

Gospel Jailbreak

PASTOR MIKE YODER • ACTS 16:16–34



Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a female slave who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling.

Acts 16:16

She followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, “These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved.”

Acts 16:17

She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so annoyed that he turned around and said to the spirit, “In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!” At that moment the spirit left her.

Acts 16:18

When her owners realized that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities.

They brought them before the magistrates and said, “These men are Jews, and are throwing our city into an uproar

Acts 16:20

by advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice.”

The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten with rods.

Acts 16:22

After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully.

Acts 16:23

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 16:25

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.

Acts 16:26

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.

Acts 16:27

But Paul shouted, “Don’t harm yourself! We are all here!”

Acts 16:28

*The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling
before Paul and Silas.*

Acts 16:29

He then brought them out and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”

Acts 16:30

They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved — you and your household.”

Acts 16:31

Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house.

Acts 16:32

At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his household were baptized.

Acts 16:33

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 16:34

In Philippi three very different kinds of individuals are singled out: religious women, a possessed woman from the “dark side”, and a simple “secular soldier.”

Darrell Bock

They are the three groups held in contempt by Jews:
women, slaves, and Gentiles — so all gender, ethnic, and
social barriers are crossed.

God elicits responses
through our Gospel
proclamation. (16:16–25)



For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Ephesians 6:12

Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

Ephesians 6:13

There is great value to opening our mouths. Don't wait for the perfect opportunity. Sometimes opening our mouths creates the opportunity.

But thanks be to God, who always leads us as captives in Christ's triumphal procession and uses us to spread the aroma of the knowledge of Him everywhere.

2 Corinthians 2:14

For we are to God the pleasing aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing.

2 Corinthians 2:15

*To the one we are an aroma that brings death; to the other,
an aroma that brings life. And who is equal to such a task?*

2 Corinthians 2:16

God uses our joy and hope in
difficult circumstances for
Gospel witness. (16:25,26)



Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the Gospel.

Philippians 1:12

As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ.

Philippians 1:13

And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the Gospel without fear.

Philippians 1:14

Do everything without grumbling or arguing,

Philippians 2:14

*so that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.”
Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky*

Philippians 2:15

as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain.

Philippians 2:16

God does not require us to like unpleasant circumstances. He calls us to find joy and accept the bigger picture in which the circumstances occur. We can embrace God's plan while at the same time struggling with the pain.

God allows crises in others'
lives to cultivate receptivity
to the Gospel. (16:27–30)



They did not view their freedom as a means of escape,
but as an opportunity for witness.

But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect...

1 Peter 3:15

God uses our obedience over time and through a variety of challenging circumstances in order to bring people to ask for the hope that is in us.

Darrell Bock

Usually people do not come to us in search of Christ, so we must go to them and seek for ways to turn the conversation to the things of God.

Ajith Fernando

God gives us content to
proclaim and bears fruit
through the message. (16: 31-34)



GOD: created every human in His image, loves us, and makes each of us accountable to Him.

MAN (humanity): all of us have rebelled against God, which is sin, and therefore each of us stands under God's rightful condemnation.

CHRIST: Jesus is God's intervention in a fallen world. Through His perfect life, death as our substitute, and resurrection in power, God offers us salvation.

RESPONSE: each person is called to respond to God's salvation offer through repentance and faith. The result is the forgiveness of sin, the gift of the Holy Spirit, inclusion in God's people, and the guarantee of eternal life.

Paul is offering salvation to everyone in his household on the same terms as he is offering to the jailer. We should not infer that his faith will save his whole family.

Ajith Fernando

There were few people more diverse ethnically, socially, psychologically, and culturally than Lydia, the girl, and the jailer, and yet Paul engaged them all with a Gospel intended for all.

Darrell Bock

There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Galatians 3:28

Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.

Colossians 4:2

And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains.

Colossians 4:3

Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.

Colossians 4:4

Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity.

Colossians 4:5

Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

Colossians 4:6

**The Gospel has power
over obstacles and finds
wide open doors.**

