



Act 16:11-40

“Prison Break & a New Church”

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21:19

We are going to be in Acts chapter 16 this morning. So grab your Bible, make your way to Acts 16. We're on page 1134 in the black Bible. So if you didn't bring a Bible, there's a Bible underneath of your chair. You can follow along in that. We're on page 1134 in those Bibles. But as we're diving in the message that we're going to be looking at this morning, I've titled Prison Break and A New Church.

21:43

I think there's something about a good breaking out of jail movie or story that has been, it's captivated the imagination of generations. It's been one of the great stories, I think, of some older movies and perhaps some newer ones. You may recognize a couple of these. The Great escape with Steve McQueen. Anybody remember that one? Or Cool Hand Luke a few years ago. Escape from Alcatraz with Clint Eastwood back in the 1970s. My personal favorite out of this list, Shawshank Redemption. Yeah, we got a couple of Shawshank fans in here. And the less appreciated, just a few years ago, Sylvester Stallone released a movie called the Escape Plan. So this week in Acts, what we're going to be looking at, we're going to see Paul and his team in Philippi. They're doing ministry.

22:35

They're out there and sharing the gospel as we've seen them do so many other places. But it won't be long into our passage before we see these men locked into prison along with the events that are going to eventually lead to their freedom. So we're just going to dive right in. We've got a big chunk of text that we're going to look at this morning. So we're in Acts 16. We're going to start in verse 11 and we're going to make our way all the way down through the end of the chapter in verse 40. So if you would follow along with me in your copy or on the screens in Acts 16, it says.

23:06

So, setting sail from Troas, we made a direct voyage to Samothrace, and the following day to Neapolis, and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city in the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. And we remained in the city some days. And on the Sabbath day, went outside the gate to the riverside, where we supposed there was a place of prayer. And we sat down and spoke to the women who had come together. One who heard us was a woman named Lydia from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul. And after she was baptized, and her household as well, she urged us, saying, if you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.

23:49

And she prevailed upon us. As we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by fortune telling. She followed Paul and us, crying out, these men are servants of the most-high God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation. She kept doing this for many days. And Paul, having become greatly annoyed, turned and said to the Spirit, I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And it came out of her that very hour. When her owners saw that their hope of gain was gone, they seized Paul and Silas, dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers. And when they had brought them to the magistrates, they said, these men are Jews. They are disturbing our city.

24:31

They advocate customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to accept or practice. And the crowd joined in attacking them. And the magistrates tore the garments off of them and gave orders to beat them with rods. And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely. And having received this order, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. And about midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God. And the prisoners were listening to them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's bonds were unfastened. And the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open.

25:13

And so he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul cried out with a loud voice, do not harm yourself, for we are all here. And the jailer called for the lights and rushed in. And trembling with fear, he fell down before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them out and said, sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household. And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. And he took them that same hour of the night and washed their wounds. And he was baptized at once, he and all his family. Then he brought them up into the house, into his house and set food before them.

25:53

And he rejoiced, along with his entire household, that he had believed in God. When it was day, the magistrates sent the police saying, let these men go. The jailer reported these words to Paul, saying, the magistrates have sent to let you go. Therefore, come out now and go in peace. Paul said to them, they have beaten us publicly, uncondemned men who are Roman citizens and have thrown us into prison. Do they now throw us out secretly? No, let them come themselves and take us out. So the police reported these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid when they heard that they were Roman citizens. And so they came and they apologized to them. They took them out and asked them to leave the city. And so they went out of the prison and visited Lydia.

26:35

And when they had seen the brothers, they encouraged them and they departed. This is the word of the Lord. Would you pray with me? God, we thank you for your word. We thank you for the privilege of being able to open your word and to hear from you, God, to hear what you would say to us this morning. So, God, we pray that you would give us ears to hear what you have to say, God, that you would give us hearts that are prepared to receive whatever it is that you say. And, God, we give this time to you, and we pray that you would speak. It's in Jesus name we pray. Amen. All right. Well, as we work our way through the passage, the first thing that we're going to see is this gathering by the river, right?

