

Introduction & background:

- These verses are about events in the NT Book of Acts, “The Acts of the Holy Spirit”, on Paul’s Second Missionary journey while in Philippi.
- While Paul started out in chapter 16 with the intent to go to Asia Minor and Bithynia, Acts 16:7 tells us “When they had come opposite Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, *but* the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them;”.
- This is where Paul has a vision of a man who invites him to come to Macedonia (in Greece/Eastern Europe) because they need help.
- Once he reaches Macedonia he goes to the city of Philippi. While by the riverbank in Philippi he meets businesswoman, Lydia, and teaches her and her household about Jesus. And so Paul and Silas stay in Philippi as they continue to bring people to Jesus.
- One day going to the place of prayer, they cross paths with a slave girl whose spirit of divination was making a lot of money for her master. Paul and Silas prayed over her and the evil spirit leaves her. This angers the masters since they lose the money she earns them.
- And so Paul and Silas have false charges brought against them and are taken before the magistrates who sentence them to be beaten and thrown in jail.
- And this is where we enter the story, Paul and Silas in jail.

Acts 16:23-34 (NRSV)

²³ After they had given them a severe flogging, they threw them into prison and ordered the jailer to keep them securely. ²⁴ Following these instructions, he put them in the innermost cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

²⁵ About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. ²⁶ Suddenly there was an earthquake, so violent that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone’s chains were unfastened. ²⁷ When the jailer woke up and saw the prison doors wide open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, since he supposed that the prisoners had escaped. ²⁸ But Paul shouted in a loud voice, “Do not harm yourself, for we are all here.” ²⁹ The jailer called for lights, and rushing in, he fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. ³⁰ Then he brought them outside and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” ³¹ They answered, “Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.” ³² They spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. ³³ At the same hour of the night he took them and washed their wounds; then he and his entire family were baptized without delay. ³⁴ He brought them up into the house and set food before them; and he and his entire household rejoiced that he had become a believer in God.

1. What is the Holy Spirit lifting out to you today? (Questions continue on p. 2)

2. Who are you identifying with? Why?

3. What are the choices that Paul and Silas make in this passage? How do they affect the outcomes?

4. What do you see God through God's people doing in the face of suffering and injustice?

5. Where do you, your church experience:
 - A. injustices? Being shaken

 - B. Being empowered by the Holy Spirit?

 - C. Being Sent?

After all have an opportunity to share about the passage, each person share 1 personal request for prayer and prayer for one another before group time ends. Watch the clock!