

Why

Do We Church?

Why do we
read the
Bible?

Why do
we pray?

**Finding
Answers For
Following Jesus**

Why do we
need Jesus?

Why do we
worship?

Why do we
go to church?

1ST-5TH GRADE

Day 5: Why do We Need Jesus?

Why do We Need Jesus?

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 To teach the students that everyone needs Jesus in order to be forgiven and receive the gift of eternal life.

Key Verses

Acts 16:16-34—Main Teaching Passage

Ephesians 2:8-9

Romans 10:9

Romans 6:23

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 yesterday's memory verse, Colossians 3:16.

Have the students try to hold their breath for as long as they can. When everyone has stopped, ask them why they took a breath. They took a breath because they *needed* more air! Ask them, "What are some other needs?" (water, food, shelter, sleep etc.) Then ask them, "How do you know that you need something?" (Their body tells them so—they get thirsty, hungry, tired, etc.)

All needs are important, but many people aren't aware the most important need of all. Today, we are going to learn why we need Jesus.

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

Paul and Silas were led by the Holy Spirit to preach the Gospel in a land called Macedonia. As they were there telling everyone about Jesus, a slave girl possessed with an evil spirit walked behind them day after day saying, "These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation." That may not seem like a bad thing to say, but Paul didn't need the enemy's help to tell people about Jesus, and he knew it would only lead to trouble. He finally turned to the girl and commanded the spirit to come out of her in the name of Jesus, which it did. After the spirit left the girl, so did her ability to make money for the men who kept her as a slave. These men got angry and brought Paul and Silas to the authorities, who had them badly beaten and thrown into prison.

While in prison, Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises to God! As they did, God caused a great earthquake to shake the prison, open the doors, and cause all of the prisoners' chains to fall off. The prison guard woke up and saw all the doors open and was so scared that the prisoners had escaped he got ready to take his own life, but Paul called out and stopped him. Amazed and afraid, the guard asked Paul and Silas what he had to do to be saved. Paul responded, "Believe on the Lord Jesus and you will be saved." The guard immediately gave his life to Jesus. He took Paul and Silas to his home, cleaned their wounds, and when his family heard what God had done they also believed in Jesus and were baptized.

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

LOOK

Have you ever been in a situation that you wished you could get out of, or a situation that didn't feel fair? How did you respond? Paul and Silas were led by God in a dream to go to Macedonia to share the Gospel, but soon found themselves badly beaten and imprisoned for obeying God and doing the right thing! Their response was very interesting. They didn't complain. They didn't question God. Instead, they prayed and sang hymns, trusting that this was a part of God's perfect plan! It's important to know that God usually doesn't do things the same way we would do them, but His ways are always best.

Now, maybe some of the prisoners thought Paul and Silas were crazy, but they soon received a shock when a strange earthquake shook the prison, opened the doors, and made their chains fall off! It was so strange that no one even got up to escape. As the guard of the prison woke up, he saw the open doors and feared everyone had escaped. He was so afraid of the punishment he would receive that he would rather die, but Paul called out and saved his life. Paul showed this man love even though he was his enemy. Paul no doubt began to understand why God had allowed them to be thrown into prison. God wanted this man and everyone else in the prison to see that they *needed* Jesus.

LOOK (Continued)

This prison guard suddenly sensed he had a need he didn't know about before, like when you get thirsty and you know you need water, or when your lungs tell you it's time to take another breath. Something about these men who were able to sing and pray after being beaten and thrown in jail, something about these men who reached out in love to save him even though he had treated them cruelly, and something about a God who is big enough to open every door and break every chain brought this man trembling to Paul and Silas asking the most important question anyone can ask: "What must I do to be saved?"

You see, even though Paul and Silas had been the ones in chains, their hearts were actually free and knew God was in control. And while this guard watched over the prisoners and had freedom to come and go, his heart was actually bound in chains. Everyone in this world has sin in their hearts, and sin is like an unbreakable chain that holds us prisoner. One day, unless something or someone is able to free us from those chains, everyone pays the price for sin: death.

And that is why we need Jesus. He came as the chain-breaker and death-destroyer! He lived a perfect and sinless life, then took the punishment for everyone else's sin so that all who believe in Him could be forgiven and receive the gift of eternal life! He paid the wages of sin (death) so we could receive the gift of God (eternal life). But there is only one way to receive this gift. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. Everyone needs to be saved, and everyone needs Jesus to save them. You need Jesus. What must you do to be saved? Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved.

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.

Review the lesson by giving a clear presentation of the Gospel and giving the kids a chance to respond. Be sure that every child who prays to be saved receives a Bible if they do not have one already. Write their information down on the yellow card provided.

Pray: Thank God for sending His Son into the world to save us from sin and death. Pray that he would use you to boldly share the good news with others.

Parent Question: What must I do to be saved?

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on Acts 16:16-34 by David Guzik

2. ([Act 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](#)).

3. ([Act 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.”

4. ([Act 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 there were the leaders of the evangelistic group, but also, by their appearance, 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 Barnabas 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.”

5. ([Act 16:25-32](#)) 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.

6. ([Act 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.

7. ([Act 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 to 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.

8. ([Act 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 pun-

ished 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.