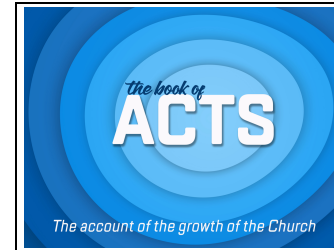


Notes:



Conversion Power through Mercy and Kindness Acts 16:20-40

Community Group Questions:

1. List some ways you can overcome evil with good.
2. How can you better praise God in hard times?
3. Can you set boundaries and remain merciful, like Paul?
4. Do you see the power of mercy in sharing the Good News?

The Back Story: *They brought them (Paul and Silas) before the magistrates and said, "These men are Jews, and are throwing our city into an uproar²¹ by advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice."²² The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten with rods.²³ After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully.* Acts 16:20-23

An Unlikely Covert the Philippian Jailer.

"When he received these orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks." "About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them." Acts 16:24,25

1. In the face of suffering the Jailer sees their peace and joy.

"Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everyone's chains came loose." The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. But Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!" Acts 16:26-28

2. In the face of harsh treatment they were kind and forgiving. *The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas.*

Acts 16:29

They had their opportunity to pay him back, but didn't.

Why? Because they overcame evil with good.

Paul would letter write:

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. Romans 12:21

In 2010 three sociologists wrote the book, "Amish Grace"

About the 2006 school shooting in Nickel Mines PA. where ten school aged girls between the ages of 6-13 were shot and five died and the incredible testimony of forgiveness the Amish offered to the shooters family.

They wrote in the book: *"There is no other religion in the world that has a man dying for his enemies on the cross as the central principle of their faith. It was that truth, which was the first reason the Amish were able to forgive."*

We live in a culture of self-assertion. Every American child is told, *"You have to assert yourself. Your freedom and your rights are important and if you harm someone in a culture of self-assertion, their response will be revenge, what the Amish were, when you harm them, was forgiveness."*

When the Jailer says, *"What must I do to be saved?"* Acts 16:30

Commentators, think he isn't asking so much for a theology lesson at this point as much as he is acknowledging the depth of Paul and Silas' character and God's power.

Regardless they gave him the Gospel of Christ. *They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household."*³² *Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house.* Acts 16:31,32

Jesus with Israel's teacher Nicodemus.

"As Moses raised up the bronze serpent on a pole in the wilderness, so when the Son of Man is lifted up, all who believe in him will have eternal life." John 3:14

So Moses made a snake out of bronze and attached it to a pole. Then anyone who was bitten by a snake could look at the bronze snake and be healed! Numbers 21:9

All they had to do was look to the Bronze Snake to be healed.

Jesus-*My salvation is like that. All you have to do is look to me.*

At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his household were baptized. The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole household. Acts 16:33,34

- Real faith makes you compassionate.
- Real faith makes you committed to your community.
- Real faith fills you with joy.

When it was daylight, the magistrates sent their officers to the jailer with the order: "Release those men."³⁶ The jailer told Paul, "The magistrates have ordered that you and Silas be released. Now you can leave. Go in peace."³⁷ But Paul said to the officers: "They beat us publicly without a trial, even though we are Roman citizens, and threw us into prison. And now do they want to get rid of us quietly? No! Let them come themselves and escort us out." Acts 16:35-37

Paul accomplishes two objectives:

1. He exposes their wrongdoing.
2. He gives the church political clout to fend off future abuse.

The officers reported this to the magistrates, and when they heard that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens, they were alarmed.³⁹ They came to appease them and escorted them from the prison, requesting them to leave the city.⁴⁰ After Paul and Silas came out of the prison, they went to Lydia's house, where they met with the brothers and sisters and encouraged them. Then they left.

Acts 16:38-40

Two Takeaways:

1. Don't be surprised by opposition when serving God.
2. Choosing to praise God during hard times, will reap a harvest of joy in this life and the next.

Now, who will want to harm you if you are eager to do good?¹⁴ But even if you suffer for doing what is right, God will reward you for it. So don't worry or be afraid of their threats.¹⁵ Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it.¹⁶ But do this in a gentle and respectful way. 1 Peter 3:15,16