

Calvary Chapel of Philadelphia



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY TEACHER'S PACKET

1st Grade

Sunday Morning

Study 44

Philippi

Philippi

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.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the "reward box" found on your cart.

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 show the students how God works through difficult circumstances for His glory.

Key Verses

Acts 16:6-40—Main Teaching Passage

Memory Verse - Acts 16:31

"So they said, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.'"

Hook

Review last week's memory verse, Ephesians 2:8-9.

On your cart will be a maze on a 11x17 sheet of paper (see back page of this packet). Go through the maze with the class and note how, at times, you are moving the opposite direction of the end of the maze. Ask the class if we should always take the path that moves you closer to the end. Explain that sometimes, you might have to move away from the end in order to get there.

The same way, sometimes when following Jesus we face setbacks, as Paul will in today's story. However, these setbacks are not mistakes, but all part of God's plan.

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

After the Jerusalem Council, Paul went on another missionary journey with Silas. They tried to travel to a number of cities, but the Holy Spirit prevented them from going. Eventually, Paul had a vision of a man calling them to come to Macedonia, so Paul and Silas went to the city of Philippi in Macedonia. There they met a group of women praying by a river. One of them was named Lydia. She was a worshipper of God, and when Paul shared the Gospel with her, she believed and was baptized.

Later, when Paul and Silas were going to prayer, a woman with an unclean spirit followed them, crying out that these were servants of God who were there to proclaim salvation. Paul was greatly annoyed that this demon was announcing his presence, so he cast the demon out of the woman. This angered the woman's masters, who had lost their chance to make money from her fortune-telling, so they grabbed Paul and Silas and took them to the authorities, who beat them with rods and threw them in jail. As they sat chained in their cell that night, Paul and Silas sang praises to God. All of a sudden, there was an earthquake, and the doors were open and everyone's chains were broken. The jail keeper, fearing he might be executed for losing the prisoners, was about to kill himself, but Paul told him to stop and explained that the prisoners were all still there. The jailer was amazed and fell down and asked what he needed to do to be saved, and Paul told him to believe in Jesus Christ. The jailer believed and was baptized, and his family did the same. The next day, the authorities realized that they had made a mistake in putting Paul, a Roman citizen, in jail without a trial, so they let him go.

LOOK

Throughout this story, it might seem like things are not going according to plan. First, Paul tried to spread the Gospel to various cities, but the Holy Spirit prevented him. Then he arrived in Philippi, where he was harassed by the woman with the unclean spirit for days, and when he finally did cast that spirit out, he was beaten and put in jail for it. It may have been tempting for Paul to be discouraged and think that the Lord was not in his mission, but God is faithful, and He worked all things out for His glory. All of these events led to the salvation of Lydia, the centurion, and the centurion's family, resulting later in the establishment of the church of Philippi. Paul would later write Philippians, one of his most positive and encouraging letters, to the church in Philippi, praising them for the good work they were doing.

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

LOOK (Continued)

The founding of this church was made possible because of all the closed doors, or opportunities that God took away. While to the human observer it might have looked like things were going all wrong, all was going according to God's plan. If the Holy Spirit had not prevented Paul from going to the other cities at the beginning of the story, he may never have made it to Philippi, and Lydia may never have gotten saved. If Paul had not gone to jail, he probably would not have met the Philippian jailer, and the jailer and his family may never have heard the Gospel. All of these perceived setbacks actually resulted in the start of the church in Philippi. They were not mistakes, but the will of God working all things out for God's glory.

In our day-to-day lives, we face all kinds of things that could be perceived as setbacks or disappointments, yet God uses those things for His glory. This could include sickness, family emergencies, losing a friend, moving away, or a number of other difficult circumstances. When we face these things, rather than seeing them as a burden, it is important to keep in mind that God could be using our circumstances to further His kingdom. Maybe in your trip to the hospital, you will have a chance to show Christ's love to a doctor or one of the other patients. Perhaps when you move to a new town, you will have new, exciting opportunities to share the Gospel with others. That doesn't mean these challenges will be easy. Paul and Silas certainly went through a lot of pain in this story, but they were able to sing praises to God in jail not because their pain was taken away, but because they loved Him and knew that He was working all things for His glory.

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, memorize Acts 16:31.

Take some extra time for prayer requests today and have students share difficult circumstances.

Pray: Lift the requests up to the Lord and pray that He will take care of them. Ask the Lord to give the class wisdom to see how God is using each of these situations for His glory.

Parent question: How has God used difficult situations for His glory in your life?

