

Acts 16:16-24 “Knowing What to Expect When You Follow Jesus”<sup>\*\*1</sup>

Main Idea: If you follow Jesus, and particularly if you choose to serve Christ on the front lines, you should expect two outcomes, both of which are illustrated for us in Acts 16:16-24.

- I. Expect great opportunities (16-18).
  - A. Paul and his team met a slave girl (16).
    1. She had demonic power.
    2. She made a lot of money as a fortune-teller.
  - B. Paul and his team encountered a potential distraction (17).
    1. The girl shouted their identity.
    2. The girl shouted their purpose.
  - C. Paul set the slave girl free (18).
    1. Some today ignore satanic forces.
    2. Others are enamored with them.
    3. We must proclaim and stand in Christ.
- II. Expect great opposition (19-24).
  - A. Here’s what the slave owners did (19-21).
    1. They exposed their self-seeking hearts (19a).
    2. They attacked God’s servants (19b).
    3. They used pretense to cover up their real motive (20-21).
  - B. Here’s what Paul and Silas experienced (22-24).
    1. They were misrepresented (22).
    2. They were physically abused (23).
    3. They were treated as vicious criminals (24).

Application: If you are serious about front line ministry, you must know this...

1. God is in control even when it may appear otherwise.
2. God’s work is accomplished God’s way.
3. God uses the world’s opposition to advance the church’s mission.
4. God wants us to view every obstacle as an opportunity to spread the Word.
5. God wants us to remember the story isn’t over until it’s over.

What did you expect? That’s a good question for us to ask ourselves as we face different things in life as followers of Jesus. Expectations are important. If you follow Jesus, and particularly if you choose to serve Christ on the front lines, you can expect two things, both of which are illustrated for us in Acts 16:16-24.

*Scripture Reading: Acts 16:16-24*

We’re going to talk about ministry on the front-lines today. The frontlines, yes, that’s where the action is. Things happen there. That’s where Christ advances His army on His rescue mission. That’s also where the enemy unleashes his heaviest arsenal.

This is why many prefer the safety of the barracks. In other words, they hang out around the church where there are people “like us,” good, clean, safe people. Typically, the enemy doesn’t attack the barracks.

Please know this. If you choose to serve Christ on the frontlines, life will not be boring! Things will happen, you can be sure of it.

Like what? Like what Paul and his missionary team faced in Acts 16. To speak frankly, we are needed on the front line. If the ministry of the gospel is to advance, there’s a need for people who will lay personal comfort aside and make reaching lost the priority that God wants it to be in our lives.

You say, “What should I expect?”

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\*\* Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

<sup>1</sup> For a previous look at this passage, see the Acts series at WBC in 2002.

Paul expected to suffer. Sure, he expected the glory of being with Jesus too, but that's later. At his conversion he received this message from Jesus through Ananias, "He is a chosen instrument on mine to carry my name before the Gentiles. For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name."

This was Paul's expectation, to make Jesus known through suffering, and he wasn't disappointed. And those he led to Christ he taught the same, saying in Acts 14:22, "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God."

James said, "Count it all joy *when* [not *if*] you face various trials (James 1:2)."

Peter taught similarly, "In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials (1 Peter 1:6)." Then at the end of the letter Peter shared the rest of the story, "And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you (1 Peter 5:10)."

Let there be no misunderstanding. If you follow Jesus, you should expect two outcomes, both of which are illustrated for us in Acts 16:16-24.

### I. Expect great opportunities (16-18).

The last time we opened the book of Acts together, we watched the missionary team of Paul, Silas, Timothy, and Luke move into Europe and begin to evangelize the city of Philippi. God opened the eyes of a woman named Lydia and her household, but that was just the beginning. Great opportunities abounded. They always do on the frontlines.

As we look at today's narrative, we'll see three events in this phase of opportunity.

**A. Paul and his team met a slave girl (16).** "Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling."

We learn a couple of details about this girl from the text.

