

When You're Wronged


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TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS

Leader's Guide

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Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. –Psalm 145:11
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. –Joshua 22:5

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

From Acts 16:19-40...

Observation—*What do I see?*

- ❶ What accusations are brought against Paul and Silas, and who brings them?
- ❷ What actions are taken against Paul and Silas **before** any investigation takes place?
- ❸ How do different people respond to the earthquake?

Interpretation—*What does it mean?*

- ❹ Why were Paul and Silas praying and singing hymns after being beaten and imprisoned? What does this reveal about their understanding of suffering and God's sovereignty?
- ❺ What does the fact that Paul prevented the jailer from killing himself and refused to escape reveal about Paul's values and purpose in life?
- ❻ Why do you think Paul revealed his Roman citizenship after the mistreatment rather than before it?
- ❼ What does this suggest about Paul's view of justice, of witness, and of the use of personal rights?

Application—*What do I do with this?*

- ❽ Tell about a time when you were treated unjustly because of your Christian faith or witness.
- ❾ What would it have looked like if you had imitated Paul and Silas's posture in those circumstances?
- ❿ How might God use your visible faithfulness under pressure to impact unbelievers around you?
- ⓫ In what ways could yielding personal rights for the sake of the gospel bring good to others?
- ⓬ In what situation do you currently have opportunity to imitate Paul's priorities (1 Corinthians 11:1)?

- ❶ The accusations are brought by the slave girl's owners, who are motivated by economic loss after Paul casts out the spirit of divination. They accuse Paul and Silas of: (1) disturbing the city, and (2) advocating customs unlawful for Romans to accept or practice. The charges are framed in political and cultural terms, not religious truth, and are designed to inflame Roman civic pride and fear rather than seek justice.
- ❷ Without a formal hearing: (1) the crowd joins in attacking them, (2) the magistrates order them stripped and beaten with rods, (3) they are thrown into prison, and (4) the jailer is commanded to secure them carefully, placing them in the inner prison and fastening their feet in stocks. Luke is highlighting the absence of due process and the severity of the punishment.
- ❸ After midnight, as Paul and Silas prayed and sang hymns, a great earthquake shook the prison, the prison doors opened and chains were miraculously unfastened. The jailer awoke, assumed that the prisoners had escaped, and prepared to kill himself. Paul stopped him, assured him that all were still present, the jailer trembled, asked how to be saved, believed in the Lord Jesus, and was baptized along with his household. The jailer then cared for Paul and Silas's wounds and rejoiced in faith. We don't know what the other prisoners thought. Probably some were converted. Certainly none of them ever forgot that night.
- ❹ Because their joy was not based upon circumstances, but rather on their saved/secure status in Christ. Furthermore, believers are commanded to "rejoice in the Lord always" (Philippians 4:4-8) and "in every circumstance" (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18). They expressed joy because they were full of joy! They understood that their good God is sovereign over all circumstances, and therefore that their imprisonment in the cause of Christ was God's good and perfect will for them (Matthew 5:10-12; Romans 12:2b).
- ❺ Paul's action showed that his goal was not his own personal comfort but the salvation of others.
- ❻ Paul's delayed disclosure demonstrated that legal rights are less important than, and more importantly, can serve, gospel purposes. Paul did not cling to his rights reflexively, but neither did he deny them. He used them strategically for the good of others and the blessing of the church.
- ❼ Paul did not "consider his life of any account as dear to himself, so that he could finish his course and the ministry which he received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24).
- ❽ Let others speak first; then (if beneficial) tell your own story briefly.
- ❾ Think through proper responses so that you can help group members come up with them.
- ❿ Flip the question: "What good ever comes to others when we demand our own personal rights!"
- ⓫ The salvation of the Philippian jailor, and his entire family, are "Exhibit A"! Paul "endured all things for the sake of the elect, so that they also may obtain the salvation, which is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory" (2 Timothy 2:10).
- ⓬ Let others speak first; then (if beneficial) tell your own story briefly.

