

# Acts 16:19-40 - Unbound

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[ 0 : 00 ] Lord, we thank you how often we've quoted this scripture to others, Lord. How often we have heard it in so many different teachings.

What must I do to be saved? Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. You should be saved. We thank you for the simplicity that's contained in that, Lord. Simple for us because you took all the hard parts. Lord, we pray that you would speak to us, Lord, the life-giving power of your word. In Jesus' name, amen. All right, so remember we've come as far into the region of Greece, Macedonia.

Paul and Timothy and Luke have loose from Troas where Paul met Luke. He got Timothy from, I can't remember where it was now, Lydda.

And then they traveled up, were forbidden to go into Asia, forbidden to go into Bithynia. And they end up over here in Philippi. Last time we saw that Paul, coming to look for the man of Macedonia, found the woman of Macedonia.

[ 1 : 04 ] He finds Lydia, and she's the first convert in Europe. He spends time in her house. And then as he's going to and from prayer, it seems like this consistent habit of going to prayer, there's this damsel, this young girl, this teenage girl following him.

And Luke, I always want to say Barnabas, Luke and Silas and Timothy, who are with Paul, and saying, these men show unto you the way of salvation, which was true.

But the emphasis was on the men, right? The enemy always takes the emphasis and twists it, even if there's some truth contained in it. And he puts the emphasis on man instead of Jesus.

The emphasis was on the men. These men show unto you the way of salvation. That was true, but they were not the emphasis. And Paul eventually grows tired of this, and it's causing a burden to his ministry.

And so he turns to her, and he tells the demon to be gone. And that's kind of where we picked up in verse 19. And when her master saw the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas and drew them into the marketplace unto the rulers.

[ 2 : 10 ] And so I guess the title tonight for the message for this section of Scripture, excuse me, would be Unbound. Unbound. Unbound. This girl was bound, was bound by the enemy, was demon-possessed, and Paul loses her.

We're going to see Paul and Silas. They're going to become bound. We're going to see that the Philippian jailer is bound. But God, through his grace, does a mighty work to unbind many of these. If you remember last time, we said briefly, talking about the difference between those who parade themselves as angels of light, those who take upon themselves wolves in sheep's clothing, and how to identify them.

That's in Matthew, where Jesus said, Beware of the false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. You shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs, or thistles?

I was thinking about that, and then I was thinking about the parable that Jesus tells in Matthew 13 of the landowner who goes, and he sows his field with wheat, and the wheat grows up, and then he goes to bed, and overnight the enemy comes, and he throws tares into the field.

[ 3 : 19 ] And the tares look just like the wheat as they grow up. And you can't tell until it comes to fruition. The wheat has fruit, and the tares do not. And the wheat gets heavy enough that it bows down.

The tares just sit there. And so the servant said, Should we go and pull them up? I mean, if there's tares out there, he's like, No, no, no. You might pull up some wheat. Leave it until the end. I was thinking of the difference between these two things. A wolf that comes in sheep's clothing, right?

That is the intent to deceive. It is a wolf trying to look like a sheep. It wants to deceive. That's not a tare. There's a difference between that and one who looks like they may be a Christian, looks like they should be in the kingdom, and you don't find out until the end.

They're not there necessarily to deceive. They're there, and they may be the type of person that you think, I mean, I thought that person was a Christian. And then you see kind of towards the end, they walk away from the faith.

That's different than a false prophet, than one who is coming with the intent to deceive. And one, Jesus says, You're going to know them by the fruit.

[ 4 : 18 ] You're going to know it's a false prophet by the fruit that's being produced. And so Paul could see with this girl who was demon-possessed, he could see the fruit that this is not bearing good fruit. A tare, someone who's, you can't really tell the difference.

You're not going to necessarily know. Again, you're going to know eventually because of the fruit that will come. But it's not quite the same. It's not with the intent to deceive. And so let's pick up here in verse 19.

The men, the masters of this girl, what happened? They saw that the hope of their gains were gone. So what is it that's really troubling these guys? They had this girl, whether they found her, whether she was just a local prophetess or whatever.

Like I said, there was an oracle near there where supposedly you could go and get your fortune told, I guess, in this region. However they obtained her, or this was their way of making money. This was their gain. This was their profit. And when they saw that their gain was gone, all of a sudden they're really upset about this. And you see, what are they using for gain? They're using oppression.