1. *She had demonic power.* She had a "spirit," literally a "python spirit" in the Greek text. One commentary explains, "The English words, *a spirit by which she predicted the future*, translate two Greek words, 'a spirit, a python.' This concept goes back to the Greek city of Delphi [not far from Philippi] where the god Apollo was believed to be embodied in a python snake. The original priestess at Delphi was purported to be possessed by Apollo and thereby able to predict the future; therefore anyone possessed by the python spirit could foretell coming events. No doubt an actual demon gave such a person predictive powers. Demons took advantage of people's worship of false gods ( cf. 17:23 ; 1 Cor. 10:20 )."<sup>2</sup>

So here's a girl who was under the control of an evil spirit, a demon. Notice a second detail about this girl.

2. *She made a lot of money as a fortune-teller.* Of course, she didn't keep the money. There were some 60 million slaves in the Roman Empire, and she was one of them. She was someone's property. Indeed, she belonged to several "owners," according to verse 16.

If Lydia came from the top end of the social scale, this slave girl came from the bottom. As Barclay notes, "She was what was called a Pytho, that is, a person who could

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cf. *confer* , compare

<sup>2</sup>Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. 1983-c1985. *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* . Victor Books: Wheaton, IL

give oracles to guide men about the future. She was mad and the ancient world had a strange respect for mad people because, they said, the gods had taken away their wits in order to put the mind of the gods into them.”<sup>3</sup>

The prophet Isaiah asked a good question back in Isaiah 8:19, “When men tell you to consult mediums and spiritists, who whisper and mutter, should not a people inquire of their God? Why consult the dead on behalf of the living?”

Yet people do just that. Instead of seeking the true God, they seek guidance from other sources, including demonic ones.

It’s really a pitiful sight, when you think about it. Here is a young girl who is enslaved to both the demon that possessed her and the cruel masters who used her. She merely exists in life for the wicked pleasure of others.

Yet the Lord was about to intervene. And that brings us to event #2.

**B. Paul and his team encountered a potential distraction (17).** “This girl 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.’”

We might expect a demon-possessed girl to get as far away as she can from messengers of the Lord Jesus Christ. But this girl didn’t. She hung around the team. In fact, she did more than just follow. She made a spectacle by shouting two things.

1. *The girl shouted their identity.* “These men are servants of the Most High God,” she said. Notice her reference to “the Most High God.” That’s no coincidental title. In Isaiah 14, a text that seems to describe the thoughts of Satan before he was kicked out of heaven, Satan is quoted as saying, “I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High (Isa 14:14).” Satan knows that God is the Most High, there’s none greater, and he wanted to usurp that position.

In Acts 16 we see one of Satan’s associates using a slave girl to acknowledge the same about God. He is the “Most High God.” Don’t misunderstand. The demon says this, not out of worship, but because that’s what he and the rest of the hosts of hell want to be, like the Most High.

As James Boice comments, “They want to possess heaven and earth. But they cannot. In fact, the opposite is the case. What was happening here was that God through the word of the missionaries had come to challenge them and begin to take away from them even that tiny bit of earthly domain they had.”<sup>4</sup>

So the girl shouted the missionaries’ identity. They are servants of the Most High.

2. *The girl shouted their purpose.* These servants of the Most High “are telling you the way to be saved.” Or as the KJV puts it, they “show unto us the way of salvation.”

Is that a true statement? It is, isn’t it? Paul and his associates had come to town to tell people how to be saved. Indeed, what she said was true.

You say, “Why would a demon help the missionaries by proclaiming the truth?”

The answer is, he’s not helping, a matter that will prompt Paul to take action momentarily. Think about it. The fact that the girl was controlled by a “spirit,” and everybody in town knew it, would damage rather than help the cause of the missionaries. This isn’t the kind of publicity you want if you are proclaiming the truth about the One

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<sup>3</sup> William Barclay, p. 124.

