

Acts 16:25-40 “The God Who Opens Prison Doors and Jailer’s Hearts”^{**1}

Main Idea: In Acts 16:25-40, we see the God who opens prison doors and jailer’s hearts. He is amazing to watch, and He’s still at work in the world today. He’s the God who opens, as we’ll see in the three scenes of our text.

- I. God opens opportunities for us to wait on Him (25-28).
 - A. Surprise #1: There was singing in prison (25).
 - B. Surprise #2: There was an earthquake (26).
 - C. Surprise #3: The prisoners chose not to escape (27-28).
 - II. God opens opportunities for us to witness for Him (29-34).
 - A. To be saved, it takes repentance (29-30).
 1. You must admit you are lost.
 2. You must be willing to change.
 - B. To be saved, it takes faith (31).
 1. You must believe in Jesus.
 2. You must believe that He is the Lord.
 - C. To be saved, it takes the reception of the Word of God (32).
 - D. Once saved, there will be evidence of change (33-34).
 1. You will show remorse for your sin (33a).
 2. You will want to be baptized (33b).
 3. You will want to serve (34a).
 4. You will exhibit joy (34b).
 - III. God opens opportunities for us to watch Him open up more opportunities (35-40)!
 - A. The authorities ignored the injustice (35-36).
 - B. Paul exposed it (37-39).
 1. It wasn’t for personal reasons.
 2. It was for the sake of Christ.
 - C. Then Paul resumed his original work (40).
- Application: Consider two questions...
1. Are you seeing the ministry opportunities in your life?
 2. Are you making the most of them?

As we open God’s Word today, we’re going to behold the God who opens prison doors and jailer’s hearts. As we read this God-inspired story, let’s look behind the story and see and marvel at God, the God who opens things up, and what He opens, no one can shut, and what He shuts, no one can open.

Scripture Reading: Acts 16:25-40

Some things just don’t seem to go together. Like giving thanks for cancer. Or praising God for a job loss. Or cherishing the death instrument of a cross. And how about this one? *Singing in prison.*

It doesn’t make sense to the on-looking world when God’s people do these things. But it does get people’s attention. In fact, God often uses the unexpected responses of His people to open the eyes of hell-bound sinners so they see their need for a Savior. He surely did in Acts 16, as we’ll see this morning.

Opportunities to accomplish our God-given mission often come in very unexpected ways. Sadly, we often miss them because we’re locked on our own agendas. If God put a red flag on top of the situation that said, “This is an opportunity!” we might look at it differently. But He doesn’t do that. He calls us to walk by faith, to choose to see Him in every situation. When we begin to live with that perspective, life becomes so exciting, so meaningful, because we realize that *every* situation is an opportunity tailor-made by God.

**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.

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

But I won't view the tough situations in my life as opportunities unless I grasp what my purpose is for being on this planet. It's not about me. It isn't to accumulate wealth. It's not to be comfortable. It's not to gain power. It's not to retire with security at age 65. It's not even to live a long life. Rather, it's about Him. It's to live this life, no matter how long or short it may be, for His honor. To glorify God by cherishing His Son and helping others do the same. Once I settle that issue, I'll start seeing life as an unending string of opportunities sent my way by God.

"What kind of opportunities?" you ask.

This kind. Opportunities to see the God who opens prison doors and jailer's hearts work in and through us, as He did with Paul and Silas in Acts 16.

In Acts 16 we see these two choice servants of Christ in prison. Why? All they did was set a demon-possessed slave girl free from her oppression. But her masters didn't like it, since the girl could no longer make them money by fortune-telling. So they took the missionaries to court where they misrepresented them, beat them with rods, and threw them into a stinking jail as if they were hardened criminals.

It was a terrible injustice, right? Yes. But it was also God's ordained way of revealing that He's the God who opens things, as we'll see in the three scenes of our text.

I. God opens opportunities for us to wait on Him (25-28).

Waiting. A lot of the Christian life involves waiting on God. The Lord gives us light for the path, but the light comes one step at a time.

When I use the term waiting, please don't construe this to mean being passive or inactive. Waiting simply means that we do what God directed us to do until He gives us further orders. That's what we see Paul and Silas doing as the episode begins.

What you're about to see is a very unexpected response, indeed, three surprises.

