

Open Bible Stories — Paul and Silas in Philippi

Introduction

Key Idea

The story of Paul and Silas in Philippi teaches us how the mission of Jesus is to preach the gospel to all people groups in the world.

Core Belief Verse

"Thus I make it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named, lest I build on someone else's foundation." Romans 15:20

God's Big Story

The eternal God created all things in six days.

He made a good and perfect world.

He made humans in his image to fill the earth and rule over creation.

But humans rebelled against God and ruined God's creation.

God set to restore his world through his promise.

God made a covenant with Abraham. He promised to bless all nations through Abraham.

God kept his promises across the generations.

God provided Abraham with a promised child, Isaac.

God gave Isaac a wife, and she bore twins Jacob and Esau.

God blessed Jacob and his sons, and the blessing continued to the next generation.

God rescued Joseph, one of Jacob's sons, and used him to rescue his family.

God caused his people, the Israelites, to multiply in the land of Egypt; eventually, they became slaves.

But God raised up a deliverer, Moses, to deliver his people from slavery.

God judged the Egyptians with harsh plagues; in the final judgment, he passed over his people, who covered their doorposts with the blood of a sacrificed lamb.

Then, God delivered the Israelites by bringing them out of Egypt and crossing the Red Sea on dry land.

God made a covenant with the Israelites and made them his people.

God tested Israel in a series of wilderness wanderings and eventually brought his people into the promised land of Canaan.

God raised up deliverers to lead Israel and rescue them from their enemies.

God formed Israel into a kingdom. He made a covenant with King David and promised to send a king that would rule his people forever.

Many of Israel's kings were evil, and the kingdom of Israel was divided into two kingdoms.

God sent prophets to warn his people of God's judgment and call them to repent.

When Israel did not repent, God sent his people into exile. After many years, he brought them back to the land.

Throughout the Old Testament, God promised to send his Messiah to deliver his people from their sin.

After many years, the prophet John was born. He would prepare people for the coming Messiah.

At the perfect time, God sent his Son, Jesus, to be born of a virgin Mary.

When John and Jesus grew up, John baptized Jesus as a sign that Jesus was God's beloved Son.

Jesus endured all manner of temptation without ever sinning.

When he was thirty years old, he launched a public ministry of preaching, teaching, and healing.

He taught his disciples about the life of compassion, sacrifice, and forgiveness.

Jesus performed many miracles: he fed a crowd of five thousand, he walked on water, he healed the sick, and he cast out demons.

He proclaimed to people the nature of real faith, God's kingdom, and how fallen humans can be restored in relationship with God.

Toward the end of his ministry, Jesus revealed his power and glory to his disciples.

He raised a dead man to life.

Jesus was betrayed by one of his disciples and put on trial before a Roman governor.

Jesus was sentenced to death and crucified on a cross

Three days later, Jesus rose again from the dead.

After meeting with many of his disciples, Jesus went back to heaven.

The Holy Spirit empowered Jesus' followers and formed them into his church.

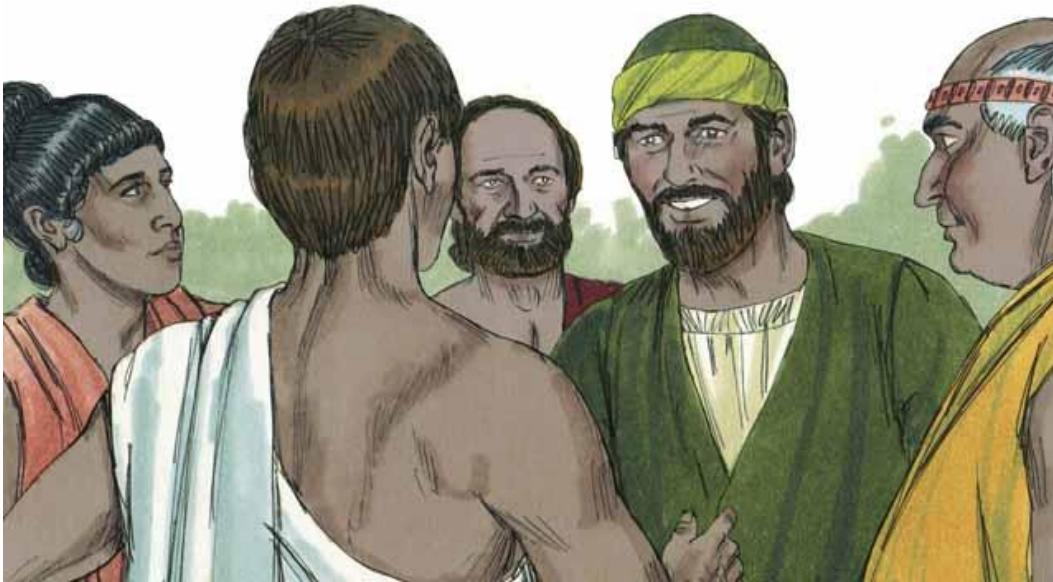
Jesus' disciples, like Peter and John, performed miracles and preached the good news about Jesus.