<sup>4</sup> James Boice, *Acts*, p. 279.

who is the truth. After all, though Satan may speak the truth one minute, he's liable to spew forth a vicious lie the next, and the listening, unregenerate audience wouldn't even know the difference.<sup>5</sup>

Jesus faced similar situations. Matthew 8:28-29 tells of one, "When he arrived at the other side in the region of the Gadarenes, two demon-possessed men coming from the tombs met him. They were so violent that no one could pass that way. "What do you want with us, Son of God?" they shouted. "Have you come here to torture us before the appointed time?" Jesus quickly silenced the demons by casting them into a herd of swine.

Something comparable happened to the Lord at Capernaum, as described in Mark 1:23-24, "Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an evil spirit cried out, "What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!" At that point, Jesus said sternly, "Be quiet! Come out of him!" As far as I know, every time a demon confirmed that Christ was the Son of God, Jesus rebuked it. Every time.

Know this. Satan's forces are never interested in helping the cause of Christ. No way. Don't miss Satan's strategy here. It hasn't changed. If he can't prevent the advance of the gospel, he'll try to infiltrate it. He'll try to join ranks and thereby derail the gospel ministry from the inside. In other words, he'll put on our army uniform and try to look like a soldier of Christ.

Kent Hughes elaborates, "This approach is difficult to resist. The missionary team could easily have reasoned, 'She's telling the truth. Why not let her speak? We would never get crowds like this on our own. Besides, maybe as she associates with us, she will see the light.' Whatever their initial inclinations, they did not fall for the devil's bait."<sup>6</sup>

This may surprise us, but it's true. Satan's ministers will preach the truth at times. They'll sing it, too. They'll write it in their best-sellers in Christian bookstores. You'll also hear them giving some truth on their "Christian" television and radio programs. Satan knows that no one would listen if his messengers didn't speak truth once in awhile.

My friend, there's a vital lesson here for us. Please exercise discernment in who you listen to. Just because a musician or an author or a preacher says some true things doesn't mean he is a *Christian*. He may talk about God and salvation. She may sing beautiful words about Jesus and His power to save. But in the long run, they will do far more harm than good to the cause of Christ, for who knows what they may say or sing or write or do next month that will smear the beauty of what they're saying today.

It's a dangerous reality that we're so quick to join teams with anybody who seems to be saying the same thing we're saying. I'm all for Christian unity, but to use Paul's question in 2 Corinthians 6:14, "What fellowship can light have with darkness?" Paul didn't make this girl part of his team, no matter how true her present words were. He knew she wasn't the real thing, and rather than giving clarity to the ministry of the gospel, she was putting a dark cloud over it.

So he took action, event #3.

**C. Paul set the slave girl free (18).** "She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so troubled 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."

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<sup>5</sup> As Wiersbe observes, p. 468.

<sup>6</sup> Kent Hughes, p. 214-5.

It went on for many days, Luke says. Why Paul didn't take action sooner, we're not told. Perhaps he knew the price he would pay for it. But for sake of the ministry and for the good of this young girl, he knew drastic action was needed. So he addressed the python spirit and said, not in his own authority but in the name of Jesus Christ, "I command you to come out of her." And immediately, the spirit departed.

This is a good time to talk about three potential responses to demonic activity.

1. *Some today ignore satanic forces.* They don't believe in anything they can't measure by their five senses. To them, Satan is like the Tooth Fairy or the Easter Bunny, a fictitious character that only fools believe to exist. I must hasten to say that although some today exhibit this response, the following is far more common.

2. *Others are enamored with them.* This is true in the Christian world as in the non-Christian world. Some seem to think there's a demon behind every problem, whether the problem is the flu or financial strains. They also think the solution is to confront the demons to eliminate the problems, and use a text like this to support such activity.

Should we try to cast out demons? I don't think so. That was an activity the Lord told His first followers to do when He was on the earth. It was a messianic activity, that is, one designed to draw attention to the Messiah. And Jesus enabled them to do it to substantiate His authority.

For instance, notice an event in Luke 10:17-19, "The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name." He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you."

Should we seek to exorcise demons? Again, I don't believe so. That's not our assignment. It was for the apostles, yes. The ability to cast out demons identified Christ's apostles. It confirmed that they were God's spokesmen. It also ceased when the apostles passed from the scene. Paul was an apostle. We are not.