27:07

So as we read through, there's a large chunk of our passage that focuses on Paul and Silas, imprisonment and release, obviously a huge volume of verses. But I wouldn't describe those verses as the primary focus of the chapter. I would say that the. The focus really in Acts 16 is how God is establishing his church in Philippi. And so our missionaries come into town. They make their way as they were sailing across the sea there, and they start their ministry on a new continent where very little traction has been made so far in the way of religious faith or Jewish faith. There really isn't much to be spoken of in Philippi at this point. Philippi was a Roman city, had a very different culture than many of the other cities that Paul and the other missionaries had been ministering in.

27:59

All right, Paul had made a habit every time he came into a new city. Anybody remember what does he normally do? He heads to the synagogue, right? He goes down and he finds the people who were already kind of God fearing, knew of God people, and he begins to share with them how Jesus has changed the paradigm. Paul made a habit of going to the synagogue, but in Philippi there is no synagogue. So we've got a problem here. So since there was no substantial Jewish presence in the town, there was no synagogue for Paul to go to. Our missionaries, they head down to the river on the Sabbath to seek out anybody who may be down there worshiping. Basic practice during that time.

28:40

If there was no synagogue, the faithful people who wanted to worship were instructed to meet under the open sky by a river or a sea, any body of water that may have been convenient and available to them. So the men go down to the river where they're introduced to an impressive woman named Lydia. Lydia was described as a seller of purple goods. That means that she was quite wealthy, most likely. Purple dye was painfully difficult to make. It was associated with royalty and it was associated with wealth due to the difficulty with which purple would have been made during that time. So her goods that she was selling as a tradeswoman would have been quite expensive. We know that she was a woman of significant financial means, that she had done well for herself in the business world.

29:29

Lydia is also described in verse 14 as a worshiper of God. That means that similar to some of the other people that we've seen in the Book of Acts, she was probably a Gentile, but she probably followed the Jewish faith. She was probably familiar with Yahweh and some of the practices, but she wasn't a full convert. She wasn't someone who was fully in and accepted in the Jewish faith at that point. So when Paul shows up and he starts sharing with the women by the river, we're told in verse 14 and 15 that the Lord opened her, Lydia's heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul, that she was baptized along with the rest of her household. Lydia, quickly, she buys in. This is what she's been looking for.

30:15

It tells us essentially that she's been looking for God as it tells us that she was a God fearing woman. But she clearly received by faith the offer of salvation that Paul has been extending over and over again in these different towns. And we're going to see him very clearly communicate a little further down in our chapter in verse 31. And he likely said something very similar to Lydia that he says to the jailer a few verses later. He says, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved, you and your household. And as Lydia comes to faith, there's something interesting that happens here because Lydia, even though she has been separated by miles and doesn't know anybody, in fact there's a significant amount of years that have passed between now and when the early church was established in Jerusalem.

31:03

She reflects the same generosity, she reflects the same generous hospitality that we saw among the first Christians back in Jerusalem at the beginning of the Book of Acts. In Acts

chapter 2 and in Acts chapter 4, you may remember the supernatural generosity that kind of characterized the church at that point. It told us that they were selling their possessions, that they were making sure that no one among them had need, that everyone was taken care of because they didn't count their possessions as their own, but that they loved one another enough to be generous with what they had gone and what they had earned. In fact, the generosity and hospitality that we've seen throughout the Book of Acts has kind of served as a sort of qualifying characteristic of the people who come to faith in the story of the early Christians.

31:54

We see it over and over again. But Lydia offers her hospitality specifically and clearly here in Acts 16, as a piece of evidence to show how God has impacted her life, to show how she has truly given Christ her heart and has allowed him to be Lord, to be king. Let's look at verse 15. It says it pretty clearly. It says, after she was baptized and her household as well, she urged us, saying, if you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay. And she prevailed upon us. She looks at the missionaries and says, if you have judged us to be faithful. That's her way of saying, if you think we're legit, come stay at my house. If you think that God truly has come to a simple Gentile woman like her, accept my hospitality.

