**Going deeper in Acts 16:16-40**

**INTRODUCTION**

Paul and Silas are spreading the Gospel in Philippi. They are being harassed by a demon possessed slave girl. Her masters were making money on the fortunes she told. Paul commanded the spirits to come out of her. They did and her masters lost the ability to make money from her. They became enraged and take Paul and Silas before the leaders of the city who beat them unjustly and throw them into prison. We take up at verse 22.

**READ** – *Read (passage) aloud. Read it several times. Listen for what the Spirit of God is saying, don’t just think about it.* **Paul and Silas in Prison**

 **22**A mob quickly formed against Paul and Silas, and the city officials ordered them stripped and beaten with wooden rods. **23**They were severely beaten, and then they were thrown into prison. The jailer was ordered to make sure they didn’t escape. **24**So the jailer put them into the inner dungeon and clamped their feet in the stocks. **25**Around midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening. **26**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! **27**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. **28**But Paul shouted to him, “Stop! Don’t kill yourself! We are all here!” **29**The jailer called for lights and ran to the dungeon and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. **30**Then he brought them out and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” **31**They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, along with everyone in your household.” **32**And they shared the word of the Lord with him and with all who lived in his household. **33**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. **34**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. **35**The next morning the city officials sent the police to tell the jailer, “Let those men go!” **36**So the jailer told Paul, “The city officials have said you and Silas are free to leave. Go in peace.” **37**But Paul replied, “They have publicly beaten us without a trial and put us in prison—and we are Roman citizens. So now they want us to leave secretly? Certainly not! Let them come themselves to release us!” **38**When the police reported this, the city officials were alarmed to learn that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens. **39**So they came to the jail and apologized to them. Then they brought them out and begged them to leave the city. **40**When Paul and Silas left the prison, they returned to the home of Lydia. There they met with the believers and encouraged them once more. Then they left town.

**ENGAGE** – *Questions for going deeper. God is speaking… to you.*

1. Paul and Silas were treated unfairly. They were beaten and imprisoned for sharing the Gospel. Have you ever been treated unfairly for sharing the Gospel? How did that make you feel?

2. In spite of being treated unfairly Paul and Silas praised God. How do you respond when treated unfairly?

3. How hard is it to pray and be thankful in hard times?

4. What are some of your go to praise songs or hymns when you need to lift your spirits?

5. God moved through the praises of Paul and Silas. He used an earthquake to set them free. What else happened? How can our praises bring people to Christ?

6. The magistrates showed contempt for Paul and Silas until they discovered they were Roman Citizens. Then they changed how they treated them. Paul could have had them arrested and beaten for what they did to them and they knew it. Instead what did Paul show them and what can we learn from this?

**PRAY** – *God has spoken. So, reply.*

\*Thank the Lord for the example of Paul and Silas.

\*Ask the Lord Jesus to give you a thankful heart for the situations you are facing.

\*Ask the Lord to help you to show Jesus in the way you live and respond to persecution.

\*Ask the Lord to help your faith and trust in him to grow.

\*Ask the Lord to give you opportunities to share him with others.

**LIVE** – *This is where the rubber hits the road.*

Paul and Silas were not shaken by the situation. Their trust was in God. When you are faced with things that shake you or are difficult this week how will you respond? Praise the Lord no matter what is happening. He will meet you where you are. Will you be like Paul and Silas and praise God from your “prison cell” or like others who complain about their treatment and circumstances? Choose to respond as Paul and Silas did with praise. Learn to praise God in **every** situation. 1 Thessalonians 5:18.