

## **What to Expect When You Go Through Trials** **Acts 16:25-40**

### **Introduction:**

1. Paul and his missionary companions entered into the city of Philippi to share the gospel of Jesus Christ and hopefully establish a local church in that city.
  - The devil was not about to allow this to happen without a fight.
2. In last week's message, we saw how Paul was unlawfully arrested and made to go through a mockery of a trial, where truth was ignored and false charges were honored. They were brutally beaten and thrown into a dungeon with their feet placed in stocks.
3. It was a dark hour, indeed. Later, Paul would testify in 1 Thessalonians 2:2 that they were "*shamefully entreated*" at Philippi.
4. Paul was serving God, doing what God would have him to do, yet he found himself in one of the worst trials of his life.
5. This text gives us some marvelous insights as to what to expect when the believer goes through trials (and everybody goes through them). What can you expect as a believer?

### **During trials, your level of faith will be revealed.**

1. Paul and Silas had been lied about, humiliated, beaten, and imprisoned due to false accusations. It is at this point we're going to find out what kind of men they really are.
2. How would they respond? They responded to this terrible trial by doing two things (vs. 25). Did they cry and whine? Did they gripe and complain? Did they moan and groan?
  - They prayed.
  - They sang praises to God.
3. Think about this – they prayed!
  - The world can take our freedom, our possessions, and our dignity, but the world cannot take away the privilege of prayer.
  - Prayer is a mighty weapon to help in the time of trial. When Paul was in prison again later in his life, he wrote these words – Ephesians 6:18-19.
  - So few people on the earth pray in times of dark trial! Many turn to alcohol, food, sleeping pills, spending binges, nightclubs, etc. Many wallow in self-pity.
  - But, a believer should realize that prayer is the most positive, beneficial action that you can possibly do.
4. Not only did they pray, they sang praises to God.
  - The Philippians stripped Paul and Silas of their clothes, they stripped them of their rights as Roman citizens, and they stripped them of all self-respect, but they could not strip away the song in their hearts!

- It is quite easy to sing praises within the four walls of this church, but what about when life is unfair and you are down and out? When things get bad, most people curse, swear, get bitter, get angry, or get depressed. But Paul and Silas prayed and praised.
  - Until then, those prison walls had probably only heard groans, curse words, and vile outbursts. Now, prayers and songs of praise are ringing off those walls.
  - Praise is a very powerful thing when going through trials.
5. Here is the point I really want you to get this morning: this deep trial demonstrated and revealed what kind of faith Paul and Silas possessed. 1 Peter 1:7
6. When we go through deep trials, we discover where we are spiritually and what kind of faith we possess. Jesus commended people for having “*great faith*” and He rebuked people for having “*little faith*.” Trials have a way of revealing where we’re at.
- **Illustration:** Some people moan, groan, gripe, complain, and accuse God of all sorts of things. They wallow in self-pity and say, “*This isn’t fair.*”
  - Others praise God and lift Him up and elevate Christ and give God glory.
  - What is the difference? It is one word – faith! Some have little faith; some have great faith.
7. This is why it is so crucial that you keep **growing** in your faith. You are going to need it when trials and problems strike your life. 1 Thessalonians 3:10; cf. 2 Thessalonians 1:3
8. Concluding thoughts:
- Is there a magic vitamin I can take that will make me physically fit and give me muscles overnight? Of course we know that this is not possible. Physical fitness comes through a day-by-day, consistent exercise program, coupled with healthy eating habits.
  - Many people will only get in God’s Word when trials hit their lives. They expect it to be like a magic pill that will give them “faith muscles” overnight. This will not work. Growth is a process in both the physical and spiritual realm.
  - It is the consistent, daily study and application of God’s Word to your heart that will build your faith muscles. Romans 10:17; 1 Thessalonians 2:13
  - You prepare for future trials right now as you study and apply God’s Word to your heart and life.