A. Surprise #1: There was singing in prison (25). "About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them."

It's not hard to imagine why they weren't sleeping. Though it was midnight, their backs were raw from the beating the previous day. The stench of the filthy prison was undoubtedly nauseating. Their legs were in stocks, probably stretched wide apart, causing painful cramping.

What do you typically do at midnight? Most people sleep. In fact, how do most people respond when they're not sleeping in the middle of the night? Probably, not the way Paul and Silas did. They prayed and sang hymns.

How could they do that in such circumstances? They knew what we're prone to forget. The activities of praying and praising God don't depend on circumstances. Paul later wrote to the Philippian church, "Rejoice in the Lord *always* (Phil 4:4)." And he practiced what he preached. We don't rejoice in our circumstances, but *in the Lord*.

You say, "I can't do that. I don't have the strength."

The fact is, while *we* can't, if we know Christ, we can because we have the enabling of the Holy Spirit. Joy is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22), not something we conjure up.

Tertullian said, "The legs feel nothing in the stocks when the heart is in heaven."²

Charles Haddon Spurgeon remarked, "Any fool can sing in the day. It is easy to sing when we can read the notes by daylight; but the skillful singer is he who can sing when

² F. F. Bruce, p. 337.

there is not a ray of light to read by...Songs in the night come only from God; they are not in the power of men.”³

When God’s people do what only God’s people can do—like praise God in the worst of circumstances—unsaved people take note. Luke says, “The other prisoners were listening to them.”

In 1948 the Romanian pastor, Richard Wurmbrand, was arrested by the Communists, taken to prison, where he stayed for the next fourteen years, enduring torture, and solitary confinement for three years in a cell many feet underground. His wife, Sabina, was also arrested and taken to a slave-labor camp. Their nine-year-old son and only child was forced to live in the streets.

Then in 1965 Christians in Norway heard about the Wurmbrand’s plight and ransomed them for \$10,000. In 1966 Richard testified before the U.S. Senate’s Internal Security Subcommittee. In 1967 he wrote the book, *Tortured for Christ*, and testified, “In the ensuing years, in several different prisons, they broke four vertebrae in my back, and many other bones. They carved me in a dozen places. They burned and cut eighteen holes in my body.”

You would think that such brutal treatment would sap every ounce of joy out of a person, but not so, says Wurmbrand. “I have found truly jubilant Christians only in the Bible, in the Underground Church and in prison.”

He shares this example, “It was strictly forbidden to preach to other prisoners. It was understood that whoever was caught doing this received a severe beating. A number of us decided to pay the price for the privilege of preaching, so we accepted their [the communists’] terms. It was a deal; we preached and they beat us. We were happy preaching. They were happy beating us, so everyone was happy.”⁴

Brothers and sisters, this is the mark of people in whose life the Lord is real. They’re not hung up on how people mistreat them. They’re devoted to showing the love of Christ even when they’re mistreated, in fact, *especially* when they’re mistreated.

It’s true. It’s doing the unexpected that really gets people’s attention. Invite a friend over for supper, no big deal. Even pagans do that. But invite a juvenile delinquent to enjoy a meal with you, then you’ll get a response. “Why do that? That kid will rob you blind.”

Complain about a mistake on a bill. Nothing eye-catching about that. Unregenerate people do that, too. But tell the salesperson that sold you something that he made a mistake by *undercharging* you and that you want to make it right. Now you’ve got somebody’s attention.

Sing a hymn in church on Sunday morning. That’s good, but even non-Christians can do that, and they do. Sing a praise song to Jesus in a prison cell. Now that will get people’s attention.

Pray before a meal. A good thing to do, yes, but pray out loud in a room full of criminals, like Paul did, and now you’ve got a curious audience.

But this wasn’t a canned, artificial response for Paul and Silas. Do you know why they sang and prayed in jail? It’s because they sang and prayed before they got to jail. It’s what they did all they time. It was the pattern of their lives, because they loved Jesus.

³ In Wiersbe, p. 468.

⁴ Richard Wurmbrand, *Tortured for Christ*.

Is that true for us? Do we sing to the Lord any other time in the week than when we come to church? How about praying and reading the Scriptures? I urge you. Let's show Jesus we love Him all week long.

