



Week of June 2, 2019

Acts 16:16-34

¹⁶ One day, as we were going to the place of prayer, we met a slave-girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners a great deal of money by fortune-telling.

¹⁷ While she followed Paul and us, she would cry out, "These men are slaves of the Most High God, who proclaim to you a way of salvation."

¹⁸ She kept doing this for many days. But Paul, very much annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I order you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And it came out that very hour.

¹⁹ But when her owners saw that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the authorities.

²⁰ When they had brought them before the magistrates, they said, "These men are disturbing our city; they are Jews

²¹ and are advocating customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to adopt or observe."

²² The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates had them stripped of their clothing and ordered them to be beaten with rods.

²³ After they had given them a severe flogging, they threw them into prison and ordered the jailer to keep them securely.

²⁴ Following these instructions, he put them in the innermost cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

²⁵ About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.

²⁶ Suddenly there was an earthquake, so violent that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were unfastened.

²⁷ When the jailer woke up and saw the prison doors wide open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, since he supposed that the prisoners had escaped.

²⁸ But Paul shouted in a loud voice, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here."

²⁹ The jailer called for lights, and rushing in, he fell down trembling before Paul and Silas.

³⁰ Then he brought them outside and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

³¹ They answered, "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."

³² They spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house.

³³ At the same hour of the night he took them and washed their wounds; then he and his entire family were baptized without delay.

³⁴ He brought them up into the house and set food before them; and he and his entire household rejoiced that he had become a believer in God.



Group Leader

Remember: you don't need to use all of the questions. Go with what works. Give people a chance to think before answering, but if a question falls flat, move on. Let the discussion go where it needs to go, as long as it remains centered around the lesson. Give the participants page 1. Use this page for yourself.

Gathering questions:

- A. When you shop, how quickly do you decide on a purchase? Ordering at a restaurant? What are your best/worst decision-making situations?
- B. What is a recent story of a time when someone really exceeded your expectations?

Bible Study Questions:

1. In verse 17, why do you think the slave-girl followed Paul around?
2. In verse 18, the word translated as "annoyed" is translated in the KJV as "grieved" and in the NIV as "troubled." Perhaps a better translation is "bothered." What do you think bothered Paul?
3. In verse 25 it mentions other prisoners, and in verse 28 Paul affirms that no one has escaped. What do you think happened to the other prisoners?
4. In verse 31, how do you interpret the answer "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household" – how is your *household* saved by your faith?
5. In verse 27, the jailer presumes that the prisoners would have escaped. Why do you think Paul and Silas remained?
6. In what ways do you often exceed people's expectations of you? How can you do so more often? What would the result be?
7. In these stories, a slave-girl is freed from a supernatural power, a jailer was ready to kill himself for failing at his job, and Paul and Silas sang hymns while in chains. These stories challenge common notions of freedom/slavery. Why was Paul able to sing? What do you think the other prisoners thought of it? Discuss ways in which people are actually enslaved when we think we are free, or vice versa.
8. Where are you feeling trapped/confined? How could you work toward freedom?

Closing prayer: Particularly ask for prayers about people for whom you can exceed their expectations of you.