32:46

And it tells us that she prevailed upon them. That means she, I read that and I think it says she won the argument, right, that she was insistent. No, you are going to come. You are. Let me feed you, let me take care of you, let me provide for you. Lydia was not just offering the passive response that we're really good at, right? We do this and we'll see somebody going through a hard time, and we'll tell them the passive, hey, if you need anything, let me know. That still puts the responsibility on someone else to come to me and to ask for help. People don't do that right now. Lydia tells us that she prevailed upon them, that she was insistent that I want to be the person who extends hospitality to you. I want to help.

33:28

I want to provide for you in this way. And she's generous. And her generosity, it was immediate and it was. It was significant. It was insistent. In fact, Lydia and the church in Philippi, they actually become famous for their generosity. We see them as significant supporters, financial supporters of Paul's ministry. Throughout Paul's ministry, he talks really clearly about this in the end of his letter that he writes to the Philippians, to many of these same people. We see the church kind of established here and in Philippi in Acts 16, but we know that he wrote the letter Philippians as well. And in Philippians chapter 4, he talks about how they have provided for his needs, how they have been such a blessing to him.

34:14

At the beginning of that section, Philippians 4, verses 10 through 20, Paul mentions in verse 10 how the Philippians were concerned about his provisions, how they have taken care of him over and over again. And Paul kind of famously says these words that I think many of us would be familiar with from Philippians Chapter four. He talks about it. He says, I am content whether I have little or whether I have much, whether I'm in prison or whether I'm free. Whatever it is, I'm content with whatever it is that God puts in my life. But I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. He's saying that in response to talking about how they have financially provided for him. He's. He's telling them, I'm not writing you this letter because I need something and I need you to send more funds.

35:01

This isn't that wonderful letter that many people have gotten from their child at college, right? Mom, dad, send more money. He goes on in Philippians 4 to thank the Philippians, of which Lydia is a prominent figure, for their continued generosity. I think it's also perhaps most importantly why Paul. He explains why he cares about their generosity. He explains why it's

so important for him to acknowledge their sacrificial giving and to thank them for what they've done. Paul's comment in Philippians 4:17 is a welcome change of pace for us. I think, that we sit here and we live in a world where it feels like everybody is trying to coerce charitable giving by whatever means necessary, right? They will stand in front of a store and ring a bell at you. We have giving. Which one is it?

35:57

Giving Tuesday or giving Monday or which day is it after Thanksgiving that we've got a special day that all the charities make sure to make their best case and to ask for people to give. We live in a culture where everyone is asking for charitable donations in one way or another. But what we see here from Paul is such a beautiful and refreshing change of pace for us when we see this. Because in Philippians 4:17, Paul says that it's not about the gift at all. He says. He's saying all of these things, thanking them for their generosity. He says, not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit. Paul's whole point here in this little section in Philippians chapter four, he says at the beginning of it, hey, guys, I'm okay with having nothing.

36:48

I trust God to provide in whatever it is that my ministry requires or my life requires. The reason that I'm bringing this up is because I'm concerned for you. I want you to be generous. I want to see you be generous with what God has given you. Because God blesses our generosity. He says that. That there is fruit that increases to their credit when they are generous. God will provide for every one of our needs. But our generosity yields fruit to your credit, and I wish the best for you. That's just a loving father trying to say, hey, I know that God wants you to do this. And in the same way that he would ask them to do anything else. When God says, hey, do this. When God says, hey, go over here. When God says, hey, live this way.

37:36

Whatever it is, he wants what's best for them, because God's way is what's best for them. And that's. That's my prayer. That's my goal. Anytime that we talk about giving, anytime that. That we talk about finances, these places in Scripture where God talks about generosity, I. Let me just tell you, I always get a little uncomfortable, right? Anybody else, we kind of pucker up and get nervous. We go, oh, I. This is the uncomfortable one, right? Is this the one where they lock the doors and they don't let us leave until we've given enough money? We hear about those. Maybe you don't. You don't. You don't read the same things I read online. Right. There's some crazy places out there. They do weird stuff.

