



Made



Worship!

Day 3: Even in the Bad Times
Pre-K/Kindergarten

Even in the Bad Times

The Objective is the key concept for this week's lesson. It should be the main focus of the study.

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The "Main passage" is the basis of the study, where the other verses support the objective of the lesson.

Each day, the students will learn a memory verse. Students who learn all 5 memory verses this week will receive a prize.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God's Word.

Objective This lesson will teach the students that we are able to and should worship the Lord even in the difficult times in life.

Key Verses

Acts 16:16-34—Main Teaching Passage
John 16:33

Memory Verse - Psalm 100:4-5

"Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, And into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name. For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endures to all generations."

Hook

Tell the students to think about the best day they ever had. Have a few share. Ask if they praised the Lord for that day. Then tell them to think about the worst day they ever had. Did they feel like worshipping God on that day?

It's easy to worship God when things are going well. It's much more difficult when times are hard. Today, we're going to look at the story of two men who praised God in difficult circumstances and see that when life is hard, we can worship the Lord too.

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

BOOK

In Acts 16:16-24, things went from bad to worse for Paul and Silas. Paul healed a girl with an unclean spirit after she had been following them around for several days. But when he did that, her owners got angry with him and Silas and brought them to the authorities. They were beaten and then thrown in prison with their feet chained in the stocks.

But that night, in the midst of all their troubles, Paul and Silas did something truly amazing. Verse 25 tells us that they prayed and sang songs to the Lord. They chose to worship God in the midst of their suffering! They could have complained about their situation or gotten upset with God, but instead they praised Him.

Then, that same night God sent an earthquake that shook the jail and broke all of the prisoners' chains. When the jail guard saw what had happened, he was afraid that the prisoners would escape and he would get in trouble. But Paul told him not to hurt himself, and that none of the prisoners had left. The guard asked what he needed to do to be saved, and Paul told him to believe in Jesus. The guard then took Paul and Silas to his house, and his whole family believed in Jesus and was saved. The next day, the rulers of the city came and released Paul and Silas from jail. God had delivered them.

Teachers' note: While there are many great angles to this story, such as the jail guard's salvation, our main focus today is on Paul and Silas worshipping in the midst of difficult circumstances, and God delivering them. Please devote the majority of your lesson to this aspect.

LOOK

Yesterday, we learned about the Israelites experiencing something amazing—going through the Red Sea on dry land—and worshipping God because of how great He is and what He had done for them. Today's story is also about worship, but in a different, much more difficult situation. Paul and Silas had been beaten and thrown in jail. In that situation, most people would be sad and angry. They might complain that things were unfair, and perhaps even be upset with God for allowing this to happen. But not Paul and Silas! Even though they were going through a hard time, they chose to worship the Lord.

What's incredible is that Paul and Silas didn't know how the story would end. They had no idea that God was going to set them free, or that the guard was going to get saved. They believed that God could save them, but that didn't mean that He would. They made the decision to worship God, whether He rescued them or not.

So how were Paul and Silas able to praise the Lord in the midst of their difficult situation? It was actually for the same reasons we learned

The interpretation/exegesis of the passage. What does this passage mean? How does this passage apply to my life?

LOOK (Continued)

about yesterday: because of who God is and what He had done. They knew that God was powerful and that He loved them. They remembered how He had rescued them before and believed that He had the power to do it again. But most importantly, they had reason to praise Jesus because He had saved and forgiven them for their sins, and they knew that no matter what happened to them in their current situation, they would spend eternity with Him in heaven. Nothing could change that or take away God's promise.

All of us face hard times in our lives. You might be going through one right now. Jesus told His disciples in John 16:33 that we would face difficulties in this world, but then He also said He has overcome (defeated, conquered) the world. He promises to be with us always, even in the tough times (Matthew 28:20; Hebrews 13:5). When you face trials, you can worship God because He is great (as we learned yesterday), because of all He has done for us in the past, because we trust that He can help us in our current situation, and most importantly of all, because (if you are a believer) He has saved us from our sins and we will spend eternity with Him, no matter what happens to us in this life. So whether you are going through good times or bad right now, let's worship our wonderful Lord!

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

TOOK

As a class, review Psalm 100:4-5.

Take prayer requests and pray for anyone who might be going through difficulties in their lives. Encourage the class to worship the Lord always, no matter what we go through in life.

Pray: Thank the Lord that He is good, even when times are tough. Pray that He would help the whole class to worship the Lord always, even when they face difficulties.

Parent Question: Why can we worship God in difficult times?

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on Acts 16:16-34 by David Guzik

3. ([Acts 16:16-17](#)) A demon-possessed slave girl follows Paul.

Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling. This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, “These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation.”

a. **A certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination... brought her masters much profit:** This girl, though demon possessed, was a source of money for her owners as a fortune teller. Presumably this was because demons gave her supernatural insight into the lives of others.

i. “It actually says, ‘She had a spirit of Pythona.’ That does not mean much to most of us, which is why it is not translated literally. But ‘pythona’ was a certain kind of snake — a python. It is used here because the python was associated with the god Apollo...not far from Philippi, in this very area of Europe, there was a shrine to the Pythian Apollo.” (Boice)

ii. Today, much of what fortune-tellers and psychics do is only a money making sham. But when it is true and has a supernatural origin (as opposed to clever, insightful guessing), there is no doubt that it is inspired by demons. There are still those today who are **possessed with a spirit of divination**.

iii. Because demons are created beings, not “gods” themselves, we suppose that they cannot read minds, nor actually foretell the future. But they can read and predict human behavior, and can attempt to steer events towards a previously predicted conclusion.

b. **This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, “These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation.”** The demon-possessed slave girl preached for Paul, giving a demonic testimony to their divine credentials and their message. She didn’t do this only once, but for many days ([Acts 16:18](#)).

4. ([Acts 16:18](#)) Paul casts the demon out of the slave girl.

And this she did for many days. But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.” And he came out that very hour.

a. **But Paul, greatly annoyed:** Paul was **greatly annoyed**, and he did not appreciate the free advertising from the demon. He did not appreciate the source of the recommendation, and he didn’t need demonic approval of his work.

i. Paul knew that a man will be identified by both his friends and his enemies, and could do without a demonic letter of reference. In this, Paul was like Jesus, who often told demons to be silent, even when they told the truth about Him ([Matthew 8:28-34](#), [Mark 3:11-12](#)).

b. **I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her:** Jesus cast out demons with His own authority. Paul was careful to speak to demons only in the authority of Jesus Christ, and he spoke beyond the afflicted girl to the demon itself with this authority of Jesus.

c. **And he came out that very hour:** The idea behind **that very hour** is that the demon came out immediately. Yet Jesus said that some demons would be more difficult to cast out than others ([Matthew 17:21](#)).

i. Bruce translates the phrase, *It came out there and then*. He comments: “The words had scarcely left his lips

when she was released from its power.”

5. ([Acts 16:19-24](#)) Paul and Silas are arrested, beaten, and imprisoned for delivering the slave-girl from her demonic possession.

But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged *them* into the marketplace to the authorities. And they brought them to the magistrates, and said, “These men, being Jews, exceedingly trouble our city; and they teach customs which are not lawful for us, being Romans, to receive or observe.” Then the multitude rose up together against them; and the magistrates tore off their clothes and commanded *them* to be beaten with rods. And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw *them* into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely. Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

a. **Her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone:** This explains why Paul and Silas were treated so badly. The masters of the demon possessed girl cared nothing for the girl herself, only for their ability to exploit her demonic possession for money. They were occult “pimps,” prostituting her spiritually.

b. **They seized Paul and Silas:** Paul and Silas were singled out not only because they were the leaders of the evangelistic group, but also by their appearance, as they were the most obviously Jewish. This is indicated by how they began their accusation: **“These men, being Jews.”**

i. Luke was a Gentile, and Timothy was only half Jewish. Paul and Silas *looked* Jewish, and “Anti-Jewish sentiment lay very near the surface in pagan antiquity.” (Bruce) The objection that these men were Jews is even more interesting knowing the Jewish community in Philippi was small.

c. **Exceedingly trouble our city; and they teach customs which are not lawful for us, being Romans, to receive or observe.** Their charges were vague, simply accusing Paul and Silas of being troublemakers. But those vague charges were enough, because both the **multitude** and the **magistrates** were biased against Paul and Silas. They were biased because of their Jewish appearance, and because they assumed Paul and Silas were not Roman citizens.

i. In the Roman Empire there were two very different laws: one for citizens of the Roman Empire, and one for those who were not citizens. Roman citizens had specific, zealously guarded civil rights. Non-citizens had no civil rights, and were subject to the whims of both the **multitude** and the **magistrates**.

ii. Since they assumed Paul and Silas were not Roman citizens, they were offended that these obviously Jewish men harassed Roman citizens with their strange religion of a crucified Savior. As well, the **multitude** and the **magistrates** felt free to abuse Paul and Silas because they assumed they were not Roman citizens.

iii. “There was great indignation that Roman citizens should be molested by strolling peddlers of an outlandish religion. Such people had to be taught to know their proper place and not trouble their betters.” (Bruce)

d. **When they had laid many stripes on them, they threw them into prison:** After being severely beaten, Paul and Silas were imprisoned in maximum-security conditions (**commanding the jailer to keep them securely... the inner prison... fastened their feet in the stocks**).

i. Jewish legal tradition gave a maximum number of blows that could be delivered when beating a person, but the Romans had no such limit. We simply know Paul and Silas were severely beaten. Paul later wrote of his life: *In labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often.* ([2 Corinthians 11:23](#))

ii. After such a bad beating, they were put in uncomfortable conditions (**fastened their feet in the stocks**). “These stocks had more than two holes for legs, which could thus be forced apart in a such a way as to cause the utmost discomfort and cramping pain.” (Bruce)

iii. Even in their pain, God was not far from Paul and Silas. Tertullian said, “The legs feel nothing in the stocks when the heart is in heaven.”