[ 5 : 22 ] Spiritual oppression for personal gain. And the world will do that. The world will try and take what will take the most corrupt parts of the spirit and use that, the spiritual world, to oppress for their own gain.

And any society that greenlights oppression as a source of gain is a corrupt society. You're going to find corruption throughout every society. Every system is going to have corruption. Capitalism. Socialism. Now, some systems at the very nature of what they are allow for good to be done. Socialism is never going to work because the idea that no matter how hard you work and how hard I work, someone else is going to decide what the fruits of our labor go to that cuts us off at the knees for any type of work ethic.

Within capitalism or a system like that, there's the potential for good to be done, right? If there are good men. But any system that has corrupt people will become corrupt, right?

Look, if God, when he came to Israel and said, here is the system by which you are to rule your country, if that system could become corrupt, we have no hope, okay, that a system is going to fix or solve anything because it's going to eventually be filled with corrupt people.

[ 6 : 42 ] We're all corrupt, right? So there's corruption in every system. Not every society has gone to where they are actually promoting corruption. They could just have corruption in them.

But when you get to the point where society is actually promoting and allowing and supporting oppression for gain, then I think you could say that society has become corrupt.

And just looking at this and thinking of where it said the masters of this young girl, using her and abusing her and oppressing her just for gain. And you think of all the unfortunate young women that are being used in our society that have no hope because their masters just want to oppress them for gain.

And we live in a society that for a large part is kind of backing that, you know. It's entertainment. It's art. It's an industry. It's corruption.

It's pollution. And it shows that our society has moved from having corruption in it to being corrupt. Anyway, so that's what they're upset about.

[ 7 : 53 ] They've lost their gain. They're very upset that they've lost it. And, you know, the world will leave the church alone as long as we don't hurt their bottom dollar. The world leaves us alone, right?

We live in the South. You've probably heard that's going from preaching to meddling, right? Anyone heard of that? I worked with a guy. He said that all the time. He'd say that about other things. You know, like, well, now that's going from preaching to meddling.

And I didn't want to say it because it would just be cheeky, but I wanted to be like, that's the point. It's not preaching if it's not meddling. I mean, if your heart's not stirred, then, you know, listen to an audio book. It's about all it is.

So they're okay with this. They're okay. Paul, whatever. Silas, you want to go to prayer? Whatever. But, man, you heard our bottom dollar. Uh-oh. And so they caught them. They grabbed Paul and Silas.

So I guess at this point, Timothy and Luke maybe are not there. But they grabbed Paul and Silas and they draw them into the marketplace, unto the rulers, the seat of government in this place. And they brought them to the magistrates, saying, these men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city.

[ 8 : 56 ] Why are they so upset? Because they cannot undo what God has done. The enemy cannot undo what God does. They were stuck. They couldn't go, well, go put the demon back in her. You know, they can't.

And what God does, the enemy cannot undo. But he got really upset here. So he brings them. It's interesting, though, because what does it say that they say to these townspeople or to the magistrates or to the city?

These men being what? Jews. Jews. Does that sound familiar today? These men being Jews do greatly trouble our city.

It seems like the disturbance was more based upon who they were than what they did, wasn't it? It didn't say because they're Christians. It said they're Jews. They're Jews. The Jews, they'll eventually be kicked out of Rome.

I can't remember at this point. We're at 51 AD if they've been kicked out yet or not. But it was getting to the point where they were not looked on very highly in Roman society.

[ 9 : 56 ] And so they are upset because they're Jews. We see anti-Semitism on the rise today, right? What's anti-Semitism for the younger ones? It's just that which is against the Jews.

And I was thinking of it looking at this section of Scripture, and there's three things that I think stand out with anti-Semitism. It's irrational. It's irresponsible. And it's irrepressible.

What do I mean by that? It's irrational. There's no rational basis by which you can say, well, I think that the Jews should be wiped off the face of the earth. It's just irrational when you see what seems like normal, reasonable, well-grounded people in life.

All of a sudden, you know, I'm not on social media, but I see things that other people put on social media. It's just despicable what they're saying. And it's irresponsible.

