

Power Impact **Acts 16:25-40**

Introduction:

- God’s plan for spreading the gospel is clear. In Romans 10:13-14 Paul clearly says that there is a need for a “*preacher*.” A preacher is simply one who proclaims.
- I once heard someone say, “No people in history have had as many opportunities to hear the truth about God, to learn how salvation can be found by turning to Jesus Christ, than those who live in this country at the end of the 20th Century. Do you realize there are 450,000 churches in the United States? In fact, 24% of protestant congregations in the world are in this country. There are 600 religious radio stations, the vast majority run by evangelical Christians, who daily broadcast the message of Jesus Christ to people across the land. Christian TV, Christian publishing, Christian music recording, all communicate the Bible’s message. God has given us so many chances. But, there are so many folks who continue to reject the truth.”
- Granted this is not a proven fact, but you can see the argument. With technology and the vast number of churches today, you would think that Christianity would be exploding. However, it is imploding!
- Christians today are having less of an impact on the people around them than the great men and women of the first century. All believers today should have a faith that impacts the people around them, as men like Paul had.

We can learn from Acts 16:25-40 how to effectively reach others with the truth of God’s Word.

1. Remain faithful during the hard times. Acts 16:25

- Paul and Silas were definitely facing a difficult time in their lives. However, their actions while in prison show a spirit of faithfulness.
- Hard times are sure to come, and you can expect more of them as you stand for your faith. 2 Timothy 3:12
- How you respond to the persecutions that you will face as a believer will get the attention of others. Your actions will either be a positive or a negative influence.
- We do not know how many prisoners there were, but we know that those that were there saw the faith of Paul and Silas revealed through their actions.
- Why should you remain faithful during hard times?
 - Because of the glory that it will bring to Christ. 1 Peter 4:13-16
 - The best way to glorify anything is to lift it up and praise it.
 - Teams are glorified by the media and their fans.
 - Christ is glorified by the body of Christ.

- Because of the promised inheritance in Christ. Romans 8:17
 - It is worth it! If I am able to have eternal life, something I do not deserve, then I am willing to go through a little suffering on earth, where Christ was willing to come and live and die for me!
- Today, many people are definitely seeing what it means to live in hard times. Some experience hard times because of the economy, while others experience hard times because of their decisions to live putting Christ first in their lives.

2. Look for opportunities to impact lives. Acts 16:26-34

- What must it have been like to be there when Paul and Silas were singing and praising the Lord, and then all of a sudden the ground began to shake and the prison doors flung open and the shackles broke loose!
- Here was their chance to flee and escape! I'm sure the thought of leaving and going on to preach again crossed Paul and Silas' minds. However, they saw an opportunity! An opportunity that could have brought more physical pain and suffering, yet it was worth the risk to impact a life!
- Had Paul and Silas been more concerned with their personal desires, they would have missed the opportunity.
- When you allow the things of this world to cloud your thinking, you will miss opportunities to impact others for Christ!
- The world offers many things to distract a person from seeing opportunities:
 - Material things (Matthew 19:16-20)
 - The rich young ruler had everything but eternal life, and was not able to give these things up in his heart for eternal life.
 - Meaningless tasks (Luke 10:40)
 - Mary took time to hear Jesus while Martha was worried about serving.
 - Misplaced priorities (2 Timothy 1:15; 2:10)
 - Here are records of some of those that were with Paul.
- Satan's best way to prevent people from coming to Christ is having them be too busy or self-centered to see the opportunities.
- Even in the midst of something as amazing as seeing the earth shake and being freed from their chains, Paul and Silas still were alert enough to see the opportunity to help someone who was a threat!

3. Maintain a good reputation before all men. Acts 16:35-40

- Once things settled down, Paul and Silas could have left, but they remained through the night.
- As the leaders of Philippi sent messengers to ask Paul and Silas to leave, Paul uses his "trump!" As a Roman citizen, he should not have been treated the way he

was. Paul could have used this as a way to bring the Roman government into Philippi and have the leaders there brought on trial for their actions.

- What a testimony it was to the leaders to see Paul handle the situation with the grace and forgiveness that he did! Here was another opportunity that was a risk, but Paul took it.
- I'm sure these men were a bit nervous, yet, given the trouble they could be in, were willing to come and confront Paul.
- Paul's next move was classy! They left.
- Paul knew that the city was aware of what had happened and that the gospel had been established in the city.
- Paul's manner of life was not like protesting Christians that are seen in the news today! Paul didn't stand outside homes or government buildings chanting and screaming for the resignation of the leaders or pronouncing judgment on them for their actions!
- He respected their request and moved on, but didn't forget them. He later wrote back to the church that had been formed in Philippi.
- Christians should have the best reputations in the world. However, many Christians use personal liberties which create a stumbling block for others, or give them a reason to talk negatively about Christ.
- Paul says to live "*Giving no offence in any thing...*" **2 Corinthians 6:3**

Conclusion:

- It is sad to see that more and more people today are either being turned off by Christians or not learning the truth from them.
- Will you live a life that can't be condemned that leads others to seek a relationship with Christ?