

Chain Reaction

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In Acts 16:20, Paul and Silas have just faced a crowd, that rose up against them and beat them, for proclaiming customs not like those of the their own. The chief magistrates then tore off their robes, only adding to the humiliation, and ordered the chief jailer to guard them securely. He received this command and threw them into the inner prison, fastening their feet into stocks. Around midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them.

Let us take a moment to pause there. Take a moment to think of our own lives. Today we face our own onslaught of daily struggles and difficulties, but in all honesty, our modern day trials pale in comparison to the pain and anguish that Paul and Silas had to deal with. These men not only kept the faith, but demonstrated it outwardly; praying and singing to God. We will continue to examine the chain of events set off by their faith in verse 26 and following.

Suddenly there came a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison house were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's chains were unfastened. And when the jailer had been roused out of sleep and had seen the prison doors opened, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing the prisoners had escaped. But Paul cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here!" And he called for the lights and rushed in and, trembling with fear, he fell down before Paul and Silas, and after he brought them out, he said "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" And they said "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your household." They spoke the word of the Lord to him together with all who were in his house. And he took them that very hour in the night and washed their wounds, and immediately he was baptized, he and all his household (Acts 16: 26-33).

As written in verse 33, the jailer and ALL his household were baptized. If only we could know how many souls were saved that night; all because Paul and Silas relied on their faith, and demonstrated joy and praise to God while in prison, under mental duress and physical suffering.

Each day every single one of us wakes up with our own mountain to climb, whether it be a stressful job, financial strain, grief, illness, marital strife, challenges with trying to build a Christian home in a sinful world; the list goes on. Insert your problems here. We must still walk in Faith. Faith that God is on his throne and will see us through the steepest summits and scariest descents.

God used Paul and Silas' extreme adversity to help spread the Gospel. The jailer went from contemplating taking his own life to trembling at their feet, asking what he must do

to be saved, all because Paul and Silas chose to worship and praise God in ALL circumstances. This brings to mind another verse written by Paul, Philippians 4:11, "Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am." We can use this scripture as motivation to find contentment in the daily grind of life. Finding contentment in the mundane often leads your mind to think on things in a more spiritual manner, illuminating the blessings God has placed before you. Paul again extends his wisdom in Colossians 3 urging them to "keep seeking the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on the things that are on earth."

You never know when a seemingly ordinary interaction with someone may lead to a chain reaction of not only saving one soul, but perhaps a soul and their entire household. Paul and Silas were not consumed with thought about their own wellbeing; they submitted themselves to God, and praised his name. I can personally admit that I often ease into my day focused on my own challenges, my busy schedule, and my own family. It takes a concerted effort to "take off" daily self-mindedness and see the needs of others and opportunities God is setting before us.

Three Simple Ways We Can Demonstrate Our Faith Daily

Put on the Word – Start off right by setting your mind right. "Set your minds on the things that are above, not on the things that are on earth" (Col. 3:2).

Share the Word – Don't be afraid to act on an opportunity to turn conversation to God. "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel" (Rom. 1:16).

Be the Word – Exemplify God in your daily actions. "Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the Gospel of Christ" (Phil. 1:27)

We must strive to demonstrate faith in all circumstances, and perhaps, we might just turn one everyday moment into a chain reaction of obedience and generations of souls saved.