New leaders like Stephen and Philip served the church and preached about Jesus.

Even Saul, a persecutor of Jesus' followers, became a Christian and preached the gospel to many people.

The Story

47-01



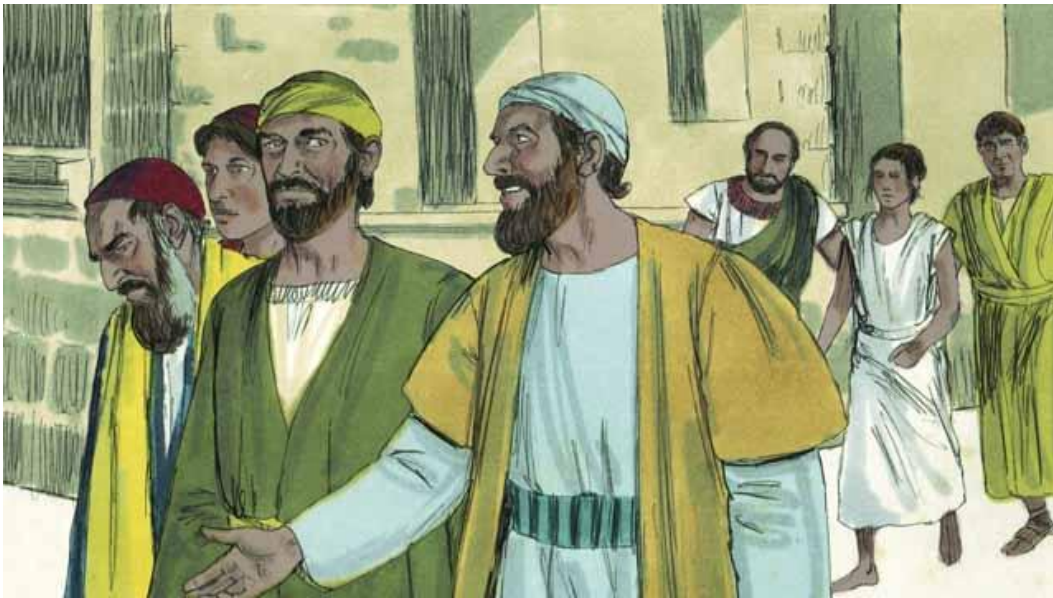
As Saul traveled throughout the Roman Empire, he began to use his Roman name, 'Paul.' One day, Paul and his friend Silas went to the town of Philippi to proclaim the good news about Jesus. They went to a place by the river outside the city where people gathered to pray. There they met a woman named Lydia who was a merchant. She loved and worshiped God.

