippi - 2”.

Prayer Points

Give thanks for:

- The Salvation we have in Jesus Christ.
- God answering our prayers.

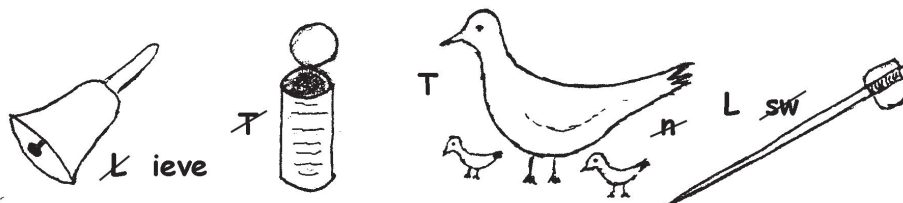
Pray for:

- Those in prison for their faith.
- The members of your family who are not saved.
- God to give you strength to be a witness for Him.

Mission

Prison at Philippi

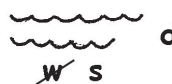
Solve the following puzzle to find out what the memory verse is and then learn it.



suseJ
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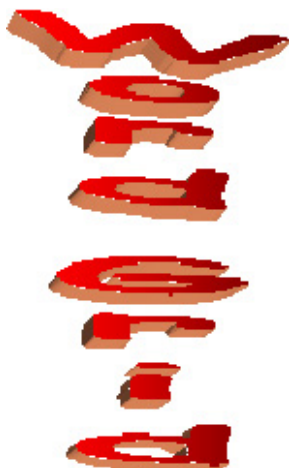


Acts 16:31

Place the words below in their correct places in the grid.

Believe slave Lystra Silas doors

					S				
					A				
					V				
					E				
					D				



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Prison at Philippi

Use the code to find the memory verse and then learn it.

a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m
26	25	24	23	22	21	20	19	18	17	16	15	14

n	o	p	q	r	s	t	u	v	w	x	y	z
13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

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25 22 15 18 22 5 22 18 13 7 19 22 15 12 9 23 17 22 8 6 8

26 13 23 2 12 6 4 18 15 15 25 22 8 26 5 22 23 26 24 7 8 16:31

Wordsearch

Find the following words in the wordsearch below.

Believe Lord Jesus Be Saved

n	J	o	s	h	a	l	i
B	e	l	i	e	v	e	f
a	s	f	c	d	r	o	L
p	u	y	e	u	a	n	x
d	s	v	B	a	j	l	w
t	i	f	d	e	v	a	S