



Sermon Notes

Topic: Lessons from Paul & Silas in Prison

Bible Passage: Acts 16:22–34

Preacher: Ps Brony Monk

Date: 30 August 2026

Study Guide Overview & Small Group Questions/Discussions

1. Opening Question - What is your natural response when life feels unfair, painful or completely outside your control? Do you tend to:

• complain? • withdraw? • overthink? • try to fix everything? • become angry? • pray? • worship? • look for someone to blame?

Leader note: Allow this to be honest rather than overly spiritual. The sermon itself acknowledges the very human responses we might have had in Paul and Silas' situation—anger, fear, desperation, pain and even overthinking.

2. Read the Passage - Acts 16:22–34

3. Setting the Scene

Paul and Silas had been preaching the gospel in Philippi. After Paul cast a demon out of a slave girl, her owners became angry because they had lost their source of income. They dragged Paul and Silas before the authorities, where they were beaten and imprisoned. This wasn't simply an uncomfortable situation.

They had been: • falsely accused • publicly attacked • stripped • severely flogged • imprisoned • placed in the inner cell • restrained in stocks

4. Lesson One — How We Respond Matters

One of the most striking things about this story isn't actually the earthquake. It's what happens after the earthquake. The prison doors open. The chains fall off. Paul and Silas are free. And yet... They stay. The other prisoners stay too. They don't run. They don't take advantage of their freedom. Instead, Paul calls out to the jailer and prevents him from taking his own life. The result? The jailer and his household encounter Jesus, believe and are baptised.

Discuss: Why do you think Paul and Silas stayed?

The text doesn't tell us exactly what conversation took place, so we shouldn't pretend to know their motivations with certainty. But the sermon draws our attention to their willingness to remain faithful and wait for God rather than simply running when circumstances changed.

Go deeper:

1. Have you ever wanted God to remove a circumstance from your life, but perhaps God was wanting to do something within that circumstance?

2. How can we become so focused on asking God to change our circumstances that we fail to ask what He might be doing through them?



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3. What might it look like to ask: "God, what are You doing here?" rather than only: "God, how do I get out of here?"
4. Have you ever seen something difficult in hindsight and realised God was using it for a purpose you couldn't see at the time?

5. What does faithfulness look like when God hasn't changed the situation yet?

5. The "My Chains" Question The sermon asks a challenging question:

"Maybe, just maybe, my chains... my prison cell... has less to do with me than it has to do with someone else encountering Jesus." Sit with this for a moment.

Discuss carefully: • What does this statement challenge in us? • How does it change our perspective on suffering?
• Is there a danger in saying this too simplistically? • How can we acknowledge genuine pain while still asking God to use our circumstances for His purposes?

Important distinction This does not mean:

"Your suffering doesn't matter." Nor does it mean: "God will always remove the prison." Rather, the sermon challenges us to recognise that **God sees beyond what we can see**, and our response in suffering can become a witness to others.

6. Lesson Two — We Can Worship in All Circumstances - Read Acts 16:25 again.

Paul and Silas didn't worship **after** the breakthrough. They worshipped **before** it. They had no idea that an earthquake was coming. They weren't singing because they knew God was about to open the prison doors. They were worshipping because **God was worthy**. The sermon makes this distinction very deliberately: their worship was not a formula for getting God to change their circumstances.

Discuss: How is worship different when we worship God for who He is rather than for what we want Him to do?

7. What Were They Singing?

The sermon imagines that Paul and Silas may have been singing Psalms they knew well. What can the following Psalms teach us about what authentic worship can look like? Psalm 8; 13; 16; 23; 28; 46; 44 & 105; 103; 108; 121

Biblical worship doesn't require pretending everything is okay.

Psalm 13 contains both: "How long, Lord?" and "I trust in your unfailing love."

Discuss: Could worship include: • grief? • questions? • tears? • disappointment? • fear? • remembering?
• declaring truth when we don't feel it?

8. Worship Changes Our Focus The sermon says:

"We worship because it reminds us of who God is and what he has already done."

Worship doesn't necessarily change the **circumstance**. But it can change what has our **attention**.

Instead of: **"Look at my prison."** we begin to say: **"Look at my God."**



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Discuss: What are the things that most easily capture your attention when life gets difficult? Then ask:
What truths about God help you lift your eyes above those circumstances?

9. Corporate Worship

The other prisoners were listening. That's an important detail. Paul and Silas weren't worshipping privately with headphones on. Other people were hearing them.

Worship in community can encourage others and give us a shared language for remembering who God is and what He has done.

Discuss: 1. Have you ever been encouraged by someone else's worship during a difficult season? 2. How can someone else's faith strengthen ours? 3. Why is it important that Christians worship together, rather than trying to follow Jesus entirely on our own? 4. What might someone who doesn't know Jesus learn about God by watching how Christians respond to suffering?

10. Worship Is Ultimately About God - "Ultimately and absolutely most importantly - worship is not about us at all. We worship because GOD IS WORTHY!"

Discuss: What does it mean for worship to be a response to God's worth rather than our circumstances?

Read: Romans 12:1 - How does Paul describe our lives as worship?

Question: If worship is more than singing, what might worship look like on Monday morning?

11. Jesus Is Worthy Bring the conversation to the cross.

The sermon reminds us that even if God never did another thing for us, **Jesus has already done enough to make Him worthy of our worship.**

He: • gave His life for us • bore our sin • demonstrated His love and grace • defeated sin and death • opened the way for us to return to God.

Read Philippians 2:6–11. Discuss: 1. What does this passage reveal about Jesus? 2. What makes Jesus worthy of our worship? 3. How does remembering the cross change the way we respond when life is difficult? 4. Is your worship currently more influenced by what God has done for you or by what you want God to do for you?

12. Going Deeper — The Five Practices - The sermon gives five practical ways to cultivate a life of worship.

1. Find something every day to be thankful for. What could you intentionally thank God for today?
2. Share testimonies. Who could you tell about something God has done in your life?
3. Change your soundtrack. What are you allowing to fill your mind and shape your attention?
4. Pray. How could you intentionally ask God to cultivate a heart of worship in you?
5. Cultivate a love of God's Word. What would it look like for Scripture to become the place you go to remember who God is?



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13. "Because You Are..."

Use the final declarations from the sermon as a group exercise. Have one person read each statement slowly. After each one, allow the group to respond: "You are worthy of our praise."

For example:

You are the Alpha and Omega — the beginning and the end.

You are worthy of our praise.

You are the Creator of the heavens and the earth.

You are worthy of our praise.

You are my help in time of need.

You are worthy of our praise.

You are love.

You are worthy of our praise.

You are my refuge, my shelter and my anchor in the storm.

You are worthy of our praise.

You are forgiving, full of mercy and grace.

You are worthy of our praise.

You are my healer, my redeemer, my Saviour and my friend.

You are worthy of our praise.

You are the Way, the Truth and the Life.

You are worthy of our praise.

You are the Lion of Judah and the Lamb of God.

You are worthy of our praise.

You are the King of kings.

You are worthy of our praise.

You are the Lord of lords.

You are worthy of our praise.

You are the Name above all names.

You are worthy of our praise.

The sermon concludes with exactly this declaration: **God is worthy of our praise.**