

In the book of Acts, we read about how Paul and Silas were wrongly thrown into prison for casting a demon out of a slave girl. Look at Acts 16:22-24, “The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates tore the garments off them and gave orders to beat them with rods. And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely. Having received this order, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.” So, even though they had done nothing wrong, in fact - they did something great, they cast a demon out of a poor slave girl who was being used to make some wicked men rich.

Not only had they done nothing wrong and did not deserve to be in prison, they also certainly didn't deserve to be beat with rods! Most people, Christians included, would have been complaining loud and strong about this injustice! However, in the next verse (vs. 25) we read, “About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them...” Notice first off that Paul and Silas were not complaining or griping or demanding their lawyer! They were singing and praying. But also notice that next phrase, “the prisoners were listening to them...” The fellow prisoners, who most likely had done something to deserve being in prison, were in shock...here were these two guys who in spite of their terrible and even painful situation, were praying and singing! The other prisoners probably thought, “WHO are these guys???”

The truth we can learn from this is the fact that whatever we do, people watch us. And especially when we claim to be followers of Jesus Christ - people watch how we react to difficult circumstances as well as good circumstances. And our lives, as Paul and Silas did here, should show the truth, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.” (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Remember what Paul wrote to Timothy, “Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.” (1 Timothy 4:12) We are to be **EXAMPLES** that others will watch and say, “What do they have that I don't have?”

Imagine the thoughts going through the prisoners as they listened to Paul and Silas praying and singing. “What do these guys have that makes them so joyous even in the midst of being in prison?” And most likely, “I wish I knew what they know!”

When people watch your life do they see something different, or do they see someone who simply claims to be a follower of Jesus Christ, yet lives the same way everyone else does?