38:15

When it comes to money in churches, I always get a little uncomfortable because I don't want people to assume that this is where we're headed. I don't want people to think this is some selfish request of we need more. Because if Paul would instruct the other side of this same conversation in Philippians 4, he says, Guys, God's going to provide and you need to learn to live with a little bit. And so that's important for all of us to learn and understand as a church. We don't sit here nervous and say, I hope that God will provide. We know that God will provide for our needs.

38:51

And so I'm not worried as a church, but I do want to talk about this uncomfortable topic whenever it shows up out of a concern, in the same way that Paul was concerned, he says, hey, I'm not concerned about the gift. I'm concerned about you. I'm concerned about your generosity. I'm concerned that I bring this up so that you would live in a way that God will give you the blessings and the fruit that generosity provides in a person's life. Paul talks in a way that's out of concern for them and for their growth. And I hope that's the same that we would see here in us. So as we go back to Acts 16 now. Sorry, a little detour there for a

second. As we come back to Acts 16, what we see from Lydia is that she is all in. Immediately.

39:38

She is all in. She was joyfully insistent that she wanted to help the missionaries and support them in their work. She's seen welcoming them into her home. She's serving as the host for the missionaries at this moment. But even by the end of this chapter, she is the host of kind of the Philippian Church at that point. As it's getting started she is the one that they're meeting in her home and they're able to grow and expand based on Lydia's influence and resources. So as Lydia is becoming the host of this newly burgeoning church there in Philippi, Paul and the others continue through town sharing the gospel. Let's keep going. The second thing that we see as we work our way through our passage is in verses 16 through 24, we see Paul and Silas incarcerated for a miracle.

40:26

As we work our way through verses 16 through 24, we have this scene where Paul is eventually arrested and thrown into prison for healing a demon possessed girl. Let's look at verses 16 through 18 just to see the initial interaction between them. Verse 16, it tells us, as we're going to the place of prayer, we're met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination, brought her owners much gain by fortune telling. She followed Paul and us, crying out, these men are servants of the most-high God who proclaim to you the way of salvation. She kept doing it for many days. And so Paul, having become greatly annoyed, turned and said to the Spirit, I command you in the name of Jesus Christ, come out of her. And it came out that very hour. Paul and the others are going through town.

41:15

They're sharing the gospel, and this girl is just following them day after day, moment after moment, screaming, these men proclaim the way of salvation. What's wrong with that? Anybody else think that? I'm reading through and I go, all right, what is the problem with it? What she's saying is accurate, right? That's not a bad thing. Barnabas could have been saying the same thing. Silas could have been yelling the same thing. Isn't that true? Well, it is true. But as I pulled on that string a little bit this week, there's some context in Philippi that may have led to some confusion. So let me just toss this out there for you. The term way of salvation would not have been immediately clear to a Gentile that was living in Philippi.

41:58

The Greco Roman world was full of people who would refer to themselves as the Savior. The emperor would refer to himself as the Savior of mankind, as the Savior of all of the people, that he was the one who had come to usher in civilization, that he was the one who had come to save them. And so as this girl is running around screaming out terms that were familiar to the people there in Philippi, who associated them with Rome, Paul is walking around saying, no, no. We're not a part of that. We're talking about something entirely different over here. I don't think this girl was helping Paul. I think she was muddying the waters. I think she was making things more difficult for Paul and the others as they tried to share about Jesus.

42:43

Not only that, I can tell you firsthand, when a little girl follows you around yelling the same thing over and over again, it just gets annoying, right? Paul was fully within every reasonable thought I can imagine to turn around and say, stop. I think at least a couple of you have been around toddlers before. What I believe that the demons in this girl meant for harm, God used for good. Because Paul turns around and he casts this demon, these demons, out of this girl, we see this incredible moment for her. She's set free, she is miraculously set free, her life is changed. We see evidence, and there's kind of subtext here that Jesus enters into this young girl, she becomes a Christian and everything changes for her.