47-02



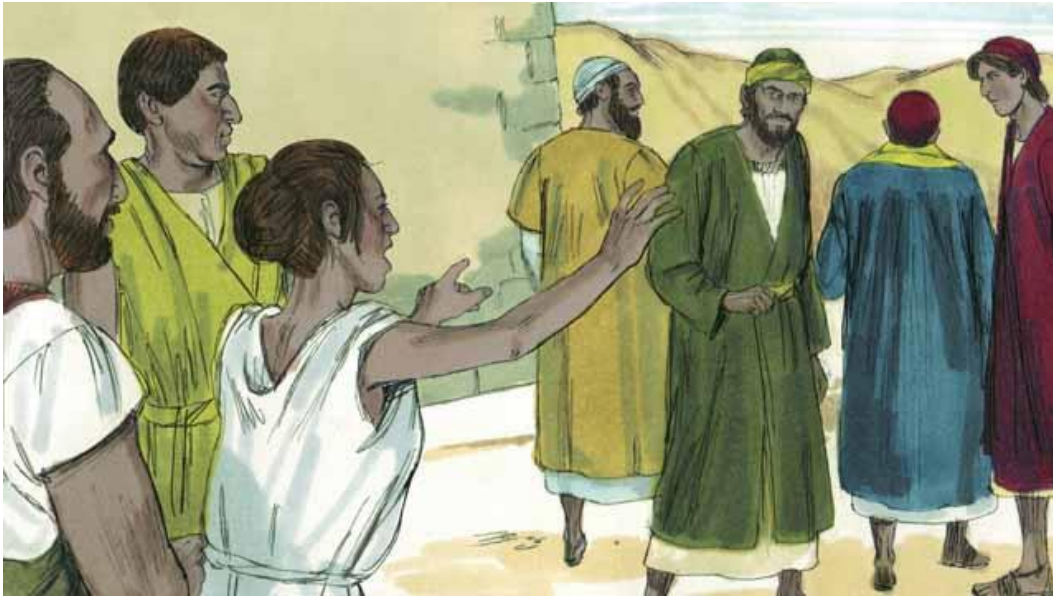
God enabled Lydia to believe the message about Jesus. Paul and Silas baptized her and her family. She invited Paul and Silas to stay at her house, so they stayed there.

47-03



Paul and Silas often met with people at the place where Jews prayed. Every day as they walked there, a slave girl possessed by a demon followed them. By means of this demon, she predicted the future for people, so she made a lot of money for her masters as a fortuneteller.

47-04



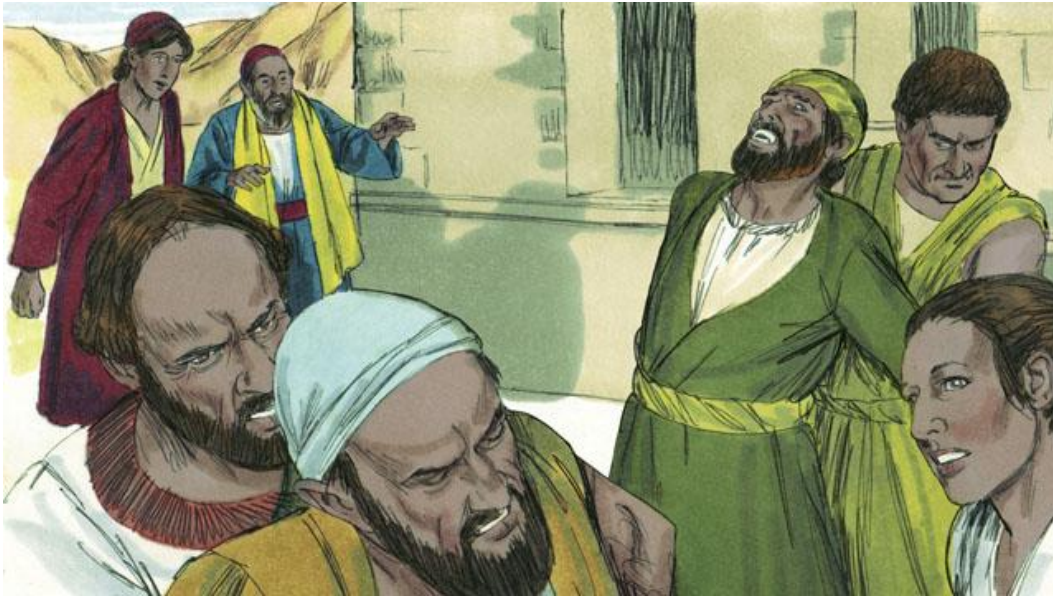
The slave girl kept yelling as they walked, "These men are servants of the Most High God. They are telling you the way to be saved!" She did this so often that Paul became annoyed.

47-05



Finally, one day when the slave girl started yelling, Paul turned to her and said to the demon that was in her, "In the name of Jesus, come out of her." Right away, the demon left her.