B. Surprise #2: There was an earthquake (26). "Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everybody's chains came loose."

This was no ordinary earthquake. It shook the foundations hard enough to cause the doors to fly open...and yet nobody got hurt. It caused the chains to fall off, but apparently nobody was injured by falling debris from the ceilings or walls.

And notice that everybody's chains came loose, including the non-Christians.

C. Surprise #3: The prisoners chose not to escape (27-28). "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!'"

Roman law said that if a guard lost a prisoner, he himself must receive the punishment the prisoner would have received. When the jailer saw the open cell doors, he drew the natural conclusion. The prisoners were gone. That's what prisoners do when given the chance, right? They escape. So he drew his sword. He was a man of duty.

But then he heard words that shook him to the core, surprising words, unexpected words: "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!"

Just think what Paul could have done when he saw the jailer reach for his sword. He could have thought, "After the way that brute treated us, he deserves to die. The whole lot of city officials do! Let him go ahead and fall on his sword. It must be God's vindication."

But no. Paul didn't look at people—even those who hurt him—as the enemy, but as victims of the enemy. And rather than condemn them, he sought to rescue them. That's why he reached out to this jailer.

Have you been hurt by someone recently? Do you realize that God can use you to touch the heart of that person? How? By choosing to treat him or her the way God treated you.

You say, "I can't do that." No, not on your own, but God will help you.

"But I don't feel like it," you say. Please realize that feelings have little to do with it. What God asks us to do is to choose to treat that person kindly, to help that person, to *love* that person. Isn't that what Jesus said? "But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic (Luke 6:27-29)."

Listen again to Richard Wurmbrand. "The cruelty of atheism is hard to believe. When a man has no faith in the reward of good or the punishment of evil, there is no reason to be human. There is no restraint from the depths of evil that is in man."

So godless people do godless things, evil things. And our response is critical. "God will judge us," said Wurmbrand, "not according to how much we endured, but how much we could love."

Then he shares this example. "I have seen Christians in Communist prisons with fifty pounds of chains on their feet, tortured with red-hot iron pokers, in whose throats spoonfuls of salt had been forced, being kept afterward without water, starving, whipped,

suffering from cold—and praying with fervor for the Communists. This is humanly inexplicable! It is the love of Christ, which was poured out in our hearts.”

Oh, how we need this perspective in America in 2020! How I need it! “Persecution has always produced a better Christian,” explains Wurmbrand, “a witnessing Christian, a soul-winning Christian. Communist persecution has backfired and produced serious, dedicated Christians such as are rarely seen in free lands. These people cannot understand how anyone can be a Christian and not want to win every soul they meet.”⁵

History shows that down through the ages this has been the most effective advertising Christians have done. When mistreated, instead of retreating or retaliating, they did the unexpected. They reached out in love. And the world took note.

You say, “Are you sure about that? If we do that, won’t they conclude we are weak people?” Possibly. But they don’t know what we know, about the God who opens prison doors and jailer’s hearts.

So here’s the first kind of opportunity God sends our way. He gives us opportunities to *wait on Him*.⁶

II. God opens opportunities for us to witness for Him (29-34).

Here’s a guarantee. If we respond to hardship in a godly way, as Paul did, God will open up opportunities for us to witness for Him, just as He did for Paul. The question is whether we are ready to make the most of the opportunity.

To put it simply, do you know how to tell somebody how to be saved? If you want to know how, pay special attention to what happened next in that jail.

A. To be saved, it takes repentance (29-30). “The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. He then brought them out and asked, ‘Sirs, what must I do to be saved?’”

Can you answer that question? Bishop John Taylor Smith was honorary chaplain to Queen Victoria and the chaplain general of the British Army during World War I. He used to ask all candidates for the chaplaincy one question:

“Now, I want you to show me how you would deal with a man. We will suppose I am a soldier who has been wounded on the field of battle. I have three minutes to live and I am afraid to die, because I do not know Christ. Tell me, how may I be saved and die with the assurance that all is well?” If the applicant began to beat about the bush and talk about the true Church and ordinances and so on, the good Bishop would say, ‘That will not do. I have only three minutes to live. Tell me what I must do.’ And as long as Bishop Smith was Chaplain-General, unless a candidate could answer that question, he could not become a chaplain in the Army.⁷

Could you tell a dying man how to be saved? Paul shows us how, doesn’t he?

