

The Jailer in Philippi

Lesson 03 in the series, "I Didn't Catch Your Name"

A. God sent Paul, Silas and an earthquake to get the attention of the jailer in Philippi.

"Suddenly, there was a massive earthquake, and the prison was shaken to its foundations. All the doors immediately flew open, and the chains of every prisoner fell off! The jailer woke up to see the prison doors wide open. He assumed the prisoners had escaped, so he drew his sword to kill himself. But Paul shouted to him, 'Stop! Don't kill yourself! We are all here!' The jailer called for lights and ran to the dungeon and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them out and asked, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' They replied, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, along with everyone in your household.'" Acts 16:26-31 (NLT)

1. The jailer was pursued by God.

"I can never escape from your Spirit! I can never get away from your presence! If I go up to heaven, you are there; if I go down to the grave, you are there. If I ride the wings of the morning, if I dwell by the farthest oceans, even there your hand will guide me, and your strength will support me. I could ask the darkness to hide me and the light around me to become night— but even in darkness I cannot hide from you." Psalms 139:7-12 (NLT)

"If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them wanders away, what will he do? Won't he leave the ninety-nine others on the hills and go out to search for the one that is lost?"
Matthew 18:12-14 (NLT)

2. The jailer's life was radically impacted by the attitudes and actions of Paul and Silas.

"But to you who are willing to listen, I say, love your enemies! Do good to those who hate you. Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who hurt you. If someone slaps you on one cheek, offer the other cheek also. If someone demands your coat, offer your shirt also. Give to anyone who asks; and when things are taken away from you, don't try to get them back. Do to others as you would like them to do to you. Love your enemies! Do good to them. Lend to them without expecting to be repaid. Then your reward from heaven will be very great, and you will truly be acting as children of the Most High, for he is kind to those who are unthankful and wicked. You must be compassionate, just as your Father is compassionate." Luke 6:27-31, 35-36 (NLT)

Two Questions We Need to Ask Ourselves:

- Whose actions and attitudes are making a positive impact on me?
- Who are my attitudes and actions impacting?

3. The jailer surrendered his life to God in the midst of a crisis.

Note: People are more open to God during times of uncertainty, grief, transitions and trials than at any other time.

"For a long time Israel was without the true God, without a priest to teach them, and without the Law to instruct them. But whenever they were in trouble and turned to the LORD, the God of Israel, and sought him out, they found him." 2 Chronicles 15:3-4 (NLT)

Life Application: We need to be intentional about sharing God's love with those who are facing pivotal moments in their lives.

B. When the Philippian jailer believed in Jesus, his life was radically changed.

"And they shared the word of the Lord with him and with all who lived in his household. Even at that hour of the night, the jailer cared for them and washed their wounds. Then he and everyone in his household were immediately baptized. He brought them into his house and set a meal before them, and he and his entire household rejoiced because they all believed in God." Acts 16:32-34 (NLT)

1. The jailer was given a new life and a new heart.

“...anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!” 2 Corinthians 5:17 (NLT)

“Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. Your filth will be washed away, and you will no longer worship idols. And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart. And I will put my Spirit in you so that you will follow my decrees and be careful to obey my regulations.” Ezekiel 36:25-27 (NLT)

2. The jailer’s attitudes and actions changed.

“Zacchaeus stood before the Lord and said, ‘I will give half my wealth to the poor, Lord, and if I have cheated people on their taxes, I will give them back four times as much!’”
Luke 19:8 (NLT)

3. The jailer had an eternal impact on his family.

“But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.” Joshua 24:15 (NLT)

Life Application: We need to allow God to radically change us.

“...let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.” Romans 12:2 (NLT)

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CONNECT GROUP QUESTIONS:

1. How have you been impacted by watching someone walk faithfully through a crisis?
2. Read 1 Timothy 2:3-6. What does this passage tell you about God’s desire for every person?
3. Read Acts 16:30-34 and Ephesians 2:8-9. How would you describe our part in being made right before God? Why is it essential to understand that we have no part in the process of being saved beyond believing?
4. Read Acts 16:25. How can our attitude and actions impact others? Why are our reactions to life struggles one of the greatest witnesses of our faith?
5. Read Romans 12:2. What are some radical changes that you need to allow God to make in transforming your life?
6. At Centerpoint, we teach four simple ways to share the Gospel:
 - Become Aware
 - Commit to Prayer
 - Show You Care
 - Be Ready to Share

How did Paul and Silas do these 4 things in the story of the Jailer of Philippi?