47-06



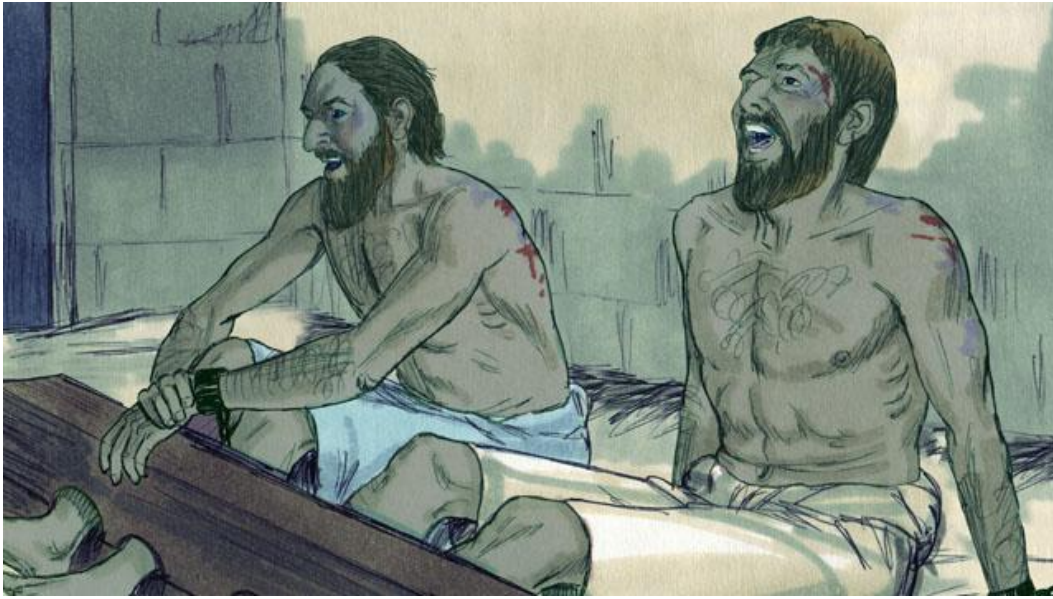
The men who owned the slave girl became very angry! They realized that, without the demon, the slave girl could not tell people about the future. This meant that people would no longer pay her owners to have her tell their future.

47-07



So the owners of the slave girl took Paul and Silas to the Roman authorities, who beat Paul and Silas, and then threw them into jail.

47-08



They put Paul and Silas in the part of the prison with the most guards. They even attached their feet to large pieces of wood. But in the middle of the night, Paul and Silas were singing songs of praise to God.

47-09



Suddenly, there was a violent earthquake! All the prison doors opened wide, and the prisoners' chains fell off.

47-10



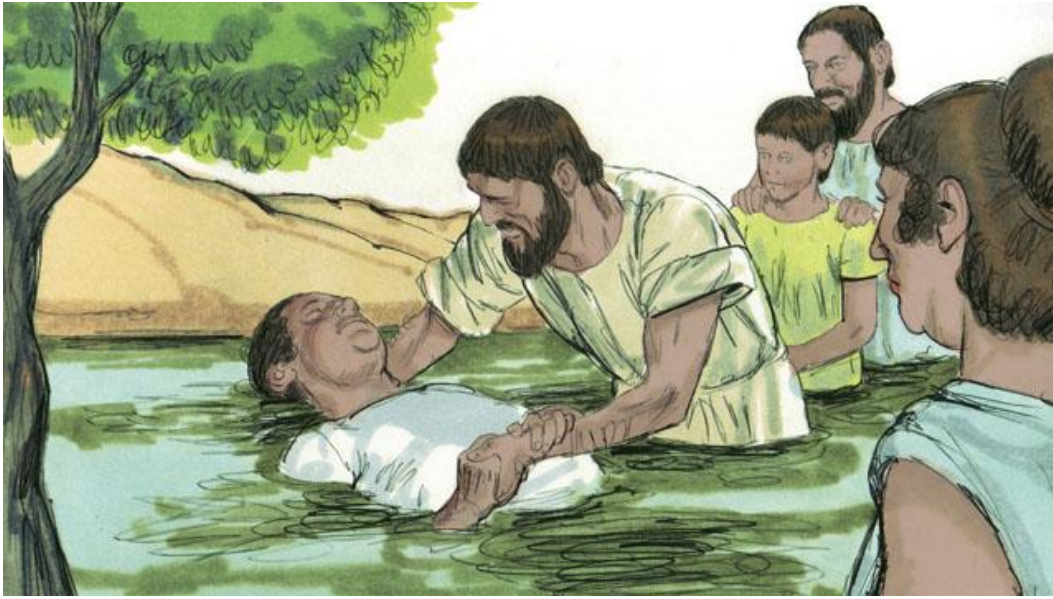
Then the jailer woke up. He saw that the prison doors were open. He thought that all the prisoners had escaped. He was afraid the Roman authorities would kill him for allowing them to go, so he got ready to kill himself! But Paul saw him and shouted, "Stop! Do not hurt yourself. We are all here."

