

Paul & Silas

Acts 16

PPT Title

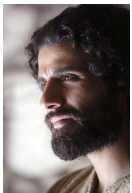
Paul & Silas

Main Point: Our praise invites God's power into our lives.

Key Verse: *About midnight Paul and Silas were praying. They were also singing hymns to God... Suddenly there was a powerful earthquake. It shook the prison from top to bottom. All at once the prison doors flew open. Everybody's chains came loose. - Acts 16:25-26*

Prop: A big, sturdy chain

BACKGROUND/REVIEW



Say: After Saul's amazing change of heart, God sent a man named Barnabas to help the believers accept the "new & greatly improved" Saul. **Ask:** Who remembers what the nickname Barnabas means? *Son of Encouragement*. **Say:** Barnabas was a great encourager! An encourager always wants what's best for others. Barnabas wanted others to follow Jesus with all their heart. He told people about Jesus, and he spoke good, truthful words to everyone who believed in Jesus. Barnabas even sold his belongings to help meet the needs of those who trusted Jesus.

Barnabas was also a great help to Paul as Paul traveled on his first mission trip. The two men traveled all over the area of Judea preaching the truth about Jesus, and performing miracles. Everywhere they went, they took the light of Jesus, and many, many people put their trust in Jesus. Those who believed were "filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit." (Acts 13:52)

After their big mission trip, Barnabas and Paul decided to go in two different directions (Acts 15:36-41). Paul chose another man, a prophet named Silas, to travel with him. Silas was a man who also encouraged the believers (Acts 15:32).

CALLED TO MACEDONIA (Acts 16:1-15)



Say: Paul and Silas, along with a few others, traveled to Derbe, then to a town called Listra. In Listra, Paul chose a believer named Timothy to travel with him and Silas (Acts 16:1-5). The men traveled and listened to the Holy Spirit. They preached only where the Holy Spirit told them to preach (Acts 16:6-8). One night, God gave a vision to Paul.



During the night Paul had a vision. He saw a man from Macedonia standing and begging him. "Come over to Macedonia!" the man said. "Help us!" After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia. We decided that God had called us to preach the good news there. - Acts 16:9-10

Ask: What do you think Paul and his friends did when they heard this message from God? *They listened and obeyed.* **Say:** The Bible tells us that Paul, Timothy, and Silas went to Macedonia RIGHT AWAY.

Teacher Note: Though difficult to define, the region of Macedonia correlates to modern day Southern Europe.

Application: It is ALWAYS right to obey God RIGHT AWAY. God's timing is always perfect. He instructs you to do things at just the right time. God may talk to you through the voice of the Holy Spirit living inside you, through His word, in a dream, or through the authorities He has put over you, like your parents and teachers. When you put off obeying the Lord, you can easily get distracted and forget about doing His will. Then you'll miss out on the blessing that God had in store for you (Genesis 22:18).



Say: At this point, the men were in Troas, and the only way to get to Macedonia was by boat. **Teacher:** Refer to map. The men sailed to Neapolis and then went to Philippi. These cities were all ruled by the Roman government. These missionaries were getting farther and farther away from the Jewish cities. Paul was obeying God's command to take the truth of Jesus to people who were not Jews (Acts 13:47). They were fulfilling Jesus' words that they would spread His truth to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8).

PAUL AND SILAS IN PRISON (Acts 16:16-40)



One day we were going to the place of prayer. On the way we were met by a female slave. She had a spirit that helped her to tell ahead of time what was going to happen. She earned a lot of money for her owners by telling fortunes. The woman followed Paul and the rest of us around. She shouted, "These men serve the Most High God. They are telling you how to be saved." She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became upset. Turning around, he spoke to the spirit. "In the name of Jesus Christ," he said, "I command you to come out of her!" At that very moment the spirit left her. - Acts 16:16-18

Her owners were using this slave girl as a "fortune teller." People would pay money, and she would tell them what was going to happen in their lives.

