

Lesson 21- Acts 16:14-40

Mission: Philippi

How do you react when someone treats you unfairly? Perhaps you've been cheated. Maybe someone lied about you and hurt your reputation. You've been scolded for something you know you didn't do or you were picked on because of what you stand for. Unfortunately, typical human reactions might be to

- withdraw into self-pity.
- plan revenge.
- determine to never do anything nice for anyone again.
- allow bitterness to grow so that you become a miserable person.

Today's lesson tells of Paul and Silas doing nothing wrong yet they were thrown in prison. Their response to this was not a typical reaction. It was one that could only be credited to God's grace at work.

Philippians

Philippians is a letter Paul wrote to the church he established in Philippi. At the time he writes this letter, he is imprisoned in Rome.

Paul writes to the Philippians to thank them for the financial gifts they have sent, but also to encourage them in their faith. In the first chapter, Paul prays that their "love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve the things that are excellent in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ" (vv.9-10). What are some of the "excellent" things Paul speaks about?

1:20-21	<i>boldness, exalting Christ</i>
2:3-4	<i>humility</i>
2:29	<i>respect</i>
3:1 and 4:4	<i>rejoicing</i>
4:6-7	<i>trusting rather than anxiety</i>
4:19	<i>faith in God supplying needs</i>

Into the Word: Acts 16:14-40

1. Meet and compare the two women from Philippi:

	Acts 16:14	Acts 16:16
Name:	<i>Lydia</i>	<i>not known</i>
Occupation:	<i>purple cloth was a luxury item</i>	<i>made lots of money for her masters</i>
Action:	<i>The Lord opened her heart to respond</i>	<i>greatly annoyed Paul, followed him, crying out constantly</i>
Results:	<i>v.15 Lydia invited him to her house – hospitality.</i>	<i>v.18 Paul commanded the demon to come out</i>

2. Once the demon was gone (vv.19-21), the woman could no longer tell fortunes. Because her masters were upset that their income stopped, they dragged Paul and Silas before the authorities. They accused Paul and Silas of bringing confusion to the city and claimed that, as Jews, they were saying things against the Roman law.

Without even a trial, Paul and Silas were stripped and beaten, then thrown into prison.

Number the following events in the order occurring by writing 1-6 on the lines provided (vv.22-34):

- 4 The jailer assumed that all prisoners had escaped, so he was about to kill himself. v 27
- 2 They sang hymns and prayed. v 25
- 1 Thrown into the "inner prison" and chained to the stocks. vs 23-24
- 6 Paul and Silas baptized him and his family, which was followed by great rejoicing. vs 33-34

- 3 God sent an earthquake. The doors opened and the chains unlocked v 26
 5 Panicked, the jailer asked how he could be saved and was told, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved." v 31
3. In the morning, Paul and Silas were officially released from prison. Explain why Paul was not pleased (v.37).
They had been beaten in public, unfairly thrown into jail without trial, and now were to be quietly released, still without a trial. The insult was worse because they were Roman citizens, which entitled them to better treatment.
 4. Paul asked that the magistrates escort them out of prison. They were escorted out, showing they were declared innocent. The fact that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens changed everything (v.38). How did this fact affect the magistrates?
The magistrates were very afraid that they would be punished for breaking Roman laws, which protected the Roman citizens from this sort of treatment.
 5. How did their stay in Philippi end? vv.39-40
The magistrates came to Paul and Silas, begging them to leave the city. They left the prison, stopped at Lydia's house to encourage the believers there, and left Philippi.

New Ideas:

The Romans

At the time the events of Acts were happening, the entire region was under the control of the Roman Empire. This empire was one of the strongest and longest lasting in history and greatly affected the Early Church and the spread of the Gospel.

Because of the Roman Empire, it was very easy and safe for a person to travel from Israel all the way over to Spain, a little like traveling between different states in America. This allowed Paul to travel freely and spread the Gospel.