43:36

But as we continue reading, what was such an incredible moment for this girl was not so great for her handlers, for the men who were kind of, forgive my term, kind of pimping her out, right? They were using her gift, they were using what she was able to do for their own profits. They were using this girl as just a resource or an asset to them. They were profiting from her ability. A girl who could tell the future was quite the profitable assets. And so Paul's decision to heal this girl was going to cost them a fortune. Who cares how it helped the girl? Let's Continue reading verses 19 through 24. Tell us how they responded having seen this girl healed from the possession of these demons.

44:30

Verse 19 it says that when her owners saw that their hope of gain was gone, they seized Paul and Silas, dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers. When they had brought them to the magistrates, they said, these men are Jews. They are disturbing our city and they advocate customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to accept or practice. The crowd joined in and attacking them and the magistrates tore the garments off of them, gave orders to beat them with rods, and when they inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely. Having received this order, the jailer put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in stocks.

45:09

The owners, the people who were profiting from this young girl's ability, they grabbed Paul and Silas and they drag him to the police, right? They drag him into court, essentially. But here's the problem. They didn't accurately convey, they didn't accurately communicate what happened. They accused Paul and Silas of several things, but none of them are their actual complaint that they have against Paul and Silas. They come up with some things that maybe land better before the Roman officials. They make a few claims, right? Let's look at them. First off, they accuse them of being Jews. Okay, they are. That's not illegal. But they are. That being said, it may have prejudiced the crowd against Paul and Silas a little bit. They also accuse them, they say they're disturbing the city.

45:57

Well, that one probably caught the attention of the Roman magistrates who were responsible, put in place by Rome for keeping order in the town. So if things got out of hand, they were the magistrates responsibility. It was the magistrate's fault for not keeping order in the city. And so that caught their attention, didn't it? That raised the concern of these Roman officials, these slave owners. They also, they accuse Paul and Silas. They say their customs are against the law for us as Romans. Now, I'm not convinced this was true. Right. I did a little bit of digging on this. People will point to the idea that proselytizing for Judaism was illegal in a Roman colony. We've got some historical evidence of that, but there's no evidence of it happening at this time.

46:43

The closest we can find is 100 plus years later, it was illegal for them to be going around and doing this. Not only that, later, just a few verses later in our passage, we see that having nothing actually changed about what Paul and Silas did, the leaders, the magistrates, come to them with their tails tucked between their legs, apologizing and asking them politely to leave the jail and leave the city. And we're sorry for wrongly doing this to you. So if what they had done was actually illegal, I can't imagine that's the way the story plays out. Best I can tell, these Roman magistrates were perfectly cut out to be politicians because they're there. And we see these slave owners come before them. They make their complaints and they start to accuse Paul and Silas of doing these things.

47:34

And it seems to me that these politicians are just standing there waiting to see which way the wind will blow. They're just. They're just watching and waiting. And so as they sit back, they see that the crowd starts to turn against Paul and Silas. And so it seems to me that's when they turned against Paul and Silas. There was no trial, there was no opportunity for Paul and Silas to plead their case, to defend themselves. They simply hear the arguments of the slave owners. And then they turn and they hear that the crowd is starting to get worked up and upset. And so they grab Paul and Silas, they. They order them beaten and thrown into jail.

48:12

That brings us to our last section that we're going to look at, verses 25 through 40, when they're saved in more ways than one. As Paul and Silas find themselves on the wrong end of this angry mob that has kind of popped up all of a sudden in Philippi. We see that their fate turns back and forth at a dizzying pace. The section here starts by showing us Paul and Silas incarcerated, but joyful about it. It's an interesting scene. Let's read a few verses. There's kind of an interesting sequence that follows here. Starting in verse 25, it tells us about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.

48:52

Suddenly, there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken, and immediately all the doors were open and everyone's bonds were unfastened. When the jailer woke up and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword. He was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul cried out with a loud voice, do not harm yourself, for we are all here. The jailer called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear, he fell down before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them out and said, sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household. They spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house.