Does it surprise you that the evil spirit shouted out that Paul and Silas believed in the Most High God and wanted to help people be saved from their sins? It is a little surprising, but remember that the devil started out as an angel - in the beginning. But he was proud and wanted to be like God. He sinned against God, and many of the angels followed him. All of them were thrown out of heaven (Revelation 12:7-9). They have always known the truth: that God is the everlasting, all-powerful God (James 2:19). But they choose not to follow Him; they want to go their own way (Matthew 25:41). So the slave girl followed the men around yelling out why they had come. Even though she was shouting the truth, this must have caused quite a disturbance. **Say:** Mr. _____ is going to help demonstrate this. **Teacher:** Prearrange for an adult volunteer start yelling, "He's right! Listen close! Everything he says is true!" He should interrupt every time you begin to speak the next few sentences. **Say:** Wherever...Paul, Silas, and...Timothy spoke,...she followed along,...yelling. She interrupted...their preaching over and over again...It must have been...quite difficult...to teach like that. **Thank your volunteer.** Finally, Paul cast the demon out of her.

I can't imagine how good this must have felt for the girl. What a relief! She was finally FREE from the demon! It is very sad that this girl lived so many years of her life controlled by evil, and it is terrible that her greedy owners made money from her awful condition. Her owners were glad that she was controlled by an evil spirit! (Acts 16: 19) They cared more about money than about this poor girl.



When Paul cast out the spirit, the girl could no longer tell the future. The girl's owners were very angry that they could no longer use her to make money! They grabbed Paul and Silas and dragged them to the judges. The slave owners said that Paul and Silas were causing trouble in their city. **Ask:** Now, were Paul and Silas causing trouble? No. **Say:** Paul and Silas were teaching truth and helping people. The slave owners even said that Paul and Silas were telling people to break the law. The judges did not investigate, or hold a trial to find out the truth. The judges just believed the slave owners. They had Paul and Silas whipped, beaten, and thrown in jail. The judges ordered the jail keeper to guard the men very carefully. The jail keeper put Paul and



Silas in a cell in the very middle of the prison, and he even put their feet in chains! He knew he would be in BIG trouble if the prisoners escaped on his watch.



Certainly, the slave owners and the judges were sinning. They lied about these good men, and punished them without a trial. But we are about to see that God had it all under control; God allowed this for a reason. God was about to take this terrible event, and make it into something WONDERFUL (Isaiah 61:3).

About midnight Paul and Silas were praying. They were also singing hymns to God. The other prisoners were listening to them. - Acts 16:25

Say: Prison is often a noisy place. Prisoners may complain about the food, or scream to be set free; guards often yell at the prisoners. But I doubt that anyone ever heard this particular sound before. There, in the middle of the night, in the pitch dark, Paul and Silas sang praises to the Lord. This unusual sound caught the attention of every other person in that jail - the other prisoners, and the jail keeper too. They knew there was something different about these two prisoners, because they praised their God in the middle of their trouble.

We may wonder how Paul and Silas could sing at a time like that. Didn't they know they were unfairly chained up in a prison cell? Paul and Silas could praise God because they were filled with **faith** and with the **Holy Spirit** (Acts 11:24).

"Faith is being sure of what we hope for. It is being certain of what we do not see." (Hebrews 11:1) Paul and Silas were SURE that God had not forgotten them. They were CERTAIN that God would not allow anything that was not BEST for them.

And they were filled with the **Holy Spirit**. One of the fruits of the Holy Spirit is **joy** (Galatians 5:22). Please notice that I did not say "happiness." Joy is different than happiness. Happiness comes when things are good around you - like when you get a birthday present, or you hit a home run. Joy comes when things are right on the inside - it is the inner gladness and peace you have because you believe in Jesus. Joy doesn't change when our circumstances change. Joy is deep down inside of us. Out of their joy, given by the Holy Spirit, Paul and Silas praised the Lord.

Application: We should praise God in good times and in bad (James 5:13). Praising God is proclaiming His greatness. His greatness never changes - even when our circumstances do. When you are in a difficult situation and you don't *feel like* praising God, that is the PERFECT time to do it! As we are about to see, **our praise invites God's power into our lives** (Psalm 50:23, 2 Chronicles 20).

