

# The Book of Acts

## GROUP CURRICULUM

SERMON **WHO IS LIKE OUR GOD! (ACTS 16:16-40)** DATE **APRIL 26, 2020**

<sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> She followed Paul and us, crying out, “These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation.” <sup>18</sup> And this she kept doing for many days. 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 that very hour.

<sup>19</sup> But when her owners saw that their hope of gain was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers. <sup>20</sup> And when they had brought them to the magistrates, they said, “These men are Jews, and they are disturbing our city. <sup>21</sup> They advocate customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to accept or practice.” <sup>22</sup> The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates tore the garments off them and gave orders to beat them with rods. <sup>23</sup> And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely. <sup>24</sup> Having received this order, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. <sup>25</sup> About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, <sup>26</sup> 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.

<sup>27</sup> When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. <sup>28</sup> But Paul cried with a loud voice, “Do not harm yourself, for we are all here.” <sup>29</sup> And the jailer called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas. <sup>30</sup> Then he brought them out and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” <sup>31</sup> And they said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.” <sup>32</sup> And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. <sup>33</sup> And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family. <sup>34</sup> Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God.

<sup>35</sup> But when it was day, the magistrates sent the police, saying, “Let those men go.” <sup>36</sup> And the jailer reported these words to Paul, saying, “The magistrates have sent to let you go. Therefore come out now and go in peace.” <sup>37</sup> But Paul said to them, “They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men who are Roman citizens, and have thrown us into prison; and do they now throw us out secretly? No! Let them come themselves and take us out.” <sup>38</sup> The police reported these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid when they heard that they were Roman citizens. <sup>39</sup> So they came and apologized to them. And they took them out and asked them to leave the city. <sup>40</sup> So they went out of the prison and visited Lydia. And when they had seen the brothers, they encouraged them and departed.

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1. There are several groups of people in this week's passage. To see how many, on the opposite page highlight every occurrence of the following words: "slave girl," "owners" "magistrates," "jailer," "crowd," "Paul," and "Silas."
2. Underline every word that we have recorded of what Paul says in this passage.
3. Look back to Acts 16:13. Where is "the place of prayer" mentioned in **Acts 16:16**? What significant event happened earlier in this location?
4. What, according to this weekend's message, is the key to unlocking encouragement in our lives, regardless of what it is we face?
5. Read again **Acts 16:16-18**. Unlike the slave girl, why do you think we so often choose the things that end up enslaving us? Why are we so hesitant to let some of these chains go?
6. Why did the populace of Philippi turn so quickly against Paul and Silas?
7. As you consider your life as of late, would you say the difficulties you're facing have led you to more "praying and singing," or less? Who would witness this in your life currently?
8. Recall that years later Paul would write from another prison cell to the now-growing church at Philippi. How would Paul's words in **Philippians 1:12-14** and **4:10-13** bring to mind the events here described in Acts 16?
9. Consider the jailer and his family and the local magistrates. When confronted by the apostle Paul, both behaved differently. What was different about them, and what was the same?
10. One of the dangers of the familiarity of the "believe and be saved" language is that we can develop of the language of belief, but not encourage a full walk in faith and obedience to the Lord. How does **Acts 16:30-34** indicate that the Philippian jailer and his family embraced a belief that led to action?
11. Close your time praying for those who seem to be far from the Lord. Remembering the Philippian jailer, remind one another in your prayers of the power of God to save anyone at anytime.