

NOTES

Memory Verse

Acts 16:31 (ESV)

"Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."

Leader's Note

As you facilitate discussion, continually bring the conversation back to the Gospel. While God certainly works powerfully in our circumstances, the central message of Acts 16 is not that worship guarantees immediate breakthrough. Rather, faithful worship bears witness to the lordship of Christ, and God uses that witness to draw people to Himself. Encourage the group to see their everyday workplaces, campuses, homes, and neighbourhoods as places where faithful worship can become a powerful testimony that points others to Jesus.

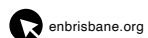


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OPENING PRAYER

Invite someone to pray, asking the Holy Spirit to help the group see Jesus more clearly, strengthen faith in difficult seasons, and teach us how to worship Him regardless of our circumstances.

OPENING QUESTION_(OPTIONAL)

Share about a time when something difficult in your life unexpectedly became an opportunity for good. Looking back, what did God teach you through it?

WORD

16 As we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by fortune-telling. 17 She followed Paul and us, crying out, “These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation.” 18 And this she kept doing for many days. Paul, having become greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.” And it came out that very hour. 19 But when her owners saw that their hope of gain was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers. 20 And when they had brought them to the magistrates, they said, “These men are Jews, and they are disturbing our city. 21 They advocate customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to accept or practice.” 22 The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates tore the garments off them and gave orders to beat them with rods. 23 And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely. 24 Having received this order, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. 25 About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, 26 and 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 bonds were unfastened. 27 When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. 28 But Paul cried with a loud voice, “Do not harm yourself, for we are all here.” 29 And the jailer called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas. 30 Then he brought them out and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” 31 And they said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.” 32 And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. 33 And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptised at once, he and all his family. 34 Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God.

- Acts 16:16–34 (ESV)

Paul and Silas are on their second missionary journey. After faithfully obeying God's leading, they arrive in Philippi. There they set a young woman free from spiritual oppression, but instead of receiving gratitude, they are falsely accused, publicly beaten, imprisoned, and placed in stocks in the innermost cell. Their suffering was not the result of disobedience—it was the cost of faithful obedience.

WORD (cont...)

At midnight, instead of complaining or giving up hope, Paul and Silas pray and sing praises to God while the other prisoners listen. God responds with an earthquake that opens every prison door and loosens every chain—not only theirs, but everyone's. Their worship ultimately leads to the salvation of the Philippian jailer and his entire household.

Luke reminds us that the greatest miracle wasn't simply that prison doors opened—it was that hearts opened to Jesus.

MAIN REFLECTION POINTS

1. Worship is our response before the breakthrough.

Paul and Silas didn't wait until God rescued them before they worshipped. They worshipped while they were still wounded, chained, and sitting in the darkest part of the prison. Biblical worship is not denial of pain—it is a declaration that Jesus remains worthy regardless of our circumstances.

Our culture often tells us to worship when life is going well. The Gospel teaches us that Jesus is worthy because of who He is, not because of what is happening around us. For many of us, "midnight" may look like workplace stress, financial uncertainty, unanswered prayer, parenting challenges, relationship struggles, anxiety, or waiting for God's timing. Disciples learn to worship through every season because Christ is Lord over every season.

2. Your worship impacts people you cannot see.

Luke makes an important observation:

"The prisoners were listening."

Paul and Silas probably had no idea who was watching.

Neither do we. Our friends, children, classmates, colleagues, neighbours and family members often learn more about our faith by watching how we respond under pressure than by listening to our words. When God shook the prison, every prisoner's chains came loose—not just Paul and Silas'. God often uses one believer's faithfulness to become part of someone else's freedom.

Our worship is deeply personal—but it is never merely private.

MAIN REFLECTION POINTS (cont...)

3. Every miracle ultimately points people to Jesus.

The climax of the story is not the earthquake.

It is the jailer's question:

"Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

Paul's answer remains the Gospel today:

"Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved."

The greatest miracle in Acts 16 is not the release of prisoners.

It is transformed people.

The Gospel always moves beyond changed circumstances to changed hearts.

Jesus is not simply the One who rescues us from difficult moments. He is the Lord who rescues us from sin, reconciles us to God, and invites us into new life.

Living It Out

Following Jesus means choosing worship even when circumstances have not yet changed.

This week consider:

Where is your current "midnight" season?

What would it look like to intentionally worship Jesus in that place?

Who might be watching your response?

How could your faith become a doorway for someone else to encounter Christ?

Remember:

Our greatest testimony is often not that God removed every difficulty, but that Jesus remained faithful in the middle of it.

CLOSING PRAYER

Pray together for:

- Those walking through a "midnight" season to experience God's peace and presence.
- Courage to worship Christ regardless of circumstances.
- Friends, family members, colleagues and neighbours who are "listening" to our lives, that they would encounter Jesus.
- Opportunities this week to share the hope of the Gospel.
- Every Nation Brisbane to be a church whose worship points many people to Christ.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1.

Paul and Silas suffered because they obeyed God, not because they had failed Him. Why is this distinction important for followers of Jesus today?

2.

What does worship practically look like during a difficult season? How can we move beyond worship being dependent on our emotions or circumstances?

3.

"The prisoners were listening."

Who might be watching your life right now? How could your response to pressure point someone toward Jesus?

4.

The jailer asked, "What must I do to be saved?"

How does this remind us that every miracle and every testimony should ultimately point people to Christ rather than ourselves?

5.

What is one practical way our Lifegroup can become a community that helps people worship through difficult seasons and boldly share the hope of Jesus with others?

Gospel Moment

If you've never placed your trust in Jesus, Acts 16 gives a wonderfully simple invitation.

The jailer asked the most important question anyone can ask:

"What must I do to be saved?"

Paul answered:

"Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved."

Jesus lived the perfect life we could never live, died for our sins, rose again, and now offers forgiveness, new life, and eternal hope to everyone who trusts in Him.

If you're exploring faith or ready to follow Jesus, speak with your Lifegroup leader today. We'd love to pray with you and help you begin your journey of following Christ.