49:33

He took them that same hour of the night and washed their wounds, and he was baptized at once, he and all his family. Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. He rejoiced, along with his entire household that he had believed in God.

49:52

God brings an earthquake that hits this prison in all the right places, right? The right pieces of brick shook so that doors popped open, so that chains were loosed. These prisoners were, they were set free. They were able to stand up and run out of this prison if they wanted to. And so as the jailer wakes up, I don't know if he's, what he's doing. All the men are locked in chains and behind locked doors. It seems like a safe time for him to take his eye off the ball for a minute. But as the jailer realizes, wakes up, stirs whatever it is, realizes that the doors were opened after that earthquake, sees that probably all the prisoners have escaped, right? He's preparing to take his own life.

50:41

He's doing that because he knew that he was going to be executed by the Romans if he lost the prisoners. So he's choosing to go out on his terms, right? He's going to fall on his sword. He's going to take his own life. And so as Paul sees him. Paul's still sitting in the cell, Silas still sitting there next to him, all the prisoners still there. Paul stops him. Hey, whoa, whoa. We're still here. The prisoners didn't leave. That seems like supernatural thing number one in this, well, I guess two. Earthquake, number one. Prisoners didn't get up and run out, that's item number two. So when the jailer realizes that they all stayed he is spiritually moved, he is spiritually motivated. And he asks Paul, what must I do to be saved?

51:32

I have to imagine that, you know, that's a very clean and simple translation for us, but I have to imagine that he's looking at Paul saying, why? Why are you still here? What is what? All right, it doesn't make sense how you were locked, you were beaten with rods, you were quite uncomfortable. We didn't clean your wounds. We didn't do anything for you. We locked you in the stocks with your feet so you couldn't even lay down and rest. And you're sitting in there singing. There's something different about you. There's something that doesn't add up. There's something that doesn't make sense. And now that the doors are open and you could be set free from all of this, you're still here. How do I get what you have? That's my translation. That's my imagination a little bit. That's less inspired.

52:23

Certainly not inspired like God's word is. But that's just, that's the way I see this kind of playing out. Why are you here? How do I have what you have? There's nothing about this circumstance that you're in that should be happy, that should be joyful. But you're sitting in there singing, and you're sitting here talking with me, and why are you here? He says, what must I do to be saved? Isn't that just every evangelist's dream? Right? We sit around and we pray for God. Use me, give me an opportunity to share with somebody. Give me an opportunity. Just open the door so that I might be able to share my faith in some conversation or in some place. We pray for those opportunities, but God just drops one in Paul's lap here.

53:11

Paul responds with a very clear explanation by clearly and simply telling the man what is required whenever someone becomes a Christian. Verse 31, he says, Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved. Not only is this prison guard saved on that night, but it tells us that he invites the missionaries to come into his home. More hospitality. That his entire household believes. And his entire household is baptized. That Paul has the opportunity to share all of the same truth that he was able to share with the jailer. He shares about Jesus. He shares the truth that God has made known to him. He shares it with this family, with this house. It tells us that the entire household believes and is baptized in verses 32 through 34. So what happens with Paul and Silas in the prison, right? They're out.

54:06

The jailer gets them out. It says that he cleans their wounds, that he takes them to his house for dinner and. And they're free, but not really. Verse 34 says that they went to his home. But in verse 35, they're back in the jail. I guess they got yard time or something. I don't know what it was. They got visitation or something, but they go back to the prison after their little dinner party. Verses 35 through 40 tell us a story about some government officials who found themselves in a troubling spot because they had violated the rights of two Roman citizens. Lets read our last few verses. Verse 35, it says, when it was day, the magistrates sent the police saying, let those men go.