There's no responsible place that you can find yourself in that you could be anti-Semitic.

[ 11 : 01 ] So if someone is anti-Semitic, you can just right off the bat know you are not a responsible person. This is irresponsible of you. You're a well-grounded, well-educated person, and yet you would be anti-Semitic.

And it's unfortunately irrepressible. There's nothing we can do to stop it. You're not going to suppress this because it's spiritual. It's demonic. Why? Why is the world so against the Jews? Why is the enemy so against the Jews? There's the land that God talks about in Scripture, and then there's also the people, right? In 2 Chronicles, when Solomon is dedicating the temple, in 2 Chronicles 6, verses 5 through 6, it says, Since the day, God is speaking, Since the day that I brought forth my people out of the land of Egypt, I chose no city among all the tribes of Israel to build a house in, that my name might be there.

Neither chose I any man to be a ruler over my people Israel, but I've chosen Jerusalem, that my name might be there. And I've chosen David to be over my people Israel. He's chosen Jerusalem, that his name might be there.

That's not stopped. It's not gone away. He didn't decide, Oh, wow, they built a mosque there. Well, I guess I'll put my name, you know, in Texas. His name is still there.

[ 12 : 23 ] And then in Isaiah, Isaiah 41, 8 through 13, I'll read it quickly. It speaks very much to the situation that Israel finds themselves in today. But thou, Israel, art my servant.

Jacob, whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham, my friend. Thou, whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant.

I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away. Fear not, for I am with you. Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you. Yea, I will help you. I will uphold you with the right hand of my

righteousness.

Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded. They shall be as nothing. They that strive with thee shall perish. Thou shalt seek them, and shalt not find them, even them that contended with thee.

They that war against thee shall be as nothing, as a thing of naught. For I, the Lord thy God, will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not, I will help thee.

[ 13 : 25 ] So when we see the world pushing back against the Jews, against Israel, God's holding their right hand. He's holding their hand, and you think you're going to mess with them?

The Lord's going to protect his people. And even today, right, he's still reaching out to them. You know, there's so many people that, in what's just happened, the only hope they have is Jesus. And so that's why I just keep praying that God would reach them where they're at. Anyway, so they're all upset, and they bring them before the magistrates, and they say they're Jews. It's unlawful for us to observe these things they teach being Romans.

You know, the world system is never going to benefit the church. Never. It may for a while look like it is, but eventually the world will grow tire of the church. It will tire of them, and it will no longer tolerate them.

We cannot expect this system of the world to benefit the church. And the false morality of the world cannot abide the truth, can it? So here these men come, and with their false morals, well, it's because, you know, they're trying to teach us things that are near and dear to the Roman culture, and can you believe it?

[ 14 : 39 ] They want us to follow ways that the Romans don't follow. Give me a break. They lost a few dollars. They could care less about their celebrations or their religion or whatever, and hidden behind many a moral is nothing but naked greed.

Right? There's many morals today. I remember, man, I don't know how old I was, if I was still a teenager, or shortly after we were married in our 20s, just watching the rise of the idea of, if you buy this, a few dollars will go over here to something good.

And it was like so weird, because I'd grown up in the church, and it was like, well, you either give to, you know, a charity, or you don't. But the idea that somehow merchandising and this charity thing went together, and you can just see the enemy using that, like, oh, I can kind of feel good about purchasing this thing for myself because a dollar went over here.

You know, or, oh, I did give. I don't have to give because I've given over here. And it's greed. And they're just hiding it behind this false morality that the world, unfortunately, is full of.

And the multitude, they rose up together against them. And the magistrates rent off their clothes. That's not the magistrate's clothes. That's Paul and Silas's. And commanded them to be beaten. You know, there's a unity we have in the spirit.

[ 15 : 58 ] We're to be one. We're commanded by Paul to endeavor to keep the unity of the spirit and the bond of peace. But there's a spiritual unity that the world has. It's a false unity. It's not of God, but that the enemy brings people together.

Those that may never have worked together before, he'll bring together a false unity to come against God's people. And here we see that. This whole multitude, they rise up together against Paul and Silas.

And they beat them. Remember, Paul will say, I can't remember where it is, but he'll tell how many times he's been beaten, how many times he's had stripes laid upon him. This seems to be one of those times. And he takes it, him and Silas.