47-11



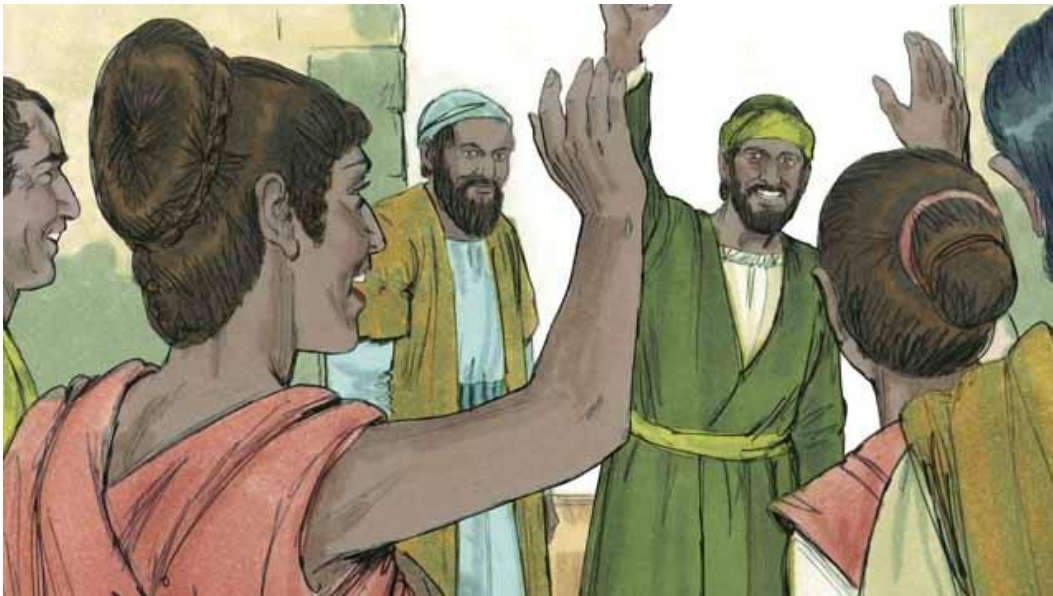
The jailer trembled as he came to Paul and Silas and asked, "What must I do to be saved?" Paul answered, "Believe in Jesus, the Master, and you and your family will be saved." Then the jailer took Paul and Silas into his home and washed their wounds. Paul preached the good news about Jesus to everyone in his house.

47-12



The jailer and his whole family believed in Jesus, so Paul and Silas baptized them. Then the jailer gave Paul and Silas a meal, and they rejoiced together.

47-13



The next day the leaders of the city released Paul and Silas from prison and asked them to leave Philippi. Paul and Silas visited Lydia and some other friends and left the city. The good news about Jesus kept spreading, and the Church kept growing.



Paul and other leaders of the believers traveled to many cities. They preached and taught people the good news about Jesus. They also wrote many letters to encourage and teach the believers in the churches. Some of these letters became books of the Bible.

A Bible story from: Acts 16:11-40

Community Study: Seasoned Community—Open Doors for Gospel Work

- **Key Idea:** looking for opportunities to minister to others in grace and wisdom
- **Key Passage:** Colossians 4:2-6
- **Main Session:** OBS 47 (Paul and Silas in Philippi)

Recite the Core Belief Verse (3–5 minutes)

The verse below summarizes the teaching of the current passage. Read the verse out loud as a community. Read it again several times as a group until the whole community can recite it from memory.