Teacher Note: Psalm 22:3 says that God comes to stay where His people praise Him. "Yet You are enthroned as the Holy One; You are the praise of Israel."



Suddenly there was a powerful earthquake. It shook the prison from top to bottom. All at once the prison doors flew open. Everybody's chains came loose.

The jailer woke up. He saw that the prison doors were open. He pulled out his sword and was going to kill himself. He thought the prisoners had escaped. "Don't harm yourself!" Paul shouted. "We are all here!"



The jailer called out for some lights. He rushed in, shaking with fear. He fell down in front of Paul and Silas. Then he brought them out. He asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus. Then you and your family will be saved." They spoke the word of the Lord to him. They also spoke to all the others in his house.

At that hour of the night, the jailer took Paul and Silas and washed their wounds. Right

away he and his whole family were baptized. The jailer brought them into his house. He set a meal in front of them. He and his whole family were filled with joy. They had become believers in God. - Acts 16:26-34

Say: Notice that it was **while** the two men were singing praises, that the ground started to move. God shook the earth on behalf of those He wanted to save! Rock walls tumbled and metal scraped against metal. Chains fell to the ground, and heavy doors swung open. Paul and Silas could have easily run into the darkness of the night and escape. Here's how we know that these two men were listening to the Holy Spirit: they did not run away. The Holy Spirit let them know that God did not cause this amazing earthquake to set *them* free - **God sent the earthquake to set the jailer free!** Paul and Silas had been chained up *physically*, but the jailer was chained up *spiritually*.

The jailer was trapped by his own sin. Paul says that the people who don't know about Jesus, or don't believe in Jesus, are slaves to sin. **Teacher:** Call up an ADULT volunteer. Wrap the chain around his wrist, and around your own wrist, holding the ends so he can't get loose. It's like they are **chained** to sin. Wherever their sinful nature wants to take them, they must go. Tug on the chain to lead your volunteer a few steps in each direction. They are not able to resist sin's temptation. But when the person puts his trust in Jesus, the chain that kept him linked to sin is broken! Drop the chain. He no longer has to sin. And even better than NOT being chained to sin, that person is now linked to Jesus. He abides in Jesus. Now he goes where Jesus leads. Jesus is the perfect guide; He is the Way.



That night, Paul and Silas had the amazing privilege of explaining to the jail keeper how to be saved from his sin. The jail keeper and his entire family trusted Jesus, and they were set free from the chains of sin. Amazingly, God turned the entire situation around for good! Paul and Silas were blessed to be a part of God's plan.

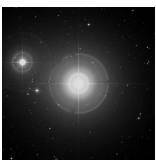


Application: How do you react to hard times, or unfair treatment? Do those around you hear you complain like everybody else? Or do they hear you pray and praise God?

Even though Paul and Silas were treated most unfairly, because of the joy of the Holy Spirit inside them, they praised God instead. Paul and Silas weren't singing in church, they were singing in the darkest place. As a result, the other people in that dark place heard their praise; they heard the truth about the mighty, living God. Later, Paul wrote:

Do everything without finding fault [complaining] or arguing. Then you will be pure and without blame. You will be children of God without fault in a sinful and evil world. Among the people of the world you shine like stars in the heavens. You shine as you hold out to them the word of life. - Philippians 2:14-16a

Anyone can complain. Only those who are filled with the Holy Spirit can give God thanks and praise when times are difficult. When you do this, in the darkest places, you will shine like a bright star in the darkest night. Others will see you and be drawn to the One you praise. Don't forget, your praise invites God's earth-quaking power into every situation!



PPT Verse

Key Verse: About midnight Paul and Silas were praying. They were also singing hymns to God... Suddenly there was a powerful earthquake. It shook the prison from top to bottom. All at once the prison doors flew open. Everybody's chains came loose. - Acts 16:25-26

PPT Main Point

Main Point: Our praise invites God's power into our lives.

Teacher Note: The earthquake was not meant for the release of Paul and Silas. They were set free, by order of the magistrates, the next day (Acts 16:35-39).