You don't see them fighting back. You don't see them, you know, calling for a lawyer. They recognize, I think, the situation they're in, that this is God's hand. And we're just to submit to this. And when they laid many stripes upon them, verse 23, they cast them into prison, charging the jailer to keep them safely. We know that Matthew 5, verses 11 and 12, Jesus says, Blessed are you, when men shall revile you and persecute you and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake.

[ 17 : 15 ] Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. Why should I be exceeding glad and rejoice? What does that mean, great is my reward in heaven?

Because that's just proof that I am identified and one with my Lord. That I am in Christ. Because the world hates me. Because the enemy hates me.

Well, that's just proof then that I do have a reward in heaven. Because I have an inheritance, undefiled, incorruptible, reserved in heaven for me. And we are to rejoice.

We are to be exceeding glad when men say all manner of evil against us falsely. It doesn't do any good if they say all manner of evil against you truthfully. Man, that guy's the biggest jerk.

Oh, yes I am. You know, no. You want it to be said against you falsely. And so the irrational behavior of the enemy, this doesn't make any sense.

[18:11] Why are they doing this? Because the enemy hates God's people. But we are not to be discouraged, but instead to focus on our Savior. So Paul and Silas are thrown into prison and they charge this jailer to keep them safely.

Now, it's a very, um, there's a lot of emphasis in that phrase, charging the jailer to keep them safely. This isn't just like, hey, bud, I got some more prisoners for you.

Lock them up. This was kind of like, anything happens to them, you're done for, bro. It's over. And so he takes them and he thrusts them into the inner prison. That word thrust literally means, like, without care.

It's like to throw something down. Like, you come home, you throw your bag down, just like whatever in the corner. You know, the Philippian jailer, I don't think he had a great empathy for the prisoners that were under him.

This was his job. This is what he did. At that time, it wasn't uncommon for the house of the jailer to be conjoined or right next to the prison that he was to watch over.

[19:12] We're going to see he's going to sleep, but he's going to wake right up and be right there all of a sudden. Now, I think personally, the guy probably was sleeping in the jail that night, because he did not want these guys to go anywhere.

But either way, he seems to be very close at hand when all of this goes down. Paul's going to tell the Philippians eventually, when he writes the letter to them from Rome, he's going to tell them to not be discouraged by the persecution that they see happening to him because it falls out for their benefit, that it's a blessing to them, that he will gladly suffer that.

But what is Paul suffering? Having received such a charge, thrust them into an inner prison and made their feet fast in the stocks. Now, we all think of stocks.

We picture kind of like, you know, European-style stocks, where they put their head in, they put their arms in, and they kind of just sit there all day, you know, because I don't know what good that did.

I guess public humiliation. You don't want that to happen again, so you pay your traffic ticket next time. And this says they put their feet in stocks. This isn't just like they're sitting there with their feet up all day.

[20:19] They would stretch their legs as far as they possibly could go, and then they would lock them in place. And the only way they could get any relief was to try and lay back to ease the tension in their joints of their hips.

I mean, you try and keep your hips spread apart, your legs spread apart, and I get charlotte horses just doing that right now. So that's the condition these men were in, and they were left like that. So that's why they're awake, singing praises to the Lord.

They're not sleeping. This is not a condition you're going to sleep in. And at midnight, Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises unto God, and the prisoners heard them.

If that was me, I might have been praying at midnight too, but I don't think it would have been the type of prayers they were praying. It would have been like, Lord, I did everything you told me, and look what happened. This wasn't supposed to happen.

But they're singing praises to the Lord. You know, the life of the Spirit is not affected by outward circumstances. Neither do outward circumstances indicate one standing with God.

[21:21] Unfortunately, we can think that. We can think that our physical frame, our life situations, it means God loves me or he doesn't love me.

We can also think that somehow the things we encounter will affect my relationship with God. But it's not true.

In Job, remember when Satan came before the Lord and had to answer for what he was doing, and the Lord said, Have you considered my servant Job? We looked at this a little bit Sunday, but I wanted to pull it up again.

And Satan, three different times, or two different times, he comes to the Lord. The first time, and the Lord says, Have you considered him? And he said, Well, yeah, he's blessed because of his material benefits.