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on Acts 16 by David Guzik

THE SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY BEGINS

A. From the city of Derbe to Troas.

1. ([Acts 16:1-2](#)) Paul meets Timothy in Lystra.

Then he came to Derbe and Lystra. And behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a certain Jewish woman who believed, but his father was Greek. He was well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Iconium.

a. **Then he came to Derbe and Lystra:** Paul (and Silas) arrived in **Derbe**, where he had great success on his first missionary journey ([Acts 14:20-21](#)), and in **Lystra**, where a crowd tried to honor Paul and Barnabas as pagan gods on the first missionary journey ([Acts 14:8-20](#)).

i. Paul began this missionary journey having come from Antioch. First, he did the work of *strengthening the churches* through the regions of Syria and Cilicia ([Acts 15:40-41](#)).

ii. According to the estimate of William Barclay, the first missionary journey finished about five years before the events of this chapter. Paul was anxious to see for himself how the work of the Lord continued among these churches he founded five years before.

b. **A certain disciple was there, named Timothy:** In the time since Paul had been to Lystra, a young man **named Timothy** had been serving the Lord (**He was well spoken of by the brethren**). Timothy had a believing mother with a Jewish background (**son of a certain Jewish woman who believed**), and a (presumably) unbelieving **Greek** father.

i. The last time Paul was in Lystra, they first worshipped him as a god and then tried to kill him by stoning ([Acts 14:11-20](#)). Paul's courage and wisdom in the face of these obstacles built a great legacy in people like Timothy.

2. ([Acts 16:3-5](#)) Timothy joins Paul and Silas, and their work continues.

Paul wanted to have him go on with him. And he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in that region, for they all knew that his father was Greek. And as they went through the cities, they delivered to them the decrees to keep, which were determined by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily.

a. **Paul wanted to have him go on with him:** Paul was impressed enough with Timothy to ask him to join their missionary team. This shows God's provision, because John Mark and Barnabas just left Paul ([Acts 15:36-41](#)). No single worker in God's kingdom is irreplaceable. When a Barnabas leaves (for whatever reason), God has a Timothy to **go on with him**.

b. **And he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews in that region:** Paul had Timothy **circumcised**, not for the sake of his salvation (Paul would never do so) but so there would be less to hinder ministry among the Jews.

i. In [Acts 15](#), Paul argued strongly that it was not necessary for Gentile converts to come under the Law of Moses for salvation ([Acts 15:2](#) and [15:12](#)). At the time Paul met Timothy, he was delivering the news of this decree that came out of the [Acts 15](#) council (**as they went through the cities, they delivered to them the decrees to keep, which were determined by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem**).

ii. Yet, Paul did not contradict his belief or the findings of the council when he had Timothy circumcised. Paul did this not for Timothy's salvation or right standing with God, but so that Timothy's status as a non-circumcised man from a Jewish mother would not hinder their work among the Jews and in synagogues. Paul did things for the sake of love that he would not do for the sake of trying to please God through legalism. Paul insisted that Titus, a Gentile co-worker, did *not* have to be circumcised ([Galatians 2:3-5](#)).

iii. "By Jewish law Timothy was a Jew, because he was the son of a Jewish mother, but because he was uncircumcised he was technically an apostate Jew. If Paul wished to maintain his links with the synagogue, he could not be seen to countenance apostasy." (Bruce)

iv. "As Paul saw it, being a good Christian did not mean being a bad Jew." (Longenecker) The wording of [Acts 16:3](#) implies that Paul *himself* performed the circumcision (**he took him and circumcised him**).

c. **So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily:** Paul, Silas, and Timothy together enjoyed great success in their work of strengthening and growing churches.

i. Their work was successful because their first interest was in strengthening the churches. Strong churches will naturally increase in number daily, without relying on man-centered and manipulative methods.

3. ([Acts 16:6-8](#)) The Holy Spirit forbids Paul to go towards the province of Asia Minor.

Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia. After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them. So passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas.

a. **They were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia:** After strengthening the churches in the region, Paul sought to go next to the south-west, towards the important city of Ephesus. Yet, Paul was **forbidden by the Holy Spirit** to go there.

i. We note with interest that the Holy Spirit actually forbade Paul to do something we normally think of as *good* — preaching God's Word to those who need it. Yet the Spirit of God directed this work, and Paul wasn't the right person in the right place at the right time to begin bringing the gospel to the Roman Province of Asia Minor. There was certainly nothing wrong with Paul's *desire* to **preach the word in Asia**; but it wasn't God's timing, so this was **forbidden by the Holy Spirit**.

ii. It is difficult to say exactly how the Holy Spirit said *no*; it may have been through a word of prophecy, or by an inward speaking of the Holy Spirit, or by circumstances. One way or another, Paul and his company got the message. Ephesus would come later, not now.

iii. **Asia** does not refer to the Far East as we know it today. It refers to the Roman Province of Asia Minor, which is modern day Turkey.

b. **They tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them:** After the attempt to go to Asia, Paul sought to go north into **Bithynia**, but was again prevented by the Holy Spirit. So, **they came down to Troas**.

i. Paul didn't set out to go to **Troas**. It was at least the third choice for him. But it was the Holy Spirit's plan to lead him there. Paul, beautifully responsive to the Holy Spirit, was willing to lay down his will and his plans for the direction that the Holy Spirit brings.

ii. Paul was guided by hindrance. The Holy Spirit often guides as much by the *closing* of doors as He does by the *opening* of doors.

iii. David Livingstone wanted to go to China, but God sent him to Africa. William Carey wanted to go to Polynesia, but God sent him to India. Adoniram Judson went to India, but God guided him to Burma. God guides us along the way, to just the right place.

4. ([Acts 16:9-10](#)) God directs Paul to the region of Macedonia.

And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying,

“Come over to Macedonia and help us.” Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them.

- a. **And a vision appeared to Paul in the night:** In Troas, God made Paul’s direction clear. In **a vision**, Paul was invited to the region of Macedonia, westward across the Aegean Sea.
- i. This moved Paul and his missionary team from the continent of Asia to the continent of Europe; this was the first missionary endeavor to Europe.
- ii. The wisdom and greatness of God’s plan was beginning to unfold. In Paul’s mind, he wanted to reach a few cities in his region. But God wanted to give Paul a *continent* to win for Jesus Christ.
- b. **A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.”** The Macedonian man wanted **help**. So Paul went to bring Macedonia the gospel — the best possible help.
- i. The greatest help we can bring anyone is the life-changing gospel of Jesus Christ. It is good for us to bring other help along with the gospel, but without the gospel, little *real* help is given.
- c. **Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go:** Paul did not hesitate to answer the call of the Macedonian man. Paul’s missionary team did not hesitate to follow him on the basis of this call. This was a strong, godly man, leading a strong, godly team.
- i. God still calls people to the mission field, and He may call through unusual ways. It’s still possible for a type of Macedonian Man to give an unusual call to serve God in a distant place. When that happens, it’s important to respond the way Paul and his team did.
- d. **Immediately we sought to go:** The shift from *they* (*they came down to Troas, [Acts 16:8](#)*) to **we** in this verse probably means that Luke joined the band of missionaries in Troas. Perhaps he even came as Paul’s personal doctor.
- i. Now we see another reason why *they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia*. We see another reason why *the Spirit did not permit them* to go into Bithynia. God wanted Paul and his team to go to Troas and pick up a doctor named Luke. Because God said “no” to Paul these two times, we have a gospel and a Book of Acts written by Doctor Luke.
- ii. At the time, Paul probably had no idea of the greatness of God’s purpose. God wanted to give him a continent for Jesus, to give him a personal doctor, and to give all of us the man whom God would use to write more of the New Testament than anyone else did. God knows what He is doing when he says, “No.”

B. Paul’s work in the Macedonian city of Philippi.

1. ([Acts 16:11-12](#)) Arrival in Philippi.

Therefore, sailing from Troas, we ran a straight course to Samothrace, and the next day came to Neapolis, and from there to Philippi, which is the foremost city of that part of Macedonia, a colony. And we were staying in that city for some days.

- a. **Sailing from Troas:** Paul and his missionary team (now including Luke) had to sail across the Aegean Sea, from the continent of Asia to the continent of Europe. This was a big step, perhaps bigger than Paul even knew.
- i. “That they ‘sailed straight for Samothrace’ is quite revealing, because this is a nautical expression that means the wind was at their backs. So perfect were the winds that they sailed 156 miles in just two days, whereas returning the other way at a later time ([Acts 20:6](#)) it took five days.” (Hughes)
- b. **From there to Philippi, which is the foremost city of that part of Macedonia:** Paul here followed a plan to plant churches in the major cities. He knew that it was easier for the gospel to spread *from* these cities than *to* these cities.
- i. Philippi was “the place where the armies of Mark Antony and Octavian defeated Brutus and Cassius in the

decisive battle of the second Roman civil war in 42 B.C.” (Hughes) Because of this, many Roman soldiers retired in the area, and Philippi was proud of its Roman connection.

