

Paul and Silas in Prison

Acts 16:16-40

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A slave girl who was possessed by an evil spirit and who made a great deal of money for her owners by predicting the future started following Paul and his companions shouting, "These men are servants of God Most High. They have come to tell you how to be saved."

She followed them for days until Paul said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ, come out of her." And it did.

The girl's owners were furious. They dragged Paul and Silas before the city officials who had them beaten and thrown in prison.

Around midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing when suddenly an earthquake shook the prison. All the doors flew open and the prisoners' chains fell off. The jailer woke up and assumed the prisoners had escaped. He drew his sword intending to kill himself. But Paul shouted, "Stop! We're all still here!"

The jailer asked Paul and Silas how to be saved. They shared the word of the Lord with him. He and his entire family believed and were baptized. He took them into his home, tended their wounds, and fed them.

The next morning the city officials sent word Paul and Silas were free to go. They refused, "They had us publicly beaten and imprisoned without a trial, and we are Roman citizens. Now they want us to leave quietly? No! Tell them to come here and release us themselves."

The city officials came, apologized, brought them out of the prison, and begged them to leave the city. Paul and Silas returned to the home of Lydia to meet with believers. Then they left the city.