It's because he's got all this stuff. You took that away, he cursed you to your face. And so the Lord says, Go ahead. Take it all away. He does. And Job does not curse God. And Job chapter 1, verse 22, at the bottom there, says, In all this, Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.

[ 22 : 25 ] Satan comes back again. The Lord says, Hey, hey, see Job? I love that guy. Satan's like, He's like, Well, it's because of his health. You touch that, he'll curse you to your face.

He says, Go ahead, but don't take his life. So Job, we know, loses everything. So the enemy does not understand. He does not understand God or the gospel. He assumes that man is only motivated by temporal and material things.

He thinks that if he can affect the temporary things in our life, the material things in our life, he can move us in our relationship with God. What Job tells us is, No, your relationship with God cannot be moved.

It is solid. It's on a firm foundation. The only way it's moved is if we let it be moved, if we let those things affect us. Paul and Silas, they sing praises to God when they're at the river with Lydia, and the ladies there having prayer, and they sing praises to God when they're in prison.

The life of the Spirit is not affected by outward circumstances. In fact, the Holy Spirit loves to transcend what would from appearances be considered the worst of situations.

[ 23 : 32 ] He loves to do that. He takes the worst situation and he transcends that. Right? This could be a new agey word. All that means is, he lifts us above the situation.

This is one of his favorite things to do. When we are in the deepest place of discouragement or the hardest situation, we find ourselves where someone's saying all manner of things against us falsely, the Lord comes in.

He says, All right. I'm near you. I'm close to you. Remember in Psalm 23, he said, He said, The Lord of my shepherd I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures.

He leads me beside the still waters. Right? It's not until he's in the valley of the shadow of death that he says, Thou art with me. The Lord's leading him to a place. Oh, this is wonderful. I'm in green pastures.

I'm laying beside the still waters. This is great. It's not until he says, Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death. I will not fear for thou art with me. You rod and your staff that comfort me. It's in those moments when God draws near.

[ 24 : 29 ] And so, we might think, What would I do in a situation like that? You don't have to worry about it because the Holy Spirit will be there to give you exactly what you need. Paul told Timothy, when he will eventually write to him in 2 Timothy 2, He says, Wherein I suffer trouble as an evildoer, even unto bonds, but the word of God is not bound, unbound.

Therefore, I endure all things for what? For the elect's sake. Not for his own personal gain. Not even for his own relationship with God. That they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

So, Paul and Silas in prison. What do we see about them? A few characteristics. They did not fight back or attempt to alter their situation. That's a hard one, especially in this culture.

It's like, Well, I'll get my lawyer and I'll get some friends and I'll call a senator. Right? They didn't fight back or attempt to alter their situation. What was their standard? Well, wait a minute. I'm a Roman.

I have rights as a Roman. Oh, but wait, I'm a follower of Jesus. And he said, Blessed are you when you're persecuted. So this is a blessing. They understood the battle was not against flesh and blood.

[ 25 : 41 ] They knew that. That's what Paul just said to Timothy, essentially. That the flesh and blood who comes against me, that's going to work a greater spiritual blessing. They recognized that they were in God's hands.

They used their circumstances as a platform for prayer and praise. That's a hard one. Like I said, I might pray, but I don't know if I would pray quite along those lines. But at the same time, I have been in hard situations, nothing like that, but situations that have been difficult.

And I do find myself praising the Lord because he's so good. He's so good. You just can't help but recognize how good he is when you're in the worst of situations. And they used, I'm sorry, and they

believed the word of God.

They believed God's word and so they endured through this. And then something happens as they're laying there. It says in verse 25, they sang praises to God and the prisoners heard them. Eventually, we're going to see after this earthquake that their bands are going to be loosed, their bonds are loosed. And it says, then all the prisoners were there because Paul yells out, hey, it's okay, we're all here. How do you know that? How do you know they were there?

[ 26 : 46 ] The jailer runs in with a light. So this is in the dark. I'd like to find them. Right? He says, okay, we're all here. I don't know how long they were laying there singing praises and praying, but specifically the scripture wants us to know that the men who were there heard them.

So the church in Philippi is getting some new members. The first member was Lydia. Okay. Second one was this demon-possessed girl who's just been loosed.

