Acts 16:25-40
The Power of Praise

I. Introduction

A. In our last study, we saw the Holy Spirit guide and redirect the mission team over into Europe from the East.

1. God is the one who directs our steps, and this is seen clearly in the first half of Acts 16.

B. Today we are going to see how God works in our trials and how prayer and praise provide a powerful release.

II. Acts 16:25-26 Prison, praise, and prayer

A. 16:25 Prayer and praise should be our response in tribulation.

25 But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.

1. This is an important lesson for us to learn.

2. Paul and Silas could have worried all night long, but they decided to sing and pray to their God.

a) You see that God is no less worthy of praise in our trials than He is in our triumphs.

3. Praise is an acknowledgment of God’s power, sovereignty, and goodness.

4. Prayer is an acknowledgment of our need and God's willingness to help.

a) This is the best counsel you can find anywhere for trials and crises.

5. Thanksgiving for all things is God’s will!

Ephesians 5:20 giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,
NLT 1 Thessalonians 5:18 No matter what happens, always be thankful, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.

a) These can be some very tough words to swallow when you are in the midst of fiery trials, but I am confident that the Lord knows best.
b) In a conversation this past week, I was reminded of how Corrie Ten Boom learned how God showed her how to be thankful for even the lice that filled their sleeping barracks while in a Nazi concentration camp at Ravensbruck. This infestation kept the guards out of their barracks, which among other blessings, allowed them to conduct Bible studies with the other ladies who were held captive with them.

c) I may not be familiar with your circumstances today, but I know the Lord is, and you can be thankful for them.

6. Of course the opposite of being thankful is complaining, and God’s Word warns us against this.

a) Numbers 14:27, 1 Corinthians 10:8-11

b) When we complain and grumble against circumstances, we are indirectly making a statement about God.

B. 16:26 Worshippers are set free.

26 Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed.

1. Praise sets us, the captives, free and defeats the plans of the enemy.

a) 2 Chronicles 20 is an Old Testament example of this same principle.

2 Chronicles 20:21-23 21 And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who should sing to the LORD, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army and were saying: "Praise the LORD, For His mercy endures forever." 22 Now when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated. 23 For the people of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir to utterly kill and destroy them. And when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, they helped to destroy one another.

2. Scripture is clear that as God’s people praise the Lord in trying and challenging times, God moves on their behalf.

a) You may not understand WHY, so focus on WHO!

III. Acts 16:27-34 The jailer is set free.

A. 16:27-28 A desperate jailer

27 And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself. 28 But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here."

1. A common punishment for allowing prisoners to escape was death.
2. So in this jailer’s mind, there was no way out of his circumstances. He was going to take his life as he believed that the certain outcome was going to be negative.

3. Suicide is never a good answer in dealing with problems.

4. Just as we will see in this story, God will provide not only a miracle for Paul and Silas but also for the jailer and for the prisoners who remain.

5. Your circumstances may say there is no hope, yet with God there is always hope.

6. It may be impossible for you or men to provide a solution to your problems, but God is able.

Jeremiah 32:17 17 ‘Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too hard for You.

B. 16:29-34 The jailer receives salvation.

29 Then he called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. 30 And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" 31 So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household." 32 Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. 33 And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized. 34 Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household.

1. When trials, tribulations, and the unexpected take place, we have a default cry that comes from within, asking the Lord why.

   a) The world will be more likely to take notice of your faith when you stand strong in trials.

2. If the “why” question was to be asked by Paul and Silas, the answer would have been to bring the Gospel to the jailer.

3. When you are able to handle the trials of life with worship and surrender, God will redeem those unfortunate circumstances for His Glory.

4. All circumstances should be used for the glory of God!

5. A great question we should be asking ourselves is, Lord, how do You want to glorify Yourself in these circumstances?

1 Corinthians 10:31 31 Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

   a) If God wants to use your trials and tribulations, then yield yourself to them in praise.
IV. Acts 16:35-40 Paul and Silas are released from prison.

35 And when it was day, the magistrates sent the officers, saying, "Let those men go." 36 So the keeper of the prison reported these words to Paul, saying, "The magistrates have sent to let you go. Now therefore depart, and go in peace." 37 But Paul said to them, "They have beaten us openly, uncondemned Romans, and have thrown us into prison. And now do they put us out secretly? No indeed! Let them come themselves and get us out." 38 And the officers told these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid when they heard that they were Romans. 39 Then they came and pleaded with them and brought them out, and asked them to depart from the city. 40 So they went out of the prison and entered the house of Lydia; and when they had seen the brethren, they encouraged them and departed.

A. It was unlawful and punishable to treat Romans citizens in the manner in which Paul and Silas were treated, without a proper trial.

B. It is interesting that Paul claims civil rights in this circumstance because at other times it seems he does not.

C. Whatever the reason why Paul did what he did, we should not allow the pursuit of our rights to ever get in the way of being a light and a witness.

D. Paul taught the Corinthians to forgo their rights and not take another brother to court.

V. Conclusion