8 Remember Jesus Christ, from David's seed, who was raised from the dead. This is according to my gospel message, 9 for which I am suffering to the point of being bound with chains as a criminal. But the word of God is not bound. 2 Timothy 2:8-9

OR

3:1 Now, brothers, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may rush and be glorified, as it also is with you. 2 Pray that we may be delivered from wicked and evil people, for not all have faith. 2
Thessalonians 3:1-2

Testimonies of Mission Participation (5 minutes)

Divide into groups of 2-3 people. Share opportunities God has provided for you to participate in God's mission.

These are some mission opportunities God has provided for me in the last weeks...

Read the Passage (3–5 minutes)

God invites his people to participate in his mission. The church community should look for open doors to serve God's work in the world. Read the passage below to learn about how God invites believers into his work.

2 Continue steadfastly in prayer. Stay alert in it in thanksgiving. 3 Pray together for us also, that God would open a door for the word, to speak the secret truth of Christ. Because of this, I am chained up. 4 Pray that I may make it clear, as I ought to speak. 5 Walk in wisdom toward those outside, and redeem the time. 6 Let your words always be with grace. Let them be seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you should answer each person.
Colossians 4:2-6

Discuss the Passage (10–15 minutes)

God's mission for the world is defining mark of the church. Believers should be ready for opportunities to serve God's work in the world. As a community, use the following questions to discuss the teaching of the biblical passage.

Brainstorm Together (5 minutes)

Think together about how the work of translation can open new opportunities for mission.

Our work of translation can open new ministry opportunities in these ways...

Pray to God (5 minutes)

Pray that God will open doors for your community to participate in his mission work.

Sing a Song (3–5 minutes)

Identify a song about God's mission and God's people participating in God's mission. Celebrate God's work of redemption in the world.

1. What instructions does this passage give to believers? How do these instructions shape a community of believers?
2. How does this passage teach believers to relate to the world?
3. What open doors has God brought to your community? How might God be inviting you to enter into these open doors as mission opportunities?
4. How can your community be ready for opportunities as God leads? How can your translation work directly connect with God's mission?

Movement 1: Understand the Story

Read each question aloud. Give the group time to answer before sharing the answer.

Observation Questions

47-01

What was the Roman name that Saul began to use?

He began to use the name "Paul."

Where did Paul and Silas go in Philippi to proclaim the good news about Jesus?

They went to a place by the river outside the city where people gathered to pray.

Who did Paul and Silas meet by the river?

Paul and Silas met a woman merchant named Lydia who loved and worshipped God.

47-02

What made it possible for Lydia to believe in Jesus?

God enabled Lydia to understand the message about Jesus.

What did Paul and Silas do to Lydia after she believed?

They baptized Lydia and her family.

Where did Lydia invite Paul and Silas to stay?

Lydia invited Paul and Silas to stay at her house.

47-03

Where did Paul and Silas often meet with people?

Paul and Silas often met with people at the place where Jews prayed.

Who would follow Paul and Silas as they walked to the place where Jews prayed?

Every day a slave girl possessed by a demon followed Paul and Silas as they went there.

What power did the slave girl have?

The slave girl possessed by a demon predicted the future and made her masters a lot of money as a fortuneteller.

47-04

What did the demon-possessed slave girl keep yelling when she saw Paul and Silas?

She yelled, "These men are servants of the Most High God. They are telling you the way to be saved!"

What did Paul think about what the demon-possessed slave girl was yelling?

Paul was annoyed by what she was saying.

47-05

Eventually, how did Paul respond to the demon's testimony?

Paul commanded the demon to leave the slave girl.

By what name did Paul command the demon to leave the slave girl?

Paul gave this command in the name of Jesus.

What did the demon do?

The demon left the slave girl right away.

47-06

How did the masters of the slave girl respond after the demon left her?

The men who owned the slave girl became very angry!

Why were the owners of the slave girl angry that the demon was gone?

They realized that people would no longer pay money to them for her to tell people about the future.

47-07

Where did the owners of the slave girl take Paul and Silas?

They took Paul and Silas to the Roman authorities.

What did the Roman authorities do to Paul and Silas?

They beat Paul and Silas and threw them in jail.

47-08

Where did they put Paul and Silas?

They put Paul and Silas in the part of the prison with the most guards, and they attached their feet to large pieces of wood.

What were Paul and Silas doing in the middle of the night in jail?

They were singing songs of praise to God.

47-09

What happened while Paul and Silas were singing?