And then, you know, we're gaining a few new members. Not the place you might think of looking for them. We have the Philippian jailer and I'm sure a few of his, the guys here who were in prison, it's no wonder when we get to the end of the chapter here soon where Paul is saying, goes back and comforts them before he departs.

This is quite a ragtag group. But what do they have? They have the spirit. They have the Holy Spirit. They have the word of God. So suddenly, that word suddenly, it just means unaware and unexpected.

Suddenly, there was a great earthquake so that the foundations of the prison were shaken and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's bands were loosed. We never are sure of how God will deliver.

[ 27 : 57 ] but we can be 100% sure that he will deliver. I don't know how he's going to deliver but I know he will. I know he will. Paul and Silas may not have been delivered this way.

Maybe it could have been God's will the magistrates come in and say, behead them tomorrow. But God would have delivered them. He would have delivered them into glory. There are worse things than death.

A lot worse. So God is able to deliver in ways that no one else can. And also, God's deliverance is never halfway. I like where it says, all the doors were opened and everyone's bands were loosed.

God didn't do things partway. He did it all the way. And the keeper of the prison, awaking out of his sleep, right, there's this earthquake and then the doors all open and all the chains fall off.

That must have been a noise. A lot of noise, right? I don't know. I would think if you're one of the prisoners and you're like waking up as an earthquake, I'm sure it's very noisy. They're talking to one another, their doors open.

[ 28 : 55 ] And so he comes rushing in, whether he was sleeping there in the prison or in his house, which was most likely next door, awaking out of sleep and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out a sword and would have killed himself.

You see, the world sleeps through God's deliverance and the world sees God's deliverance as a tragedy. This man comes running in. God has just done a miracle. He just delivered. And he's like, this is horrible.

And he's ready to kill himself. And he slept through the whole thing. He prized his comfort above an opportunity to experience God's deliverance.

And so he comes running in and he would have killed himself. Why? Because if he had let his prisoners go, he takes their place. It was Roman law. If you allow a prisoner to escape, whatever punishment was on them is now upon you.

And it would have been on his family too. So for him, it was, I'd rather kill myself and not have to see this. And supposing the prisoners to have fled, but Paul cried with a loud voice saying, do thyself no harm for we are all here.

[ 30 : 04 ] How did he know that? Maybe the Holy Spirit gave him insight. Or maybe there was some feedback going on while he was praying and praising the Lord as all these prisoners were listening.

You know, maybe at first they were cat calling. Yeah, shut up. I can't believe a cell block's here. I can't, you know. Maybe it quieted down. Maybe they started listening. And maybe just a hush grew over the prison as Paul and Silas are singing and praying to God, completely overcoming their situation through their relationship with God.

So this Philippian jailer is bound to this world system. He was bound to follow it. He was bound to obey it. He was bound to his own view of things, wasn't he?

The natural view. He didn't have spiritual eyes to see. He was ready to kill himself. He was bound with his prisoners. There he is. His life is bound with theirs.

And he was bound by sin as well. Then he called for a light, the jailer, and sprang in and came trembling and fell down before Paul and Silas.

[ 31 : 10 ] And he brought them out and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? Paul knew an opportunity for deliverance when he saw one. Not his physical deliverance.

He knew an opportunity for deliverance from sin when he saw it. Deliverance from the enemy. He said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved and your house.

What I have is for you, not just you. This is for your whole house to be delivered. The Philippian jailer, if we look there in verse 30.

He says, What must I do to be saved? He fell down before them because a conscience is awakened. An awakened conscience and a repentant soul do not constitute salvation, but they are the path by which a seeking soul travels.

Right? You can have an awakened conscience. You can have repentance. That doesn't mean you're saved. And this is where I go back to the difference between a sheep and a sheep's clothing.

[ 32 : 12 ] They're really bad. A wolf in sheep's clothing or a tare. Right? You can have someone right there with you, living life with you. They have an awakened conscience.

They have a repentant soul. But they've not what? Believed. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved. The Philippian jailer recognized that not only did Paul and Silas have something he didn't have, he recognized he was lost.

He says, I need salvation. I don't just need something good. Salvation is not just about adding something really good to our lives. That's the Western salvation. That's America's salvation. You need Jesus so you can be blessed, so you can have a relationship with God, you can feel good, you can feel forgiven.

