

Sermon Discussion Guide- Week of Feb 16, 2020

Team Ministry: Free Indeed

Pastor Temple 8am, 9:15 & combined 10:30 services

Getting Started- Life Updates, Prayer Requests & Opening Question (15 min)

- Anything to share about personal events since you last met or about applying last week's message on "For Such A Time Is This"?
- Are there any joys or concerns that you would like to share with the group for the closing prayer time or for group members to hold in prayer during the week? (please note them below for later)

- Do you have a song you like to play or sing when you have been facing difficult life circumstances? What song(s) and why?

Review the Sermon (15 min)

Please read aloud the sermon scripture, Acts 16:25-34. Know that it is ok to skip some questions below in order to manage the time for discussions in each section.

²⁵ About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. ²⁶ Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everyone's chains came loose. ²⁷ The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. ²⁸ But Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!" ²⁹ The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas.

³⁰ He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" ³¹ They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household." ³² Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. ³³ At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his household were baptized. ³⁴ The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole household.

- If you had to give a one-minute summary of the sermon message this week, what would you say?
- Paul was called to go to Macedonia to share the gospel from a vision one night of a man there begging him "come over to Macedonia and help us." (16:9) Phillipi was part of Macedonia and a point of entry for the Christian church into Europe (Greece). How did Peter and Silas come to be in jail in Phillipi? (previous verses in Acts 16:16-24)
- In this city of Phillipi, where there wasn't even 10 Jewish men to form a synagogue, how was God at work in an unjust situation where the gospel could be shared with those who had never heard of Jesus (verse 25)?

- Back in Jerusalem, an angel had already miraculously delivered Peter from prison (Acts 12:2-11, 18-19) and Herod had the guards who were on duty executed. How does this information contribute to understanding this potential jail break in Phillipi with Paul and Silas (vs 26-28)?
- Why do you think Paul and Silas as well as the other prisoners didn't run at the chance for freedom?
- What do you think was going on in the jailor's heart in verses 29-30?
- How do you account for this flip in the nature of the jailor-prisoner relationship?
- What does Paul the prisoner do for the jailor and his family (vs 31-32)? How does jailor's response to the good news (vs 33-34) include actions as well as belief?
- When Paul and the others left Phillipi, how many people had been won to Christ as the start of the church at Phillipi? (chpt 16)

Other Related Readings (10 min)

- Later Paul would write a letter to the church in Phillipi from another prison. Would a volunteer please read out loud, Phillipians 2:12-16.
- In the Acts passage, Paul tells the Phillipians that to be saved one simply needs to believe in Jesus (16:31). Here in Phillipians 2:12, Paul tells them to "continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling...". How is salvation found in simply believing in Jesus but also something to be worked out?
- When Christians are believing in Christ and working out their salvation, they stand out as children of God among "a warped and crooked generation," shining like stars in the sky (vs.15). What are some of the characteristics of Christians that you think stand out in stark contrast in today's culture?
- How is Paul's life mission and greatest desire for the church in Phillipi shared in verse 16?

Personalizing and Applying The Message (10 min)

- As you reflect upon the sermon and the additional readings above, what are points of encouragement or challenge for you personally?
- Long after the days of John Wesley, a summary of "the four alls" of salvation for a Methodist was made:
1- All people need to be saved 2- All people can be saved 3- All people can know they are saved and 4- All people can be saved to the uttermost. How can the process of working out our salvation to the uttermost, even though it is a work of grace in cooperation with the Holy Spirit, sometimes seem like a "work out?"
- Even though the statuses, roles and titles of culture may divide us, how does common faith in Christ level the playing field in relational terms?
- Joy was present with Paul and Silas at the beginning and with the jailor and his family at the end of this week's passage. How has the joy of Christ been present or evident in your life this past week?
- What songs of Christ can you hold in your heart this week?

Witness & Closing Prayer (5-10 min)

- As believers in Jesus, how might we shine like stars in the sky this week to those around us who don't know him?
- Are there any here who would like to know more about Restorative Justice Ministries at Christ Church?
- The group leader or another volunteer who took notes on the prayer requests shared earlier in the meeting, may now lead the group in closing prayer