What's our task then? It's not to confront and cast out demons. Rather...

3. *We must proclaim and stand in Christ.* Our approach to dealing with demonic presence isn't exorcism, but evangelism. We present Christ to people, and when Christ enters, the demons flee. As Ephesians 6:10-18 teaches. There Paul tells us to "be strong in the Lord" and to "put on the full armor of God so we can stand against the devil's schemes." Paul says our objective is to *stand* against demonic attacks, not to cast the demons out.

So what should we expect? Expect, first, great opportunities. Notice what's happening in Philippi. A brand new church is growing. God blessed Paul and Silas as they preached the message of Jesus, and opened Lydia's heart, and then He set a slave girl free from demonic control and we would assume she became a believer in the Savior. These two women became the first building blocks in what would turn out to be one of the churches that brought the most joy to the heart of Paul.

Dear friend, this is what you can expect too, if you're following Jesus. You can expect great opportunity to see God work through you to make a difference in people's eternal destiny. But that's not all. You can expect a second outcome.

## II. Expect great opposition (19-24).

In our story the opposition came quickly, for not everybody is pleased when God saves sinners.

**A. Here's what the slave owners did (19-21).** Three things...

1. *They exposed their self-seeking hearts (19a).* Verse 19, "When the owners of the slave girl realized that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities."

People will do lots of things for money, including disobey God's law and take advantage of others. 1 Timothy 6:10 says, "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs."

It's sad but true. The owners of this slave could care less about the girl. So what if she's free from oppression? What mattered to them was their wallet. And when someone touched their wallet, they showed their true colors.

It's no different today. People are willing to tolerate Christianity, at least the watered down version. But not the real thing, not the type of Christianity that changes the way we do business. And true Christianity does that, you know. True Christianity affects how we make our money and spend it.

2. *They attacked God's servants (19b).* They "seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities." They didn't talk. They just reacted and did so violently.

3. *They used pretense to cover up their real motive (20-21).* "They brought them before the magistrates and said, 'These men are Jews, and are throwing our city into an uproar by advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice.'"

Now remember what upset the slave owners in the first place. It wasn't Jewish customs. It was the loss of money. But when they came before the court, they hid their covetousness and offered a cover-up excuse, a pious "concern for the good of the city."

In Roman colonies it was legal to worship as you pleased. It was illegal, however, to try to proselytize a Roman citizen. That's what these greedy men used to get their way with Paul and Silas.

The *Bible Knowledge Commentary* mentions another important historical fact, "Shortly before this incident the Emperor Claudius had expelled the Jews from Rome (18:2). Philippi, a Roman colony, would have caught this flavor of anti-Semitism. This also helps explain why Timothy and Luke were not taken before the authorities. Timothy was a half-Gentile (16:1) and Luke was probably a Gentile."<sup>7</sup>

Don't miss the overstatement in verse 20, "These men are throwing our city into an uproar." What? Setting one girl free in a city of thousands classifies as an uproar? That's surely a twisting of the facts, isn't it?

This isn't right, is it? But what did you expect? To be treated rightly? By unrighteous people?

**B. Here's what Paul and Silas experienced (22-24).** Three things happened.

1. *They were misrepresented (22).* "The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas...." Think about it objectively. Paul and Silas didn't promote lawlessness, as accused. Paul insisted on good citizenship and law-keeping (see his teaching in Rom

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<sup>7</sup>Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. 1983-c1985. *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* . Victor Books: Wheaton, IL

13:1ff). And Paul certainly didn't promote anti-Roman sentiment. After all, he himself was a Roman citizen. No, for the critics these were just smokescreen accusations.

As they are today... "Christians are bigoted and homophobic, a radical danger to society." Is that based on evidence? No more evidence than they brought against Paul and Silas. In fact, it's contracted by the evidence.

But what did we expect? There's no escaping the fact that if we seek to do something for the Lord, we can expect verbal abuse from some people.

