

**Sermon Notes of
Worship Leader Redida Edwards' Sermon on December 27, 2020:**

**"Belief, Prayer and Songs of Deliverance
(Acts 16:25–34)"**

[In today's sermon, Redida Edwards on Zoom shows us from Paul's and Silas' example that we need to pray, praise God and then share the good news of Jesus that brings deliverance to all.]

Introduction:

- 2020 has been a challenging year for us and for so many around the world.
- We are truly blessed in this country and sometimes we get too comfortable and forget about the rest of the world.
- This year has shown us that no one is exempt from pain and suffering.
- Redida played a short video about a church service in China, because it's been a challenging year of them.

- She played this video so that we can pause, Re-Center, and Re-Focus on God and His amazing love for all humanity.
- The Word of God gives us so many examples of how prayer and praise brings glory to God and victory to us.

Today's message:

- Redida's message today is just a reminder that as the coming year approaches let us get back to walking in faith and victory like Paul and Silas and many others did in the work of God.
- In Philippi, Paul and Silas were arrested, beaten and taken to prison for healing a demented slave girl.

- The commentary stated that Paul and Silas were stripped, beaten with steel rods, and placed in stocks in the inner cell of the prison.
- Just imagine the excruciating pain they were in and the conditions of the prison.
- It was dark, damp, cramped and they were placed in stocks that were mainly for the dangerous prisoners.
- They did nothing wrong but were severely punished.

Acts 16:25 (New Living Translation), Around midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God. And the other prisoners were listening. 26) Suddenly, there was a great earthquake, and the prison was shaken to its foundations. All the doors flew open, and the chains of every prisoner fell off!

27)The jailer woke up to see the prison doors wide open. He assumed the prisoners had escaped, so he drew his sword to kill himself. 28) But Paul shouted to him, "Don't do it! We are all here!"

Prayer:

- The word “prayer” in verse 25 comes from the Greek word PROSEUCHOMAI.
- *Pro* meaning “before, facing, or towards.”
- *Euchomai* meaning: to wish, to desire or to utter aloud.
- The commentary goes on further to state that Proseuchomai encompasses all the aspects of prayer: submission, confession, petition, supplication, intercession, praise, and Thanksgiving.
- It’s so interesting to read that even in the state Paul and Silas were in, they lifted their voices in prayer.
- How encouraging it is to know that at what seems like the end they are not limited to their chains because they absolutely know the power of prayer and have seen the miracles of God right before their eyes through their journeys before this point.
- In trials and difficulties, let us remember to start with prayer and the prayer is a mighty weapon to help us through it all.
- Prayer is not a limitation but our offense and defense for breakthrough.

Hymns of praise:

- Paul and Silas started with prayer and then began to sing hymns of Praise.

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- Paul and Silas were singing hymns of praise while they were in prison.
- They worshiped God during their terrible trial.
- It looks like the prayers and singing brought the house down literally.
- A prayer that is in a song came to mind while I was engaged in this verse. It comes from **2 Corinthians 4:8 NIV, “We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed, perplexed but not in despair. Persecuted but not abandoned. Struck down but not destroyed”**
- These two men were hard pressed but not abandoned or destroyed.
- Paul and Silas continued to be a testimony of the goodness of God.
- At the end of verse 25 it says, “the other prisoners were listening.”
- The verb “listening” here in the Greek means “to listen with pleasure as to a recitation or music.”
- Yes, indeed, the prisoners were listening.
- When we, as believers, are around others what are we witnessing?
- People watch and listening to the things we say and do.
- Redida hopes we are witnessing with our lives the way Paul and Silas were witnessing to the prisoners around them.
- God is preparing the way of salvation for these people.

- Can we lean in and get this because all the events that are being played out in these verses are definitely not a coincidence?

God's interaction:

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Why didn't the prisoners try to escape?

- It was obvious that Paul and Silas knew that God was up to something after that enormous earthquake.
- Maybe the Holy Spirit moved Paul and Silas to persuade the other prisoners to stay or as one of the commentaries explained the penalty for escape was death so maybe that was the case.
- The next verse says the jailer woke up.
- He had fallen asleep apparently on the job.
- The violent shaking jolted him awake and he was in a panic.
- His assumption was that the prisoners had escaped and so to prevent shame and punishment for him and his family, he wanted to kill himself.
- Jailers were responsible for the prisoners and if anyone escaped the jailer would be held accountable and most likely executed.
- In Roman times, suicide was considered cowardly but Romans considered falling on one sword in such circumstances being noble.
- So maybe this jailer thought he would take the noble way out by falling on his sword.
- In any case God intervened.
- God's Grace showed up through the voice of Paul shouting out, "Don't do it, we are all here."
- God must have revealed to Paul what was going on because remember that they were still in the inner cell and it was dark.

Sharing the Gospel:

29) Trembling with fear, the jailer called for lights and ran to the dungeon and fell down before Paul and Silas. 30) He brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" 31) They replied, "Believe on the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, along with your entire household,"

32) Then they shared the word of the Lord with him and all who lived in his household. 33) That same hour the jailer washed their wounds, and he and everyone in his household were immediately baptized. 34) Then he brought them into his house and set a meal before them. He and his entire household rejoiced because they all believed in God.

- It appears that God's intent was not to deliver Paul and Silas from physical deliverance but indeed it was for the spiritual deliverance for the jailer and his family.
- All the events that took place were to stir the jailer's heart to believe and see the need for salvation.
- Paul and Silas participated with God as instruments for proclaiming salvation.
- The jailer had heard of missionaries or disciples coming into town preaching the good news.
- Perhaps he had even heard Paul and Silas praying and singing praises to God before he fell asleep.
- We know for sure the jailer witnessed God's grace firsthand when his life was saved from the sword.
- He believed.
- Paul and Silas still in their affliction took the time and shared the good news to everyone in the household.
- In some customs, it was the belief that whatever the head of household believed was the belief of all that was in the household.
- In the case of salvation, everyone must come to faith in Jesus on their own.
- The jailer's belief did not save his family.
- They all heard the good news and came to believe on their own.
- The jailer, his family and his servants believed and were baptized.
- It is a constant prayer of Redida to allow the Holy Spirit to help her see past her circumstance and view them with an eternal perspective.
- It is so hard when you are going through trials, but it seems as if Paul and Silas showed us how it's done.
- We are not alone – God is with us in every battle we face.
- In 2021 Believe, Pray, Praise, listen, be still and share the good news that brings deliverance now and forever.
- We should remember what **1 John 4:4** tells us, **“Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world.”**
- In these times of uncertainty, we are never in the battle alone.
- God goes before us preparing the way for peace and restoration.
- We serve a mighty God, who is working things out for our good.

Closing prayer:

- Redida then asked for a musical video to be played titled, “God Turn It Around” by Jon Reddick.