

May 26: Prayerfully Study Acts 16:25-40

"About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. 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. 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. But Paul shouted in a loud voice, 'Do not harm yourself, for we are all here.'" The jailer called for lights, and rushing in, he fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them outside and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They answered, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." They spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. At the same hour of the night he took them and washed their wounds; then he and his entire family were baptized without delay. 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."

"When morning came, the magistrates sent the police, saying, 'Let those men go.' And the jailer reported the message to Paul, saying, 'The magistrates sent word to let you go; therefore come out now and go in peace.' But Paul replied, 'They have beaten us in public, uncondemned, men who are Romans, and have thrown us into prison, and now are they going to discharge us in secret? Certainly not! Let them come and take us out themselves.' The police reported these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid when they heard that they were Romans, so they came and apologized to them. And they took them out and asked them to leave the city. After leaving the prison they went to Lydia's home, and when they had seen and encouraged the brothers and sisters there, they departed."

Trusting in God | Even in Unexpected Turns

May 26

1 | About 30 years after Jesus walked the earth, the converted apostle Paul was on his second of three long missionary journeys in present-day Turkey. At Lystra, Paul and Silas were beaten and imprisoned. What happened as they were praying and singing hymns to God? What was the jailer's reaction (v. 27)? When was a time you felt like you had been irresponsible, and how did you handle it?

2 | Paul and his imprisoned companions kept the jailer from feeling as if he failed in his assigned duties. What were the results of the talk they had with the jailer (vv. 31-34)? Describe a time when you chose to show grace and care towards another? How do you think God was at work?

3 | Although severely tested and persecuted, Paul and Silas held on to their faith and their joy. How do you think you would hold up under such extraordinary pressure? This week's REACH theme is trusting in God even in unexpected turns. When in your experience has the Lord provided a happy ending to a bad turn of events? For the single mothers at The Restoration House who may have experienced challenging events, how might you be prayerfully involved in supporting them and Olive Tree?

4 | The missionaries for Christ were unjustly accused and treated (see 15:19-24). What can we learn from them to help us cope with tough times ahead? They prayed and sang to God despite difficulties. What Scriptures, songs, and prayers help you through difficult times? How can you encourage someone else in his or her Christian walk this week?

5 | Clearly those before us had to have faith that God would help them, and God has been unendingly trustworthy. When is trusting God most difficult for you? When is trusting God hardest for the Church? Our campaign to Reach, Restore, and Connect will take time to finance and complete, so how can we keep the faith over the long-haul? Surely goodness and mercy shall follow us all the days of our lives and we will dwell in the house of the Lord forever (Psalm 23).