“What must I do to be saved?” was the jailer’s question. Maybe he had heard the slave girl’s announcement (verse 17) that these men are “telling you the way to be

⁵ Richard Wurmbrand, *Tortured for Christ*.

⁶ That’s one of the things that made Paul such an effective minister, as Chuck Swindoll comments, “His obedience was not conditioned on his comfort or salary package. He didn’t go over the benefits summary before launching his missions career. His goal was simple and clear: to preach Christ where He had not been named. If that meant being shackled to a Roman dungeon, and choking on his blood, so be it. Back in Troas, when he said yes to that vision, it was an unconditional yes.” Chuck Swindoll, *Paul: A Man of Grace and Grit*, p. 190.

⁷ In Kent Hughes, *Acts*, p. 218.

saved.” Maybe he heard their attempted defense at court. Maybe he heard their singing. Regardless where he heard it, this man knew he needed what Paul and Silas had, the knowledge of how to be saved. “What must I do to be saved?”

That’s a great question, one that underscores two aspects of true repentance.

1. *You must admit you are lost.* The truth is, everyone enters this world *lost*, separated from God by sin. But not everyone admits it. Oh, they may say the words, “Yea, I’m a sinner,” but they don’t grasp the implications of them. If God is holy—and He is—and my life is stained with sin—which it is, then I am under the sentence of His just wrath and cannot enter His presence. Not now. Not ever. I have been going my own way in God’s world, and I am hell-bound because of it. I am lost.

To be saved you must be willing to admit that. And this.

2. *You must be willing to change.* “What must I do to be saved?” implies I don’t want to go on living that way. I’m ready to change. I want to live the way God wants me to live.

Is that true of you, my friend? I fear that for many who have “prayed the prayer” in America, it’s not true. They never even heard from the preacher that it must be true because repentance was left out of the gospel presentation.

To be saved, it takes repentance. Don’t misunderstand. This does not mean you must change your life before God will save you. But it does mean you are willing to be changed, to become the person He wants you to be. To repent means, to do a 180, to say, “Enough of going my own way in life. From this point forward, if You will save me, I’ll live my life Your way, according to Your Word and for Your glory.”

B. To be saved, it takes faith (31). “They replied, ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.’” To be saved you must have faith. But not just any type of faith will do. Paul makes it clear you must have the right object for your faith. You must believe the following...

1. *You must believe in Jesus.* “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved.” That means you must accept the truth about who Jesus is and what He did. You must believe that He is who He claimed to be and that He accomplished what He said He came to accomplish.

“For the Son of man is come to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10).” You must believe that He came to save *you*. “Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many (Matthew 20:28).” You must believe that His death on the cross was a ransom payment for *you*. Furthermore...

2. *You must believe that He is the Lord.* “Believe in the *Lord* Jesus and you will be saved.” You can’t serve two masters. To be saved you must surrender the controls of your life to the One to whom the Father has given all authority, the *Lord* Jesus Christ.

Now notice. What happens if you believe in Jesus? Paul says you will be *saved*. That’s a promise. You’ll no longer be lost, but *saved*. And it’s not just for you, Mr. Jailer. It’s for you and your household.

Is Paul saying that the jailer’s faith would save his wife and children? No. Faith is personal, as the Bible makes clear.⁸ And that’s why in the very next verse Paul spoke to the others in the household, too.

⁸ “...*whoever* believes should not perish but have everlasting life (John 3:16).” “To as many as received Him, to those who believe on His name, He gave the right to become children of God (John 1:12).”

C. To be saved, it takes the reception of the Word of God (32). “Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house.” Faith comes by hearing the Word about Christ (Rom 10:17). Simply telling tear-jerking stories about heaven and hell won’t cut it. Oh, you may elicit a pseudo, emotion-based decision, but true faith comes when the preacher uses the Word of God to present Christ.

And here’s a prime evidence that the Spirit has regenerated person’s heart. He wants to hear the Word. And he also wants his family and friends to hear it, like the jailer did.

D. Once saved, there will be evidence of change (33-34). When God truly saves a sinner, there will be evidence of it. Visible, tangible, God-glorifying evidence. What kind of evidence?

Verses 33-34 “At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family 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 family.”

