

SOUTH GROVE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH LONDON

Lord's Day Morning

Date Hymns Psalm 124:1-8, 7, 104 Read: Acts 16:25-34 Text Acts 16:16-19

Series: Philippians () Title: What Paul & Silas witnessed. (2)

When God brought His servants to Europe for the preaching of the gospel, they cast out the gospel net and witnessed sinners savingly brought to Christ.

Already two woman had been turned from sins bondage into salvation's blessing. I refer to Lydia and the unnamed damsel.

Whenever the unnamed woman was delivered out of the wickedness of sin, having been saved by the grace of God,

Her previous masters were now enraged for they could no longer use her to lie, steal and deceive to make money.

While God's work advanced in Philippi so did it's opposition. The men took Paul and Silas to court charging them of troubling the city with their salvation message.

Paul and Silas where then taken, their clothes torn of, nearly beaten to death, and thrown into jail.

It may seemed at first that God's work had suffered set back, what went wrong.

The answer is nothing, God was working out in the lives of the just and unjust His eternal plan of redemption through faith in the glorious person and sacrificial death of Jesus Christ.

In other words though unseen, unthought of and undetected by man, God was in control of every situation, He was bringing all the separate events together to complete His picture at that point.

We must always keep this in view believer, unknown and unaware to us, right now, God is working on your behalf. He is permitting events that take place around us.

Leading us in the right path, directing to the right place and people.

He is ordering all events in your life, He is using friends, family and foes according to the pleasure of His own will to accomplish His redemptive purposes for His eternal Glory and your good and growth in Him.

Having considered last time **Firstly PAUL AND SILAS WITNESSED THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD**, in that **God's Providence brought them to the right Path, Place, and to the right Person.**

As we continue notice secondly

II SECOND, PAUL AND SILAS WITNESSED THE PEACE OF GOD.

While in jail, having suffering shame, and beaten we might expect Paul and Silas to speak about their afflictions, ill treatment, or try and get Luke and Timothy cast into Prison with them, or put them on a guilt trip, you should be here as well.

But there was no bitterness, or questioning God's, will & ways.

Rather, Scripture records in **verse 25** "***and Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises unto God....***" There is much truth and practical application in these words that we could feast on for a very long time.

They blessed the Lord at all times. Like David in **1 Samuel 30:6** who encouraged Himself in the Lord his God, so did Paul and Silas.

Notice, it was both ***Paul and Silas, praising & praying.*** Paul wasn't trying to twist Silas arm, or get him to join in prayer and praise, or vice verse.

Their prayer and praise unto God, was not to please man, or to give a false impression, or put on a good show.

No. Rather, they sought God. This was the scriptural procedure to follow.

So when the providence of Gods leads us into testing and challenging times, afflictions, situations, unexpected to us, when the burdens increase, pray and sing praises unto God, **to whom be glory forever** as **Romans 11:36** testifies.

They worshipped God, when their circumstances appeared they shouldn't.

Spurgeon Said, **my dear friend when grief presses you to the dust worship there.**

That's what Paul & Silas did in jail.

when Paul and Sails **prayed and sang praises unto God, the prisoners heard them.**"

The word **heard** is in the continual tense meaning the prisoners continually heard the missionaries prayers and praise unto God, over and over.

They may not have been able to see the missionaries but they could listen to them, they could hear them.

What a witness that was to the unsaved prisoners in the jail. Unsaved around them.

They heard how these men responded to persecution, ill treatment by prayer and praising to God.

The prisoners heard Paul and Silas Pray to God. That in itself must be amazing.

Of course we don't know the words they prayed, however, be assured, the prisoners never heard praying like this before. There

was no vain repetitions, chanting, repeated prayed, memorised prayers.

Notice, they heard Paul and Silas pray to one God. Not listing many gods, but they prayed to God, the true and living God. They exalted Him alone. They would have heard God honoured in prayer.

The prisoners heard Paul and Silas Praise God. They sang praises. Once again we don't know what they sang, but since scripture records it was **praises unto God**, then their singing glorified God.

It was not this depressing, emotional wishy washy nonsense.

Rather, it was songs of praise to magnify God, as David instructed in **1 Chronicles 16:9-10** **“Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him, talk ye of all his wondrous works. ¹⁰ Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the LORD. ¹¹ Seek the LORD and his strength, seek his face continually**

Colossians 3:16 **“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”**

I suggest their prayer and singing in praise followed Paul's pattern in **Col 3:17** **“whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.**

In other words, the prayer and praise of Paul and Silas would have been filled with teaching & thanksgiving to God.

Had the servants of God, been filled with bitterness, against God or their accusers, then the prisoners would have heard this, it would have come out so clearly,

however, since God's servants witnessed the peace of God in their lives through their present situation, the prisoners heard their prayers and praise unto God, worship, adoration, giving thanks.

Paul and Silas looked at their sufferings, and trials through the word, ways and works of God.

They took what they knew to be true about God and His dealings, and applied it to their circumstance.

They could turn the whole situation, persecution into prayer and praise, their affliction into adoration, their sufferings into service.

They rested in the glorious truth that the sovereign God who they prayed and praised controls every circumstance of life.