54:49

The jailer reported these words to Paul, saying, the magistrates have sent to let you go, therefore come out now and go in peace. Paul said to them, no, no. They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men who are Roman citizens, and they have thrown us into prison. Do they now throw us out secretly? No, let them come themselves and take us out. The police reported these words to the magistrates and they were afraid when they heard that they were Roman citizens. So they came and they apologized to them. They took them out and they asked them to leave the city. And so they went out of the prison. They visited Lydia. When they had seen the brothers, they encouraged them and they departed. These government officials, they tried to quietly release Paul and Silas, but Paul wasn't going to let that stand. No, no, no.

55:47

Our rights were violated as Roman citizens. Apparently, Paul and Silas were never given a chance to plead their case, which was illegal for them to do against a Roman citizen. Yeah, I find irony in this story. Anybody else notice the irony? Paul and Silas were wrongly arrested and treated as criminals when they were innocent. Meanwhile, the people who convicted them, the magistrates who incarcerated them, were actually criminals for locking them up without a trial. Kind of funny how that played out. I thought this was interesting, though, trying to make sense of why is Paul being stubborn here? Is he just digging his heels in, saying, no, you're going to apologize to me. Is he just looking for a pound of flesh or whatever it might be? I thought this was interesting.

56:34

One commentator I was reading, John Polhill, he made a good point about Paul's demand for an apology. So let me just offer this. This is Paul Hill's idea, but I thought it was. Thought it was interesting. He says Paul may have seemed in a bit. Seemed a bit huffy in his demand for a formal apology from the magistrates. But that is not the point. It was essential that the young Christian community have a good reputation among the authorities if its witness was to flourish. Christians broke none of the Roman laws. It was important that the magistrates acknowledge their innocence and set the record straight. Okay, I can work with that. That makes sense to me. Paul is establishing this church.

57:14

Paul has shared the gospel with Lydia, with the women who were with her household, with the jailer, with his whole household, with the slave girl who is set free from the demons. And we see her responding in faith and her actions, whoever else may have been in the crowd. We see this young church starting to pop up in Philippi, this first church that was established in Europe. The gospel has crossed one of the big lines on our globe. God is on the move. And as we look at this passage, as we look at this chapter, there's some interesting contrasts to be found in our chapter. First, we can consider, I just mentioned it a moment ago, the innocence of the prison inmates, Paul and Silas, compared against the guilt of the Roman magistrates who put them there.

58:07

I also noticed this, that we see this comparison, this contrast between the greed of the slave owners who were upset about a girl's miraculous healing because it was going to cost them financially, compared to the generosity of Lydia, the generosity of the jailer welcoming these men into their homes. The other Philippians that we mentioned back in Philippians chapter 4 a few minutes ago. Paul and the missionaries are in town, and they're there to share the gospel and they did it beautifully. I think there's one last lesson that I want to draw out, and we'll close with this. Evangelism. It's important for two sides of the same coin to both be present as we share our faith. We see it beautifully here with Paul and Silas and with the others. Evangelism takes two different forms.

59:02

Some people know and realize that it's important for us to use our words properly, for us to communicate the gospel clearly with our words. And so they'll talk a big game, but then their actions don't line up with it. You ever met somebody who is very religious with their words, who is very, you know, I love God, and then you see them on Friday night, and they don't necessarily seem the same. Anybody ever had a family member or a friend or a coworker who they. No, no. I love Jesus, but it's just. It's just words. They're hypocrites. Some people who talk a big game but fail to live it out with their actions. The other side of that same coin, some people will echo the famous, although flawed, quote that says, preach the gospel at all times and when necessary, use words.

59:54

Well, the jailer looks at Paul in our passage. He says, what must I do to be saved? Paul

doesn't look at him and smile and hold the door open for him. Right? It's not just a when necessary, use words. I'm just going to. I'm just going to act out my faith before Paul. Paul doesn't go into mime mode and just try to act it out for. No, no. He uses words. The gospel requires words. He tells him, believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved. God was at work in Philippi. God is still at work today. But the gospel requires us if we're going to be good representatives. It requires us to carry both sides of this coin.