Here we see four evidences that accompany true, Spirit-produced salvation.

1. *You will show remorse for your sin (33a).* What did the jailer do? He washed their wounds. He had a part in making those wounds, remember. He had jammed their bodies into those stocks. He may even have been the one who beat them too. But now he’s taking steps to make things right. He can’t remove the scars, but he can wash them.

A key evidence of salvation is remorse, a remorse for one’s sin that leads to a desire to make restitution. A great example is Zacchaeus in Luke 19. If you’ve used your position of power to hurt people, you start serving them. If you’ve stolen money from people, you pay them back. And so forth.

2. *You will want to be baptized (33b).* The text says that the jailer and his family members were baptized *immediately*. There’s no half-hearted commitment here. By being baptized you are choosing to identify publicly with Christ and His people.

3. *You will want to serve (34a).* That very night the jailer brought Paul and Silas to his home and fed them a meal. He became a servant, no longer a taker but a giver. Barclay is right, “Unless a man’s Christianity makes him kind it is not real.”⁹

4. *You will exhibit joy (34b).* Verse 34 concludes, “He was filled with joy.” Why? “Because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole family.”

It’s great to be saved. And it’s so wonderful to see God save the rest of you family. When you get saved, new things bring you joy, and it’s not money and material possessions. Those things pale when compared to the joy of knowing the Lord and seeing the Lord work in the lives of those you love.

Joy. This is perhaps the most visible evidence of all. True, radiant joy. Again, Richard Wurmbrand gives a powerful illustration in *Tortured for Christ*:

“An Orthodox priest, a friend of mine, telephoned me and told me that a Russian officer had come to him to confess. My friend did not know Russian. However, knowing that I speak Russian, he had given him my address. The next day this man came to see me. He longed for God, but he had never seen a Bible. He had no religious education and never attended religious services (churches in Russia then were very scarce). He loved God without the slightest knowledge of Him. I read to him the Sermon on the Mount and the parables of Jesus. After hearing them, he danced around the room in rapturous joy proclaiming, “What a wonderful beauty!

⁹ Barclay, p. 127.

How could I live without knowing this Christ!” It was the first time that I saw someone so joyful in Christ. Then I made a mistake. I read to him the passion and crucifixion of Christ, without having prepared him for this. He had not expected it and, when he heard how Christ was beaten, how He was crucified and that in the end He died, he fell into an armchair and began to weep bitterly. He had believed in a Savior and now his Savior was dead! I looked at him and was ashamed. I had called myself a Christian, a pastor, and a teacher of others, but I had never shared the sufferings of Christ as this Russian officer now shared them. Looking at him, it was like seeing Mary Magdalene weeping at the foot of the cross, faithfully weeping when Jesus was a corpse in the tomb. Then I read to him the story of the resurrection and watched his expression change. He had not known that his Savior arose from the tomb. When he heard this wonderful news, he beat his knees and swore—using very dirty, but very “holy” profanity. This was his crude manner of speech. Again he rejoiced, shouting for joy, “He is alive! He is alive!” He danced around the room once more, overwhelmed with happiness! I said to him, “Let us pray!” He did not know how to pray. He did not know our “holy” phrases. He fell on his knees together with me and his words of prayer were: “Oh God, what a fine chap you are! If I were You and You were me, I would never have forgiven You of Your sins. But You are really a very nice chap! I love You with all of my heart.” I think that all the angels in heaven stopped what they were doing to listen to this sublime prayer from a Russian officer. The man had been won for Christ!”

It’s amazing to watch the God who opens prison doors and jailer’s hearts! Yet the story isn’t done yet. First, God gives us opportunities to wait on Him. Then He gives us opportunities to witness for Him. After that...

III. God opens opportunities for us to watch Him open up more opportunities (35-40)!

Here’s how it happened for Paul, with three events in scene three.

A. The authorities ignored the injustice (35-36). “When it was daylight, the magistrates sent their officers to the jailer with the order: ‘Release those men.’ The jailer told Paul, ‘The magistrates have ordered that you and Silas be released. Now you can leave. Go in peace.’”

Perhaps the city authorities figured these two travelers had learned their lesson. “These guys won’t disturb our nice city again! Good riddance. End of story.”