Remember Paul years later will write to the Philippians and when he does his letter is filled with lessons, and instructions based on personal experiences, in life and prison, under a wicked Roman ruler, He said in **Philippians 4:7** "**and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.**" **Verse 9** "**the God of peace shall be with you.**

Therefore believer, I know this is easier said than done, but scripture teaches through these verses, where **God's providence leads His peace will follow for that situation.**

Learn ***the will of God will never take you where the grace of God cannot keep you and where the peace of God cannot comfort you.***

That difficult situation, or trouble that you are experiencing right now, with all life's changes, whether it be, physically, mentally, emotionally, financially, medically, locationally, spiritually, trust in Him at all times, rest in His perfect peace, and He will enable you to pray and sing praises, He has loved and washed you from sin, **It is God who gives food for prayer and who gives songs in the night.**

Think of prayer and songs of praise to God offered by Christ, on the night before the cross.

When the Saviour instituted what is known as the Lord's supper, He spoke of His sufferings by two symbols, the bread referring to the wounds of His body, and then the cup referring to the shedding of blood to forgive sin, we read in **Matthew 26:30** "***And when they had sung an hymn, (psalm Ps 115-118) they went out into the mount of Olives,*** where He was arrested, tried and the next day sentenced to death, the shame of the cross by way being nailed to the tree.

Upon the cross, as He bearing of all the iniquity of His people, to honour God, He prayed four times, concerning His redemptive work.

III THIRD, PAUL AND SILAS WITNESSED THE POWER OF GOD.

During their prayer and song of praise to God, **verse 26** records, "***and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed.***"

By the earthquake God demonstrated His power to show that the schemes of man will never stop His plans.

God's eternal decree ordered that His power controlled the earthquake, so that no one died, no one was hurt, no buildings

were damaged or brought down, but only ... ***The foundations of the prison were shaken, the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed.***”

such was the power of God.

The word **shaken** is also used to describe the power of God by the moving of the Holy Spirit after a time of prayer in **Acts 4:31** ***“And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.***

When God’s people set themselves to seek God by prayer and praise, We recognise His power, He does great and mighty things which we know not, He is able to do exceeding abundant above all that we can ask for think.

When God’s power visits His people, great things happen.

May God’s power shake this Church and this city of London. That’s what God’s people need to witness in our day, the power of God, in visiting His people that sinners chained to sins burden and bondage, will be set free.

God demonstrated His power by the earthquake to show man can never stop the plan and purpose of God from being accomplished.

We see this before and after the death of Christ. Remember, when the false accusers were brought against Christ, trying to get something to say against Him, mar His name and sentence Him to death.

Well the false witness brought actually told the truth, instead of speaking against Christ they spoke what Christ said He would do. Notice, **Matthew 27:62-64 & 66.** ***“the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, ⁶³ Saying, Sir, we***

remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. ⁶⁴ Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first. ⁶⁶ So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.

They sealed the Tomb with Christ in it. The heavy stone meant in their thinking no one is getting out and no one will get in. Plus it's heavily guarded.

That means Christ can't get out, He can't rise again as He said. If Christ does not rise again, Paul said in **1 Cor 15**, our preaching is vain, we are in our sins, there is no hope for eternal life, Christ died in vain.

Ah fear not, here is the power of God by demonstration in the earthquake, **Matthew 28:2** *behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.* **verse 6** *He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.*

God raised up His Son to show that Redemption which Christ Accomplished, and to be Applied by the Holy Spirit, was Accepted by the Father.

Be of good cheer believer, Christ has done all that was required of Him by God for the saving of your soul.

Paul and Silas witnessed the same power of God as The disciples during the cross and resurrection, and believer we to can witness the same power of God today, in our lives whether through persecution, trials, affliction, sorrow.

We can witness the same power of God today, in our Church services, prayer meetings, where there is praise and praise.

We can witness the same power of God today, in our home, as its filled with prayer and praise. We can witness the same power of God today, in London in the saving of sinners.

God is showing He is pleased to work when His people pray and sing praise unto Him.

Have you neglected prayer, misdirected praise, there is forgiveness with God, in order to fellowship with Him again.

IV, FOURTH, PAUL AND SILAS WITNESSED THE PARDON OF GOD.

We will focus on these words nest week in greater detail, but God brought or lead Paul and Sails the way He did so they would witness Him pardoning the jailor. Their lives were used for the glory of God.

Their suffering was to see a soul for whom Christ died and gathered into the fold. God chose them as His human instrument, to win a soul.

The Jailor asked in **verse 30** *what must I do to be saved?* **verse 31** *they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.* **Verse 34** He *“rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.*

The same gospel power that saves, delivers, rescues, pardons, the individual, does the same with the family.

Oh all our suffering and trials is worth it all when just one more soul is brought into His kingdom. May the Lord cause us to witness His pardon in the saving of sinners. To see families changed by the gospel power.

It was only the power of God, His divine intervention that can pardon guilty sinners. therefore, sinner trust in Christ alone and be saved from sins, guilt, power, and punishment.

Know peace with God, The assurance of eternal life.

The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.