Sermon Text: Acts 16:19-40

¹⁹ But when her masters saw that their hope of profit had left,
they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the authorities,
²⁰ and when they had brought them to the chief magistrates, they said,
“These men are throwing our city into confusion, being Jews,
²¹ and are proclaiming customs that are not lawful for us to accept or to observe, being Romans.”
²² And the crowd joined together to attack them, and the chief magistrates,
tearing their garments off of them, proceeded to order them to be beaten with rods.
²³ And when they had inflicted them with many wounds,
they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to guard them securely,
²⁴ who, having received such a command,
threw them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.
²⁵ But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God,
and the prisoners were listening to them.
²⁶ And suddenly there came a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the jailhouse were shaken;
and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone’s chains were unfastened.
²⁷ And when the jailer awoke and saw the prison doors opened,
he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped.
²⁸ But Paul cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Do not harm yourself, for we are all here!”
²⁹ And he called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas,
³⁰ and after he brought them out, he said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”
³¹ And they said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your house.”
³² And they spoke the word of the Lord to him together with all who were in his household.
³³ And he took them that very hour of the night and washed their wounds,
and immediately he was baptized, he and all his household.
³⁴ And he brought them into his house and set food before them,
and rejoiced greatly with his whole household, because he had believed in God.
³⁵ Now when day came, the chief magistrates sent their policemen, saying, “Release those men.”
³⁶ And the jailer reported these words to Paul, saying,
“The chief magistrates have sent to release you. Therefore come out now and go in peace.”
³⁷ But Paul said to them, “Having beaten us in public without trial, men who are Romans,
they have thrown us into prison. And now are they sending us away secretly?
No indeed! But let them come themselves and bring us out.”
³⁸ And the policemen reported these words to the chief magistrates.
They were afraid when they heard that they were Romans,
³⁹ and they came and appealed to them,
and when they had brought them out, they kept requesting them to leave the city.
⁴⁰ And they went out of the prison and entered the house of Lydia,
and when they saw the brothers, they encouraged them and left.

Digging Deeper in your Daily Quiet Time

Monday: Suffering for Righteousness Is Normal in a Fallen World. Scripture consistently teaches that opposition to God spills over onto God's people. Because the world is in rebellion, those who align with Christ should expect resistance, hostility, and injustice.

- Genesis 3:15 _____
- John 15:18–20 _____
- 2 Timothy 3:12 _____

Summary: *Christian suffering at the hands of others is not anomalous; it is the ordinary experience of faithful discipleship in a fallen world.*

Tuesday: Christ's Suffering Is the Pattern and Interpretation of Ours. Believers suffer with Christ and like Christ. His unjust suffering becomes both the model and the meaning of ours.

- Isaiah 53:3–7 _____
- 1 Peter 2:21–23 _____
- Philippians 3:10 _____

Summary: *Christian suffering is never random; it is cruciform—shaped by the cross.*

Wednesday: God Uses Human Evil Without Being Its Author. Scripture holds together two truths: persecutors act wickedly and culpably, yet God governs their actions toward redemptive ends.

- Genesis 50:20 _____
- Acts 2:23 _____
- Acts 4:27–28 _____

Summary: *God does not excuse injustice, but He never loses control of it.*

Thursday: Believers Are Called to Christlike Attitudes and Actions. The New Testament consistently rejects retaliation and calls for active, visible righteousness in suffering.

- Matthew 5:10–12, 44 _____
- Romans 12:17–21 _____
- 1 Peter 3:9, 14–17 _____

Summary: *Christian endurance is not passive resignation but morally courageous obedience.*

Friday: Suffering Produces Spiritual Maturity and Witness. God uses persecution to refine faith, deepen holiness, and testify to the reality of the gospel.

- James 1:2–4 _____
- 1 Peter 1:6–7 _____
- Philippians 1:12–14 _____

Summary: *The church grows not despite suffering, but often through it.*

Saturday: Final Justice and Vindication Are Certain. Christian suffering is temporary and will be answered by God's righteous judgment and eternal reward.

- Romans 8:17–18 _____
- 2 Thessalonians 1:6–7 _____
- Revelation 6:9–11; 21:4 _____

Summary: *Hope anchors endurance: no injustice against God's people will remain unanswered.*