Winston Churchill had the following words of Abe Lincoln framed on the wall of his office: "I do the very best I can, I mean to keep going. If the end brings me out all right, then what is said against me won't matter. If I'm wrong, ten angels swearing I was right won't make a difference."<sup>8</sup>

The quote on our wall is even better than Lincoln's. "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven (Matt 5:11-12)."

2. *They were physically abused (23)*. Verse 22 concludes, "And the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten." The verb means "to beat with rods," as in the ESV. In 2 Corinthians 11:25 Paul says he was beaten with rods three times. Apparently, this is one of them.

The physical abuse continued in verse 23, "After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully."

This flies in the face of the message that says, "Come to Jesus and you'll be healthy and prosperous." That's just not true. Paul faced physical suffering almost everywhere he went. Consider the record in Acts:

Acts 14:19 "Then some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and won the crowd over. They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, thinking he was dead."

Acts 18:12 "While Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews made a united attack on Paul and brought him into court."

Acts 21:30 "The whole city was aroused, and the people came running from all directions. Seizing Paul, they dragged him from the temple, and immediately the gates were shut."

Paul himself commented on the hardships in 2 Corinthians 6:4-5, "Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses; in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger."

A missionary in Africa was once asked if he really liked what he was doing. His response was shocking. "Do I like this work?" he said. "No. My wife and I do not like dirt. We have reasonable refined sensibilities. We do not like crawling into vile huts through goat refuse...But is a man to do nothing for Christ he does not like? God pity him, if not. Liking or disliking has nothing to do with it. We have orders to 'Go,' and we go. Love constrains us."<sup>9</sup>

3. *They were treated as vicious criminals (24)*. "Upon receiving such orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks."

F. F. Bruce suggests this jailor may have been a retired Roman soldier. His orders were to guard the prisoners carefully, so he did. He put them in the *inner* cell, the one

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<sup>8</sup> *Bits & Pieces*, April 29, 1993, pp. 15-16 .

<sup>9</sup> *Our Daily Bread*.

that's the hardest to escape from, and he secured their beaten and bloodied bodies in stocks.

A ministry that is true to the gospel always upsets people eventually. When we engage in frontline ministry, some will be saved and some will be furious. Historian Richard Collier explains how this was the case with the Salvation Army:

“Persecution was great from the beginning... Gangs frequently hurled mud and stones through the windows at the preaching and the crowd. The liquor dealers worked hard to have Booth kicked out of East London. The police were no help; in fact, they often broke up outdoor meetings and accused Booth's followers of being the cause of all the trouble... Beatings were not uncommon: in 1889, at least 669 Salvation Army members were assaulted—some were killed and many were maimed. Even children were not immune; ruffians threw lime in the eyes of a child of a Salvation Army member. The newspapers ridiculed Booth. PUNCH referred to him as ‘Field Marshal von Booth.’”<sup>10</sup>

So yes, gospel ministry is hard. But what did we expect? According to God's Word, we should expect great opportunities...and great opposition.

But this isn't the end of the story. It's not in Acts 16, nor for us. We've taken great care to notice what happened to Paul and Silas in Philippi. Great opportunities and great opposition. But what keeps us going when the opposition is intense?

Application: If you are serious about front line ministry, you must know this...

Here are five convictions you must possess in a life-changing way.

1. *God is in control even when it may appear otherwise.* And there will be plenty of times when it will appear otherwise!

Young William Wilberforce was discouraged one night in the early 1790s after another defeat in his ten year battle against the slave trade in England. Tired and frustrated, he opened his Bible and began to leaf through it. A small piece of paper fell out and fluttered to the floor. It was a letter written by John Wesley shortly before his death. Wilberforce read it again: "Unless the divine power has raised you up... I see not how you can go through your glorious enterprise in opposing that (abominable practice of slavery), which is the scandal of religion, of England, and of human nature. Unless God has raised you up for this very thing, you will be worn out by the opposition of men and devils. But if God be for you, who can be against you? Are all of them together stronger than God? Oh, be not weary of well-doing. Go on in the name of God, and in the power of His might."<sup>11</sup>

2. *God's work is accomplished God's way.* Think of how Paul must have felt in that prison cell. He could have muttered, “Lord, you told me in the vision to come here. You said there were people here who would welcome our message. How are we going to reach them from this miserable jail? We can't spread the Word if we're locked away? What went wrong, Lord?”