Not exactly. Though the authorities wanted to ignore the injustice of the previous day, Paul didn’t. Instead...

B. Paul exposed it (37-39). “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.’ The officers reported this to the magistrates, and when they heard that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens, they were alarmed. They came to appease them and escorted them from the prison, requesting them to leave the city.”

Why did Paul respond as he did? Was he trying to embarrass the leaders, to get some revenge? No. To understand Paul, we must know this. He saw every situation as an opportunity to know Christ or to help others know Him. *Every* situation. So...

1. *It wasn’t for personal reasons.* Paul didn’t live with a personal agenda.
2. *It was for the sake of Christ.* Pleasing Christ was his agenda, in every situation.

So the question arises, “Why didn’t Paul tell them about his Roman citizenship *before* the beating and imprisonment?” The answer is, maybe he did, but in the frenzy the mob wouldn’t listen. But if he didn’t, maybe it’s because personal rights weren’t an issue for Paul. For Paul the issue was what people did with Christ, not him.

You say, “I don’t get it. What did making these magistrates personally escort them out of prison have to do with Christ?”

Think about it. If Paul and his team had just slipped out of town quietly, they would have left behind a cloud of confusion. People would have wondered, “Who were those characters? Were they really criminals? If they weren’t, why aren’t they still here?”

Paul did what he did not for his sake, but for the gospel’s. What Paul did protected the new church in Philippi from future government harassment, at least for awhile. It gave the new church a solid platform from which to proclaim Christ to the city.

C. Then Paul resumed his original work (40). “After Paul and Silas came out of the prison, they went to Lydia’s house [apparently, that’s where the new church was meeting], where they met with the brothers [by now, some men have been saved, too] and encouraged them [we all need encouragement; this is a key reason the church meets, to encourage one another to keep living for Christ in a non-Christian world]. Then they left [on they went to new cities, indeed, to new God-given opportunities].”¹⁰

As MacArthur surmises, “Once again Satan’s plans were frustrated and overruled by God’s sovereign control of events. The persecution Satan unleashed to destroy the Philippian church merely added another household to it and gained it protection from the city’s rulers.”¹¹

I’ve mentioned before that Luke is giving us selective history. He doesn’t tell us everything that happened when Paul went to a city. He does tell us just enough, in this case, three stories of changed lives in Philippi. An upper class businesswoman named Lydia, a lower class slave girl, and a middle class Gentile jailer.

Why these three stories? John Stott points out that the head of a Jewish household would use the same prayer every morning, giving thanks that God had not made him a Gentile, a woman, or a slave. But those were the very three despised categories that God chose to save in Philippi, a Gentile jailer, a slave girl, and a woman named Lydia.

He is indeed the God who opens prison doors and jailer’s hearts.

Application: Consider two questions...

1. *Are you seeing the ministry opportunities in your life?* They come our way every day, in the grocery store, at school, in the parking lot at work. And in jail cells, and hospital rooms, too. God is giving us opportunities to *wait on Him* and to *witness for Him*.

2. *Are you making the most of them?* I urge you to ask God right now to help you *see* and then *make the most* of the opportunities He has for you this week.

Closing Song: #371 “Have Thine Own Way, Lord” (all three verses)

¹⁰ The change from “we” to “they” suggests that Luke stayed behind in Philippi after this until he rejoined Paul in Acts 20.

¹¹ J. MacArthur, p. 111.

Community Group Discussion:

1. This morning's message was entitled, "*The God Who Opens Prison Doors and Jailer's Hearts.*" Take time as a group to re-read the passage, Acts 16:25-40. What do we learn about God from this account?
2. In verse 25 we see Paul and Silas praying and singing in their prison cell. What does that say to us about these men? How in the world could they *sing* with their feet in stocks? What can we learn from their example?
3. In verse 30, a shaken jailer asked Paul and Silas the question of all questions, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Look again at the conversation between the two missionaries and the jailer. What do we learn here that can help us be more effective witnesses for Christ?
4. In the third scene Paul mentions in verse 37 that they are Roman citizens. Why? And why do you think he didn't mention this earlier?
5. Spend time as a group praying to the One who opens prison doors and jailer's hearts. Ask Him to open up the hearts of unsaved people in our families and community. Ask Him to open up opportunities for us to know Him better and help others know Him.