2. ([Acts 16:13-15](#)) The conversion of Lydia.

And on the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made; and we sat down and spoke to the women who met *there*. Now a certain woman named Lydia heard *us*. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul. And when she and her household were baptized, she begged *us*, saying, “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.” So she persuaded *us*.

a. **On the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made:**

The fact that the Jews of Philippi had no synagogue and met by the river means that there were not many Jewish men in Philippi.

i. “Had there been ten Jewish men, they would have sufficed to constitute a synagogue. No number of women would compensate for the absence of even one man necessary to make up the quorum of ten.” (Bruce)

b. **Lydia... was a seller of purple:** Anyone who **was a seller of purple** dealt in a valued, luxurious product. The dyes used for making purple were expensive and highly regarded. This woman was the first convert in Europe, and one might say that the Macedonian man turned out to be a woman.

i. **From the city of Thyatira:** **Thyatira** was well known as a center for this purple dye and fabric made from it. Later, there was a church in Thyatira also, and it was one of the seven churches addressed in Revelation ([Revelation 2:18-29](#)).

c. **The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul:** Before Lydia was converted (as demonstrated by her baptism), **the Lord opened her heart**. This is a work God must do in all who believe, because as Jesus said, *no one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him* ([John 6:44](#)).

i. Therefore, a most important element in evangelism is asking God through prayer to *open hearts*, for without this there can be no genuine conversion.

d. **She begged us, saying, “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.”** Immediately, Lydia set about doing good. Her hospitality was touching and a wonderful example.

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 prison-

ers. 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.

10. ([Acts 16:35-36](#)) Paul and Silas return to the prison, and are set free by the magistrates the next day.

And when it was day, the magistrates sent the officers, saying, "Let those men go." 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."

a. **The magistrates sent the officers:** Paul and Silas left the prison (in the protective custody of the jailer) to minister to the jailer's household. Yet they returned to the prison willingly to spare the jailer certain death.

b. **Let those men go:** In societies that recognize few rights for their citizens it is common for one to be arrested, beaten, imprisoned — and then quickly and unexpectedly released. This sort of treatment effectively terrorizes the population into submission.

c. **The magistrates have sent to let you go. Now therefore depart, and go in peace:** If Paul and Silas were released the day after their beating, arrest, and imprisonment, why did God send the earthquake? We see that the earthquake had absolutely *nothing* to do with freeing Paul and Silas from prison. But it had everything to do with the salvation of a certain prison guard and his household.

11. ([Acts 16:37-39](#)) Paul and Silas reveal their Roman citizenship.

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." And the officers told these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid when they heard that they were Romans. Then they came and pleaded with them and brought them out, and asked them to depart from the city.

a. **They have beaten us openly, uncondemned Romans:** Because Paul and Silas were Roman citizens, they *had* recognized civil rights, which were violated by the Philippian magistrates. Upon learning this, the magistrates were filled with fear, because it was a grave offense to treat Roman citizens as Paul and Silas had been treated.

i. Why didn't Paul and Silas reveal their Roman citizenship earlier? It is possible that they didn't have the opportunity, but it is more likely that the Holy Spirit directed them to not reveal it until a certain time.

ii. Our *rights* are not as important as our *obedience* to the will of God. God may ask us to lay down our rights for the good of another (in this case, for the good of the Philippian jailer).

iii. How could Paul and Silas prove their Roman citizenship? "They may each have carried a copy of his *professio* or registration of birth, in which his Roman status would have been recorded. These were convenient in size...To claim Roman citizenship falsely was punishable by death." (Williams)

b. **They came and pleaded with them and brought them out, and asked them to depart from the city:** The magistrates acted as politicians often act by instinct. They tried to make their problem go away quietly by sweeping it under the rug.

12. ([Acts 16:40](#)) Paul and Silas leave Philippi on their own terms.

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. **When they had seen the brethren, they encouraged them:** Only after this did they agree to go. Paul and Silas would not be hurried out of town until they had brought their work there to a conclusion.