You need Jesus. But it's about being rescued from something called sin. It's about being rescued from hell. It's recognizing I need a savior.

There's a picture here of salvation in the text as we read down through here from verse 29 to 33. Then he called for a light and sprang in and came trembling and fell down before Paul and Silas and brought them out and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?

[ 33 : 19 ] And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved, you and your house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord and to all that were in the house. And he took them the same hour of the night, washed their stripes, was baptized, he and all his straight way.

So as we said, it's the path by which you travel to salvation. In verse 29, we see repentance and recognition. Right? He sprang, he comes in, he falls down before Paul and Silas.

He's bowing down before them, he's recognizing and he's repenting, he's realizing that I need this. We see him seeking. Sirs, what must I do to be saved? He seeks for salvation.

Next is belief in verse 31. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. And then he receives it. It's only after belief, only after salvation can we truly receive the word of God.

It's only after he believes that then it says that they spake unto him the word of the Lord and all that were in the house. And then lastly, identify.

[ 34 : 23 ] The same night he was baptized, identifying with his Lord. A picture there of this path. What was it? An hour? 20 minutes?

15 minutes? This guy moved from I'm going to murder myself, I'm a pagan, to, you know, one of the pillars of the Philippian church. It wasn't very long. Because we can see that he truly was born again.

Because that same night, not only was he baptized, but he took them the same hour of the night, washed their stripes, and was baptized, he and all his straight way.

And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them and rejoiced, believing in God with all of his heart. The inward reality of salvation defying the outward circumstances.

The inward reality proving by the outward circumstances that he saved. What do I mean by defying? Well, this guy, essentially, had just thrown in his lot with Paul. This guy has put him and his family in great jeopardy by becoming a follower of Jesus and throwing himself in here with Paul.

[ 35 : 31 ] But he recognizes that the comfort of his home, the man who was sleeping through God's deliverance, has just been superseded by the peace that has come into his home. And so Paul and Silas, they're there, and then it says, the next day, the magistrates sent to the sergeant saying, let

those men go.

So this is a place of what? They use depression for gain, right? So these men, they use Paul and Silas this moment when the mob was on them, yeah, throw them in prison for political gain. And now they're done with them. The moment's passed and these men, they've served their purpose. Okay, let them go, whatever. I don't really care. And the jailer thinks this is a wonderful thing.

He says to them, you can depart, now go in peace. But Paul said unto them, they've beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison, and now do they thrust us out privily, nay, truly.

Let them come themselves and fetch us out. Open sin needs open repentance. He's like, you know what? Paul is really willing to throw himself back into the fire. He could go.

[ 36 : 32 ] Go away, Paul. He's like, no, you know what? Let's go for round two. Let's see what happens. Why? Because he's going to be leaving this fledgling church, right? He needs to give them something to stand on, to give them some standing in the community.

You have a bunch of ex-convicts, a Philippian jailer, a previously demon-possessed girl, and Lydia. So Paul is recognizing here that he needs to do what he can do, use the resources he has and the position he has.

Now, did Paul, was he playing politics or pulling rank? No. He was simply using the means at his disposal to best support the church.

Right? So there's nothing wrong with using the means and the position God places you in. If God puts you in politics, great, or in a position of authority, use it. But what is it for?

Well, it's to benefit his people. And so Paul, he says, no, let them come to me. And then, in verse 38, it was told unto the magistrates and they feared when they heard they were Romans.

[ 37 : 33 ] Because just like that jailer, if he had lost his prisoners, he would essentially take their punishment. Man, if you messed with a Roman citizen without going through the due process of law, you have forfeited your life as well.

And they came and besought them and brought them out and desired them to depart out of the city. I like that. These men, they were never in control. They thought they were. They were the big guys in this town.

And they tell Paul, please, go, go. Paul's like, in a bit, in a little while. I got some things to do. And he did.

He went out of the prison and entered into Lydia's house. And how wonderful it must have been for that Philippian jailer to go with him and to meet, you know, his new brothers and sisters, his new family.

The oppression of Philippi was over. And it had been overcome by humility and sacrifice. Again, not a concept that we know very well.

