

## Mission Possible

### “Freedom in Christ”

#### Acts, Chapter 16

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Psalm 33:12 NIV

*“Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people he chose for his inheritance.”*

#### **Honoring Our Foundations - History & the Bible**

George Washington said, *“It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible.”*

John Quincy Adams said, *“So great is my veneration for the Bible that the earlier my children begin to read it, the more confident will be my hope that they will prove useful citizens of their country and respectable members of society. ... The first and almost the only book deserving of universal attention is the Bible. I speak as a man of the world, and I say to you, search the Scriptures.”*

Robert Prevost Makes History as First U.S.-Born Pope - *“On Thursday evening, the Vatican made a historic announcement: Cardinal Robert Prevost of Chicago was elected as the new head of the Roman Catholic Church, assuming the name Pope Leo XIV. This landmark moment marks the first time an American has ascended to the papacy.”*

That’s a pretty big deal and we need to pray for the Catholic Church. There are some good indicators - he was a registered Republican in the last nine election cycles - he voted Republican. He is pro-life and anti-LGBTQ. So, good things are there, but we still need to pray that whatever is not in alignment will become *in* alignment.

#### **What can we do?**

The entire Bible has to do with cultural engagement. Jesus said, *“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations”* - the cultures and “mountains” of all nations. While good things are happening in our nation, crazy things are also happening, so we have to stay alert, vigilant, and continue to pray for wisdom, discernment, and godly strategies to bring our nation back to God’s intended foundations of faith, family, and freedom.

Another thing we can do is to give our “Yes” to Jesus before we even know the question, and he will position us in places where we *need* to be and in places that we never dreamed that we *would* be. He will *get* us there. We’ll wake up one day and wonder how we ever got a seat at the table. It will be because we *showed up* and said “Yes” to God.

### **Quick review: Mission Possible - from Faith to Faith**

Acts 16:7-10 NIV - Living your life in lock-step with God's Spirit; Give God Your "Yes!"

*“When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, ‘Come over to Macedonia and help us.’ After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.”*

That was twenty years after Pentecost and the second of four missionary journeys.

### **Freedom in Christ**

John 8:36 KJV

*“If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”*

If we’ve been set free by Jesus, we may not *look* free yet, but he has set us free! We’re in the *process* of becoming more free day by day - moving from one level of faith to another level of faith - from faith to faith and glory to glory. We are free and we’re *being freed* at the same time.

Acts 16:16 NIV

*“Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we [Luke, Paul, Timothy, and Silas] were met by a female slave who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling. She followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, ‘These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved.’ he kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so annoyed that he turned around and said to the spirit, ‘In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!’ At that moment the spirit left her.”*

When we are so anointed by God, and we know who we are in Christ, we'll know what to *do*. Even in his *annoyed* state, Paul was *anointed*. The anointing of God is like oil poured over us - it doesn't *just* come off of us. We can be fully *anointed* of God and yet be *annoyed* at the same time. We tend to think if we just *look* the wrong way - *breathe* the wrong way - have a passing thought - that somehow God flitters away and *maybe* he'll come back another day. This should give us hope that on our worst day we can still be anointed by God and produce fruit and life.

Acts 16:19 NIV

*"When her owners realized that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities."*

This is why there are "hit" contracts out on Elon Musk right now, and why Paula White has had over one thousand death threats just for being part of President Trump's Office of Faith. When we touch something that the enemy thinks he owns or dominates, all hell will break loose.

Acts 16:20,21 NIV

*"They brought them before the magistrates and said, 'These men are Jews, and are throwing our city into an uproar by advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice.'"*

The devil is called the "*accuser of the brethren*". The Bible says that he stands before the throne of God night and day to say, "*That man had this thought. That man was mean to his wife. That man got mad on I-10 when that car merged in front of him.*" It never stops - it's 24-7.

Acts 16:22 NIV

*"The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten with rods."*

Then there was mob-rule, which doesn't work based on *logic*, but on emotion run-amok.

Acts 16:23-25 NIV

*"After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. When he received these orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks. About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them."*

What a potent and powerful witness to have seen them drug in and thrown into the prison cell, and to have heard the stocks snap shut, and then later to hear them praising God - singing, worshipping, praying - and not complaining.

Acts 16:26 NIV

*"Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everyone's chains came loose."*

God's "super" came on top of the "natural" - *supernatural*. This is an event where something happened that was so momentous, so epic, and so *powerful*!

Acts 16:27-30 NIV

*"The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. But Paul shouted, 'Don't harm yourself! We are all here!' The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. He then brought them out and asked, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?'"*

On the natural level, the jailer knows he'll be executed because all the prisoners are out - *he's dead and he knows it*. But, he also heard the worship, prayers, and the praise - he *saw* what happened as a result. He had to also be thinking, *"What must I do to be saved?"* In the bigger and overall picture, it was the Holy Spirit moving and massaging his heart so that he wanted to be born again - to be *saved*.

Acts 16:31-33 NIV

*"They replied, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved - you and your household.' Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his household were baptized."*

Whoever was there in the jailer's house heard the Gospel - and they believed. *Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God - the Message of Christ* - and faith came, and when they heard it they were saved, and they were all baptized.

Acts 16:26 NIV

*"The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God - he and his whole household."*

God did a supernatural miracle in what looked like a really bad situation. “*Then,*” the Bible says, “*God showed up suddenly.*” Are we willing to believe today that God might have a “*suddenly*” for us? - maybe God has an “*immediately*” for us? - a *right-now* moment for us? Are we where the Philippian jailer was? Jesus said that unless we become like children - we believe and be open to him - that we will in no wise inherit the Kingdom of God. But, whoever believes in Jesus Christ will be saved and will begin to live each day with purpose. That’s what it does for his disciples who come and stay close to him. God wants to walk with us and connect with us ...*every day!*

## **Prayer**

*Father, in Jesus’ name, we receive You into our hearts right now. This is a new start and a new day for us. We believe that Jesus is the Son of God and that He gave his life for us - that He was raised from the dead and that He has a purpose for us. We make an agreement with that and we believe that we were born into this world not just to take up space or to just leave a carbon footprint, but to literally live the life that He has called us to live, and we step into His purpose for us by faith right now. Lord, give us grace to come boldly before You, to connect with You, and to walk with You every day. We thank You. We love You and honor You, Lord. In Jesus’ name. Amen*