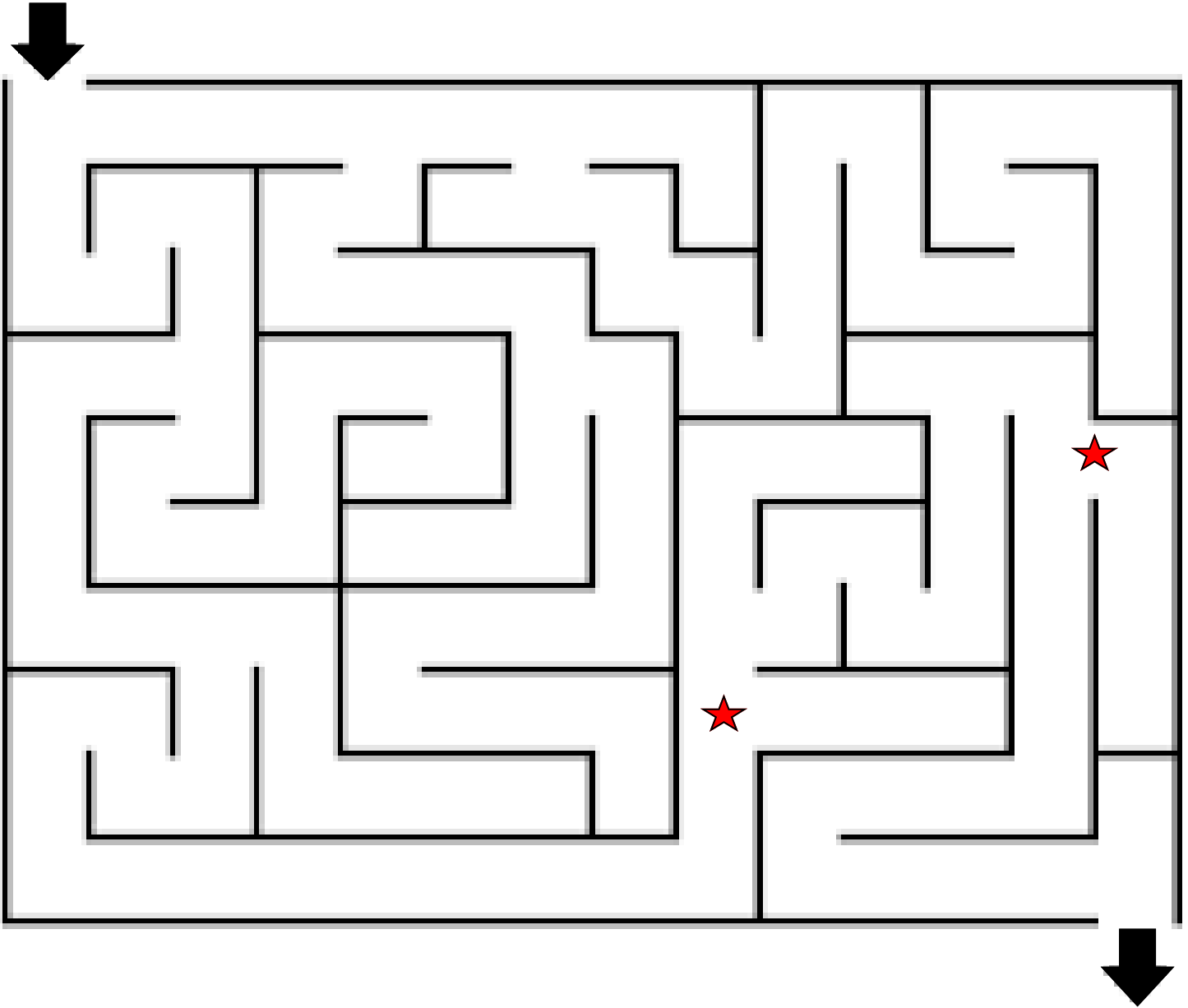
i. The great missionary David Livingstone summarized the spirit of Paul when he said, “I am prepared to go anywhere, so long as it is forward.” (Cited in Barclay)

b. **They encouraged them and departed:** In Philippi, Paul and Silas left behind two notable converts: Lydia and the prison guard. Each of these two had their lives touched by Jesus in very different ways.

i. Lydia was a churchgoer; the guard was not. Lydia was prospering in business; the guard was about to kill himself. Lydia’s heart was gently opened; the guard’s heart was violently confronted. The guard had a remarkable sign — an earthquake, but all Lydia had was the move of the Holy Spirit in her heart. Both heard the gospel and believed, and through each of them their whole families were touched!

ii. It was a strange and wonderful church they left behind in Philippi: Lydia, perhaps the slave girl, the jailer and his household, and others. The use of “**they**” here suggests that Luke stayed behind in Philippi for at least a while, perhaps to care for this new congregation.

Appendix: Maze for Hook



Note: Places with ★ are good crossroads to make the point in the hook (you can either take the path that moves closer to the end but leads to a dead end, or the one that moves further away, but eventually leads to the end). However, these are just suggestions, and you may make the point wherever you would like.