Nothing went wrong, and Paul knew it. That's why, as the very next verse says, Paul and Silas could pray and sing hymns to God after being wrongfully beaten and thrown into custody. They knew that God's work is accomplished God's way.

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<sup>10</sup> In K. Hughes, pp. 215-6.

<sup>11</sup> [Daily Bread, June 16, 1989.](#)



A ship wrecked off the New England coast many years ago. A young member of the coast guard rescue crew said, "We can't go out. We'll never get back." The grizzled old captain replied, "We have to go out. We don't have to come back."<sup>12</sup>

3. *God uses the world's opposition to advance the church's mission.* The injustice Paul endured at Philippi would have knocked many off track, but not Paul. He later wrote about this experience in his letter to the Thessalonian church (1 Thes 2:2). "We had previously suffered and been insulted in Philippi, as you know, but with the help of our God we dared to tell you his gospel in spite of strong opposition." The verbal abuse, the unjust beating, and the ill-founded imprisonment didn't rob Paul of his joy.

Later when he was in prison in Rome, he wrote these words back to his friends in Philippi, "Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel (Phil 1:12)."

The world can oppose us, but it can't stop God's work, for God uses even the world's opposition to advance His church's mission.

E.g.—

4. *God wants us to view every obstacle as an opportunity to spread the Word.* That's right, *every* obstacle. At the end of his life, just before his execution, Paul wrote these words to his friend Timothy (2 Timothy 2:8-9), "Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel, for which I am suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But God's word is not chained."

Right there we see the answer to an important question. If the danger is so real on the front lines, what will motivate us to go? The answer is to remember Jesus Christ. Specifically, remember what Jesus did. And what did He do?

Jesus left the comforts of heaven to come to earth. The Son of God Most High clothed Himself with the rags of humanity for the purpose of rescuing hell-bound sinners. Eventually He allowed wicked men to abuse Him and nail Him to a cross, and there He became a sin offering to reconcile lost people to God. He experienced death, was buried, and three days later He conquered death and returned to heaven.

Indeed, Jesus went to the front lines for us. That's why there's hope today. If you desire to leave your life of sin and become a part of God's eternal family, you can do so today, by repenting and accepting Jesus as your and Savior and Master.

There's our motivation, fellow Christian. To know Him and be like Him. He went to the front lines for us. Will we not be willing to do the same for Him?

One more conviction...

5. *God wants us to remember the story isn't over until it's over.* Paul's story didn't end in this jail cell. Hardships aren't the end of the story for the Christian, as we'll see next time. Until then I challenge you to adjust your expectations, if necessary, and live on the frontlines. Let's serve the Lord with all we have.

Closing Song: *I Gave My Life for Thee* (#453)

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<sup>12</sup> [Source Unknown.](#)

Community Group Discussion:

1. Take time as a group to re-read this morning's passage, Acts 16:16-24. What stands out most to you from this passage?
2. Paul and Silas faced a challenging opportunity when they encountered a demon-possessed slave girl in verses 16-18, and they made much of Christ through it. How so?
3. Paul and Silas faced another challenging opportunity when they were beaten and thrown in jail in verses 19-24, and once again, they made much of Christ through it. How so?
4. The title of today's message is, "*Knowing What to Expect When You Follow Jesus.*" What happens when a new (or older) Christian's expectations don't match reality? What are some indicators that our own expectations might be out of line?
5. Discuss these two statements. *God uses the world's opposition to advance the church's mission. And...God wants us to view every obstacle as an opportunity to spread the Word.* How should knowing this affect the way we live this week? After discussing, spend time as a group praying for one another in light of this reality.