01:00:39

It's important for us to use our words and to communicate clearly who God is, what God has done, and make sure that people know we are not saved by going to church. We are not saved by not cussing. We are not saved by being generous and giving money to charities. We are not saved by. It's none of those things. We are saved. Clearly, explicitly, the Bible tells us, how is a person saved? You must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. We are saved by placing our faith in Jesus. That's it. We have to use our words to communicate that. At the same time, if your words are communicating that and your actions aren't, there's a disconnect, and that witness is not going to be fruitful.

01:01:27

That's not going to be a compelling witness for somebody who's hearing, all right, do I want to be a part of these people? Do I want to follow this God? I want to give my life to this faith? Do I want in? It's easy for someone to see somebody who's just saying the right words and is living a complete lie. It's easy for them to go, no, thank you. If you're sitting here today wondering, what must I do to be saved? I think Paul's words to the jailer are the perfect words for you that I'd give you. Paul's response was clear. Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved. Period. End of story. If you already know Jesus, this morning, I would ask you, how can Paul's boldness, how can Paul's witness, that we see in Philippi, how can that challenge you?

01:02:26

How can that be instructive for you? How can that cause you to go and to be about the mission of God's work that is still active today. We're not planting any churches in Philippi. We're not taking the gospel in any unique way to a new continent. But we're about the same work that Paul was. Silas' mission is my mission and is your mission. The work that they were doing there in Philippi is the same work that we're commanded to do in our neighborhoods and in our workplaces and in our schools and in our families. How can Paul's boldness challenge you to go and to be about the mission today? We're going to close out our service in just a minute. Our prayer team is going to be down here at the front. They'd love to pray with you.

01:03:10

If you have questions, if you just need prayer with anything going on in life, they would love to pray for you. We've got our prayer wall out the back doors to the right. You can leave your prayer request there as well. Our prayer team will be praying for those, but we're going to close out in just a second. But would you pray with me as we do? God, we thank you for, God, we thank you for good examples. God, I'm so thankful for Paul, for his boldness in the gospel as he enters into a new town and he just goes blazing a trail through the darkness. This Roman city that didn't have 10 male heads of household who were believers to establish a synagogue, they didn't have a beachhead there.

01:03:59

Paul and the missionaries, they show up and they begin taking ground for the gospel. They begin seeing people respond in faith as you and the power of your Holy Spirit are working. God, you were convicting Lydia in her house. You were convicting the jailer in his house. You rescued and saved this oppressed girl. God help us to realize and to God to consciously remember that the same power that was at work in Philippi 2000 years ago is the same

power that is at work and available to us in Anaheim Hills and Yorba Linda and Orange County today. God, we pray that your gospel would go forth. God, we pray that you would give us boldness like Paul.

01:04:46

God, we also pray that you would teach us that Lydia would be instructive for us, that the Philippians and their generosity, their radical faith to see say we love Paul, but it's not about the money. It's not about the stuff. It's not about my home. It's not about my food. It's not about any of those things. God, I give it to you. God, the radical generosity that was so clearly prevalent in the book of Acts back in Jerusalem, at the beginning of the book, here in Philippi, as we work our way through towards the end, God, may that challenge us, may that be instructive for us, not because we need it. God, teach us to be content in whatever it is that we have. God, I know that you were able to provide supernaturally. I've seen it more than a few times.

01:05:37

But God help us to communicate this in the same way that Paul did. We want what's best for our brothers and sisters. And what's best is for them to hold the things of this earth loosely, for us to say that this is not my home, my address is not my home, Heaven is. My success is not measured by how many zeros are in my bank account. Maybe they're just zeros, right? God, teach us to let go. Teach us to live with the same reckless abandon that we see from Lydia as she gives generously, from Paul and Silas as they say, hey, we're going to go share the gospel. And if we end up in shackles in the dungeon, in the prison, we don't care.

01:06:26

Because everything that we've got, everything that we have, every moment of every day of the rest of our lives, God, it doesn't belong to us. It belongs to you. So teach us to be content and use us as you see fit. God, we love you. We thank you for loving us, in Jesus name. Amen