There was a violent earthquake, the prison doors flew open, and the prisoners' chains fell off.

47-10

What did the jailer see when he woke up?

When the jailer woke up, he saw the prison doors open.

Why was the jailer afraid?

He thought all the prisoners had escaped and that the Roman authorities would kill him for letting them go.

What was the jailer ready to do to himself?

The jailer was ready to kill himself.

What did Paul tell the jailer?

Paul told the jailer not to kill himself and that none of the prisoners had left.

47-11

What question did the jailer ask Paul?

He asked, "What must I do to be saved?"

What did Paul say the jailer had to do in order to be saved?

Paul told him to believe in Jesus, the Master.

Where did the jailer take Paul and Silas?

The jailer took Paul and Silas to his home and washed their wounds.

What did Paul say when he arrived at the house?

Paul preached the good news about Jesus to everyone in his house.

47-12

Who believed in Jesus as a result of Paul's preaching?

The jailer and his whole family believed in Jesus.

What did Paul and Silas do to the jailer and his family after they believed in Jesus?

Paul and Silas baptized them.

What did the jailer give to Paul and Silas?

The jailer gave Paul and Silas a meal.

How did they all feel?

They rejoiced together.

47-13

What did the city leaders do to Paul and Silas?

The next day the city leaders released Paul and Silas from prison and told them to leave Philippi.

Who did Paul and Silas visit before they left the city of Philippi?

Paul and Silas visited Lydia and some other friends and left the city.

What kind of progress was the good news making?

The good news about Jesus kept spreading, and the Church kept growing.

47-14

What kind of things did Paul and other church leaders do as leaders of the early believers?

Paul and other leaders traveled to many cities, preached about Jesus, and wrote letters to encourage and teach the believers in the churches.

What happened to some of the letters from Paul and other followers of Jesus who were leaders who wrote to the believers in the churches?

Some of these letters became books of the Bible.

Movement 2: Theological Questions

What Does This Story Teach Us?

1. What does it look like for people to experience God saving them from their sins? What do the stories about Lydia and the jailer teach us about how God saves people?
2. How does God's power bring about a change in people's lives? How does this story show God's power to change people?
3. How can believers/churches focus on the spread of the gospel and the health of church communities? What does this story teach us about focusing on spreading the gospel and strengthening churches?

Movement 3: Live It Out

Guide the group to discuss practical obedience from this story and name concrete next steps.

Personal Implications & Applications From The Story

1. How have you come to believe in Jesus? How did you come to experience God saving you from your sins?
2. How has God powerfully changed, saved, and rescued you from your life of sin?
3. What other values can compete for your loyalty to Jesus?
4. Think about this week. Where does "Paul and Silas in Philippi" challenge you to obey God in a practical way?
5. How does this key idea shape one decision you need to make right now: The story of Paul and Silas in Philippi teaches us how the mission of Jesus is to preach the gospel to all people groups in the world.

Movement 4: Retell the Story

Invite the group to retell the story several times until they can tell it clearly and faithfully.

Church Ministry

1. Can someone retell "Paul and Silas in Philippi" from beginning to end in their own words?
2. Retell this story again, but focus on what God did at each key moment.
3. Retell the story in three parts: beginning, middle, and ending. What changed in each part?
4. If you were teaching this story to your family tonight, how would you tell it simply and clearly?

Ministry Preparation: Who in your church or community needs to hear this story, and how can you prepare to tell it clearly and faithfully?

Ministry Implementation: Share this story in a church, family, or small-group setting. Invite listeners to notice what God does and how people respond.

Ministry Reflection: After sharing, reflect on what people understood, what questions they asked, and how this story can strengthen the church.

Movement 5: Share It

Help each person plan how they will share this story with others before the next gathering.

Mission Engagement

1. Who is one specific person you will share "Paul and Silas in Philippi" with this week?
2. When and where will you share this story with them?
3. What is the one main truth from this story you want them to remember?

Report-back next meeting: Who did you share with, and what happened?

Witness Preparation: Pray for one person or group who needs to hear this story. Practice telling the story simply and clearly before you go.

Witness Implementation: Share this story with the person or group you named. Ask what they notice about God, Jesus, and the good news.

Witness Reflection: Record what happened after you shared. What did the person understand, how did they respond, and what follow-up is needed?