[TM note: This had far-reaching consequences. Christianity eventually became the accepted religion, leading to the rise of the Roman Catholic Church. In the sixteenth century, Martin Luther and the Reformation brought about the Protestant church. Within a few decades, the Puritans arrived in America and our nation was founded on Christian principles.]

However, the first century Romans had attitudes toward religion that greatly affected the Early Church. The Romans allowed any religion that did not make trouble, as long as it accepted the Roman gods. Both Jews and Christians were sometimes persecuted because they rejected the Roman gods and only acknowledged the one True God.

Though not everyone who lived in the Roman Empire had the privilege of Roman citizenship, Paul and Silas were citizens and therefore were guaranteed certain legal rights. The leaders of Philippi were in a panic when they learned they had beaten and imprisoned Roman citizens without trial.

Memory Verse

And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your household."

Acts 16:31

Extra Memory Challenge

Philippians 4:8

Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things.

Discussion Questions

Each teacher should encourage, as much as time permits, discussion and inquiry on the part of students. Not every aspect of the following questions is addressed here, and students may have thoughts related to but not mentioned in this guide. The obligation of the teacher, then, is to understand as deeply as possible the Scriptures that are being discussed, in order to answer as well as possible any questions a student might have.

1. When Paul and Silas cast the demon out of the slave girl in Acts 16:18, it says that “it came out at that very moment.” What do we learn about the power of the name of Jesus?
One of the attributes of God is His omnipotence, When God spoke in Genesis the world came into being, scripture says only that He spoke, think about it. Encourage the students to think about times in Jesus ministry that He spoke and it came to be, Examples, Jesus cast out demons (Matthew 17. Luke 4), the lame man walked (Luke 5), the blind man was healed (Luke 18) , He raised Lazarus from the dead (John 11),raised the widow’s son(Luke 7) , Jairus’ daughter was brought back to life (Luke 8)
2. Paul and Silas had broken no law. They were following Christ, doing what was right. Yet they were unjustly treated. First Peter 2:19-20 describes their response to this treatment. Consider I Peter 2:21-24. Compare Christ’s reaction to injustice to our natural response to injustice.
Students may be able to identify examples of how in our present day they have seen people respond to injustice. If the teacher has time they might share a story about Christians under persecution in other parts of the world where Christians are being harmed, imprisoned or killed for their faith and how they or their family has responded
3. In Acts 16:31, Paul told the jailer, “Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, you and your household.” How did the jailer’s household come to be saved (vv.32-34)? Is it possible for anyone to be saved by the faith of another person? Why or why not? How does the faith of your family (grandparents, parents, siblings) affect your faith?
Paul and Silas shared the Gospel with every person in the jailer’s house v32 and everyone believed v34. Our faith is personal, we cannot give our faith to someone, they must receive the Gospel for themselves as the Holy Spirit works in their life through baptism or His Word The believers who live with us can only share their personal faith verbally with us, their example and witness can be used by the Holy Spirit to call us to repentance and faith.

Daily Devotions

Sunday:	Philippians 1:1-22
Monday:	Philippians 2:12-18
Tuesday:	Philippians 2:19-30
Wednesday:	Philippians 3:1-11
Thursday:	Philippians 3:12-21
Friday:	Philippians 4:1-9
Saturday:	Philippians 4:10-23

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH: THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF THE AFLC

* Fundamental Principle 8 and 9

According to Fundamental Principles 8 and 9, congregations want to help each other grow by sharing spiritual gifts, including tasks that exceed the ability of the individual congregation. Thus by working together, congregations broaden their ministry.

1. Even though a congregation is free from domination of another, what benefits are there in cooperating with like-minded congregations?

The voluntary and Spirit-promoted cooperation of congregations can multiply the spiritual work being done. For instance missions, schools, educational, evangelism, etc. which are too much for a single congregation but can be accomplished through the cooperation of many congregations.

2. In Acts 15 and 16, Paul continues his missionary work in various areas. Notice the close connection between the congregations. (Acts 15: 41, 16:4-10)

Congregations established in the faith work together to reach other people for Christ. It is a natural response and movement to the Holy Spirit’s work in each congregation.