[ 38 : 33 ] We think, you fight fire with fire. You know, if that guy's louder, I'm going to get louder. If we can get only more people to yell. You know, one of my pet peeves, and I understand it, is, you see like an email come through from some organizations.

Like, if we can get a million people to pray, then perhaps, what, God will hear us? You know, the effectual fervent prayer of the righteous man avails much. Daniel prayed and changed the course of history, right?

You know, what, are we going to get a million people and wake? No, that's not, that's when Elijah was on the Mount Carmel and he's like, hey, yell louder, maybe you're God sleeping, right? And then Elijah just goes, oh God, answer me by fire.

You know, I don't think it's a condition of quantity, right? Lack of quantity. I think it's quality. So Paul, he returns, not to leave the city, he returns back into Lydia's house, they went out of the prison and entered into Lydia's house.

And when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them and departed. Paul's like, no, I'm not going to leave here until I know I leave them in a good place. Paul's outwardly uncomfortable situation had resulted in great comfort for the heart of this small church in Philippi.

[ 39 : 41 ] If you remember back over in verse 23, the magistrates had said to the jailer, he charged him to keep them safe. Well, he fulfilled that charge, didn't he?

He brought him into this house and kept him very safe. You know, we say it all the time, how do you defeat your enemy? You make him your friend. Then the enemy goes away.

Unfortunately, some people just don't want to be friends. So as we wrap this up, Paul will write to Timothy in 2 Timothy where we already looked at it where he'll say, you know, I suffer trouble as an evildoer but there's a reason I do that.

It's for the elect's sake. Paul is willing to go back into this situation and hazard his life for the sake of this church which will eventually become one of the strongest churches when he writes to them in Philippians.

They are the ones who are sending people to chase him down to take a gift to him. John 8.36 says, if the Son make you free, you shall be free indeed.

[ 40 : 47 ] So there's three things we saw tonight that were unbound. There's a lot of unbound things, right? We are unbound when we are in Christ. The Word of God is unbound. Paul told Timothy that the Word of God is not bound. The peace of God is not bound.

Nothing can bind that. Nothing can keep that from you. And the presence of God is not bound. Nothing can keep God and us from being together. Except what?

Me. Right? But if the Son make you free, you shall be free indeed. What does that mean other than sounding very pretty? You shall be free indeed. Means you are set free for good.

If the Son makes you free, you're not going back into slavery. If the Son sets you free, you indeed are free forever. So let's live it. Let's be like Paul and let's not worry about the situation.

Right? Why didn't Luke and why didn't Timothy be like, wait, wait, wait. We're with Paul and Silas too. We should go with them because we don't choose the place of our martyrdom. We don't choose the circumstances of our witness.

[ 41 : 49 ] We let God choose that and we just be faithful to be a witness in that circumstance. So the Word of God is unbound. The peace of God is unbound. The presence of God is unbound. We are unbound as well.

So next week, Paul creates more trouble. Or not next week, two weeks from now. Next week's prayer and two weeks will be Bible study. But let's pray.

Father, thank you so much for this picture, Lord, this beautiful picture of salvation, Lord, of you reaching into this man's world. Lord, you knew that what the enemy meant for evil you were going to use for good.

The enemy thought, aha, I've got Paul and Silas locked away and you said, perfect, just where I want him. Lord, you knew that you were going to start this church and it needed to be started not by something man was going to do, but it needed to be started, Lord, by a move of God and truly you did move.

And Lord, you released many people, excuse me, in this text, Lord, in chapter 16. And Lord, how wonderful that down through the ages we can read the word and we can say to ourselves and to one another, what did we do to be saved?

[ 43 : 03 ] Believe, oh Lord Jesus Christ. We came with humility, we came with recognition of who we are, we came with repentance, we sought the Lord as we heard his voice calling to us.

And Lord, we believe, we've received and now we are free. Lord, let us not live like bound people, let us not live like we're still in a prison when you set us free. Indeed, we have no chance of being recaptured again, Lord.

The enemy's been defeated at the cross. The gates of hell cannot prevail against us. So Lord, I thank you. I thank you for my brothers and sisters here tonight, Lord. I pray that they would live free and unbound lives and they would live in the boundless joy and freedom of the Holy Spirit.

In Jesus' name, Amen.