6. ([Acts 16:25](#)) Paul and Silas sing in prison.

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

a. **But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God:** Though they were arrested, beaten, and imprisoned for doing good, Paul and Silas were filled with joy, and sang praises to God. It seemed as if nothing would make them stop praising God.

i. Anyone can be happy in pleasant circumstances, but real joy comes only from within, and is a gift available to Christians at all times. “Instead of cursing men, they blessed God.” (Stott)

b. **And the prisoners were listening to them:** What a strange sound this was to the other **prisoners!** Prayers and praises unto God at midnight, in the midst of a brutal prison. Those prison walls had probably never heard such a sound.

7. ([Acts 16:26-29](#)) The great earthquake and its result.

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. 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. But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, “Do yourself no harm, for we are all here.” Then he called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas.

a. **Suddenly there was a great earthquake:** This earthquake was clearly supernatural. This was not only because of its timing and location, but also in the way that **all the doors were opened and everyone’s chains were loosed.**

b. **The keeper of the prison...was about to kill himself:** The jailer did this for a good reason. Under Roman law and custom, guards who allowed their prisoners to escape received the penalty of their escaped prisoners. Knowing this, **Paul called with a loud voice, saying, “Do yourself no harm, for we are all here.”** He assured the jailer that no one had escaped.

i. It would have been easy for Paul and Silas to escape thinking God provided another miraculous jailbreak. But to them, the lives of others were more important than their own personal freedom and comfort.

ii. In not escaping, they showed tremendous discernment. The *circumstances* said, “escape.” But love said, “Stay for the sake of this one soul.” They were not guided merely by circumstances, but by what love compelled.

c. **Ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas:** This hardened keeper of the prison **fell down trembling.** This was as dramatic as it sounds. This man was more affected by the love and grace demonstrated by Paul and Silas than by the earthquake. As well, this may have even been the same guard who beat them a few hours earlier.

8. ([Acts 16:30-32](#)) The conversion of the Philippian jailer.

And he brought them out and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” So they said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.” Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house.

a. **Sirs, what must I do be saved?** The jailer was so impressed by Paul and Silas — by the love they showed to him, and from their ability to take joy even in misery — that he instantly wanted the kind of life that Paul and Silas have.

i. This is how God wants our lives to be: Natural magnets drawing people to Him. Our Christianity should make others want what we have with God.

b. **Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved:** Paul’s answer to the keeper of the prison is a

classic statement of the essence of the gospel. This is salvation by grace alone, received by faith alone.

i. Some have worried that Paul's invitation to salvation here is *too* easy, and would promote a too-easy faith or a cheap grace. Others refuse to preach repentance, claiming that this text says that it is not necessary.

ii. Paul never specifically called the keeper of the prison to repent because *he was already repenting*. We see the humble repentance of the jailer in that he *fell down trembling*, in the full idea of the word **believe** (*pistis*, which means to trust in, rely on, and cling to), and in the command to believe on the **Lord** Jesus Christ).

iii. For the Philippian jailer, Paul did not direct him to counseling. He did not give him a lecture on theology. He did not discuss the spiritual terminology of the jailer. He did not talk about sacraments or even churches. He pointed this obviously repentant man to faith in Jesus Christ.

iv. There was an old chaplain general of the British Army — Bishop John Taylor Smith — who used a unique test on candidates for the chaplaincy. He asked them to say how they would speak to a man injured in battle, who had three minutes to live, how to be saved and come to peace with God. If they couldn't do it within three minutes, they weren't fit for the chaplain's service. Paul would be qualified.

c. **You and your household**: This seems to be a specific promise for that Philippian jailer. Under inspiration by the Holy Spirit, Paul told the keeper of the prison that his household would trust Jesus just as he did.

i. This was a promise made specifically to the keeper of the prison. But it is a promise that the Holy Spirit may well make alive to us, helping us to trust Him for the salvation of our families.

ii. However, the jailer's household was not saved merely because he was; Paul came and **spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house**. They were all saved because they all trusted the word of God and the Jesus revealed to us through the word.

9. ([Acts 16:33-34](#)) The Philippian jailer serves Paul and Silas.

And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized. 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.

a. **And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes**: The same jailer who had punished them now cared for Paul and Silas, caring for their wounds and **he set food before them**. This shows how repentant he was and how he followed the example of love shown by Paul and Silas.

b. **And immediately he and all his family were baptized**: The jailer and his family saw no reason to delay baptism; they were baptized that very night, and all this began around midnight ([Acts 16:25](#)).

c. **And he rejoiced**: This man was carried from suicidal fear to abounding joy in just a few minutes. The Holy Spirit used the courageous praise of Paul and Silas in their terrible adversity.