

## **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.**

### **During trials, others will be observing you.**

1. Notice in verse 25, it says, "*...and the prisoners heard them.*"
2. We know that the prison guard also must have been watching and listening closely, because later he asked them the question, "*Sirs, what must I do to be saved?*"
3. What a wonderful testimony Paul and Silas bore for Christ that night. Instead of cursing or reviling with profanity and bitter words, the people in that prison heard prayers and songs of praise.
  - Can you imagine sitting there in that rotten prison cell next to them, and all of the sudden you hear from the next cell, "*Amazing grace how sweet sound...my chains are gone...*"
4. May this serve as a reminder to all of us that we are constantly being observed by others, especially during times of trial and testing.
  - Many times, what they see and hear from us will determine whether or not they are interested in our faith.
5. Not only are unbelievers affected by our attitudes in trials, but fellow believers are also impacted, either for good or bad. Young Christians watch older Christians to see how they respond in trials. Philippians 1:12-14
6. We must ask ourselves continually, "What do others hear when they listen to us?" Do we recommend the faith, or do we disgrace the faith by our attitude in dark times?

### **During trials, you can expect to experience God's mighty power.**

1. When Paul and Silas were singing praises to God, it literally "rocked the house." vs. 26
2. We see God's power manifested in several ways in verse 26.
  - There was a great earthquake.
  - The foundations of the prison were shaken, yet the roof and walls did not collapse.
  - All the doors were opened.
  - All the prisoners' bands were loosed.
  - None of the prisoners ran away!
3. When circumstances are the darkest, that is when God's power and light can shine the greatest. Look throughout your Bible – when you see God's power on display, it usually started with a problem or deep trial.
4. But please understand that when we encounter problems today, the display of God's power doesn't mean supernatural deliverance from the problem. When the earthquake was over, Paul was still in the prison.
5. God's power is displayed as He provides the believer the strength and grace to endure the trial and maintain a strong testimony and a strong faith. **Example:** 2 Corinthians 12:7-10
  - **Illustration:** Derek Redmond (1992 Olympics)

### **During trials, you can expect to be a powerful witness to those without Christ.**

1. The jailer awoke and saw all the prison doors open and assumed he had lost all of his prisoners. He started to kill himself when Paul stopped him. vs. 27-28
2. Under intense conviction, this man fell down at the feet of Paul and Silas and asked the famous question, "*Sirs, what must I do to be saved?*" vs. 29-30
  - This man had been brought into contact with a quality of life superior to anything he had known before.
  - He saw how Paul and Silas had handled this dark trial with their sweet spirit, their prayers, and their songs of praise.
  - This jailer wanted what Paul and Silas possessed.
3. Paul let this man know that there was nothing he could **do** to be saved. Everything was already done by Christ. All that was left was for him to believe. vs. 31
  - Salvation couldn't be found in a creed, but in Christ. Salvation wasn't to be found in a church, in a religious ritual, or in baptism, but in a Person – Christ, who is alive forevermore!
4. The jailer and his family placed their faith and trust in Christ. He truly was a changed man. vs. 32-34
5. God turned Paul's **test** into a **testimony**. Because of this trial, a lost man was able to see true Christianity demonstrated before his very eyes.
6. As we said earlier, people are watching us when we go through trials, and how they see us respond will determine their interest in our faith. Actions speak louder than words!

**During trials, you can expect God's deliverance.**

1. Paul and Silas had a wonderful time of fellowship with the jailer, but then they had to go back to their prison cell.
2. God sent an earthquake and saved a man and his family, but God still had not brought deliverance to Paul and Silas from this trial.
3. Finally, they were delivered from prison in a very ordinary way, but in a rather humorous scene. vs. 35-40
4. Paul and Silas were delivered **from** this trial by enduring **through** this trial. 2 Timothy 3:11 correlates trials with endurance.
5. We are delivered from so many trials by God giving us His grace to endure them to the end. There is no supernatural deliverance, but we are delivered by enduring.
6. While Paul **was** delivered from this Philippian prison with some supernatural manifestations, later in life he would be delivered from a Roman prison by enduring it until death. 2 Timothy 4:18
7. When a Christian goes through a life-and-death trial, he is in a win-win situation. If he is delivered from the trial alive, he can continue to serve God here on earth. If he is delivered from the trial by means of death, he is in heaven with Christ! Philippians 1:21-23