

LESSON 10

PAUL AND SILAS IN PRISON

BEFORE YOU TEACH

The Second Missionary Trip

Paul began his second missionary trip about three years after completing his first trip. Prior to the second journey, Paul and Barnabas had a dispute (Acts 15:36-39). As a result, Paul and Barnabas separated and went on separate missionary journeys. On his second journey, Silas accompanied Paul. Silas was a leader in the Jerusalem church and was one of the brethren chosen to bring the letter from the Jerusalem Council to the Gentile Christians in Antioch (Acts 15:22-23). Timothy and Luke also joined them for a portion of the journey.

In addition to revisiting churches from the first journey, Paul and Silas pushed further west, as far as Greece. Their journey was as followed:

- | | | | |
|---------------|---------------|------------------|-------------|
| 1. Antioch | 2. Tarsus | 3. Derbe | 4. Lystra |
| 5. Iconium | 6. Troas | 7. Neapolis | 8. Philippi |
| 9. Amphipolis | 10. Apollonia | 11. Thessalonica | 12. Berea |
| 13. Athens | 14. Cenchreae | 15. Corinth | 16. Ephesus |
| 17. Caesarea | 18. Jerusalem | 19. Caesarea | 20. Antioch |

Roman Citizenship

Having Roman citizenship was very valuable because it meant that you were a member of the most powerful empire at that time. Citizens were under the protection of the Roman Empire, even in foreign lands. You could obtain citizenship by buying it, but the cost was enormous. On the other hand, if your parents were citizens, you would automatically be born a citizen, such was the case with Paul (Acts 22:28).

A Roman citizenship carried certain privileges. For example, Roman citizens were entitled to a fair trial while non-Romans could be tortured or whipped without a trial. While in Philippi, Paul and Silas were beaten without a trial, which was illegal. This was the reason why the officials were alarmed when they discovered that Paul was in fact a Roman citizen by birth.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENTS

Many people find it difficult to praise God while experiencing suffering. But Paul said, "For when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor 12:10b). God reminds people of His guidance by allowing them to be tried. Remind your students that God is more powerful than anything they will encounter in the world. When they rely on Him, He will protect them and strengthen them. During their trials, they may find it difficult to praise God, but remind them that God will open a path for them, like when He delivered Paul and Silas from prison. Encourage your students with the knowledge that God will always protect them. Their sole duty is to pray to and praise Him.

BIBLE TEXT

Acts 15:35-41; 16:11-40

BIBLE TRUTHS

1. God protects His faithful workers.
2. God's workers praised God in all circumstances.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. To remind the students that God is with them when they face trials, and that He will help them through their problems.
2. To illustrate the importance of singing hymns in all circumstances to praise God.

MEMORY VERSE

"Sing to God, sing praises to His name."

(Psalm 68:4a)

PRAYER

In the name of the Lord Jesus, we pray. Lord Jesus, thank You for caring for us each day. You instructed Your disciples to spread the Gospel to everyone. We know that not everyone will accept Your truth. Today, we will study how Paul and Silas preached Your gospel in Philippi. While they were in prison, they sang hymns to praise You. Their actions remind us that we should preach the gospel, sing praises to You, and thank You in all circumstances. Teach us to praise You not only with our lips but with our hearts as well. May all glory be to You, our Lord Jesus. Hallelujah! Amen.

VOCABULARY

missionary: a person sent by a church into an area to preach

synagogue: a house of worship for Jews

fortune-telling: the act of predicting things that will happen in the future

stocks: a device used to punish and torture prisoners; it consisted of two pieces of wood with holes that clamped down over the prisoner's legs and hands

Roman citizen: a person who is a subject of the Roman Empire; this status held special privileges

REVIEW

Last week, we learned about Paul's first missionary journey. Paul and Barnabas were led by the Holy Spirit to different cities to preach God's word. In each city, they told everyone about Jesus and His gospel. Many people heard their message and believed. However, some of the Jews did not accept the message and were jealous of Paul and Barnabas. They plotted to kill them but God protected them. After two years, Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch. Everyone praised God for His love and guidance and for leading many people to believe in Jesus.

BIBLE STORY

Paul and Silas Travel to Philippi

A few years after his first missionary trip, Paul really wanted to return to visit the brothers and sisters he had met during the first journey. Paul decided to go on a second missionary journey. For this journey, he took a man named Silas.

Paul and Silas' first stops were the cities of Derbe, Lystra, and Iconium. The believers were overjoyed to see Paul again. They worshipped together and praised God.

Next, Paul and Silas wanted to go to the cities nearby, but the Holy Spirit prevented them from going there. So, Paul and Silas traveled to a city called Troas. During the night, Paul had a dream from God. In the dream, Paul saw a man from Macedonia begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." Paul knew clearly that God wanted them to spread the gospel there. Paul and Silas traveled by ship to Macedonia and soon they arrived at a city in Macedonia called Philippi.

A Woman Called Lydia

The city of Philippi did not have a synagogue, as there were not many Jewish people living there. As a result, Paul and Silas preached in open areas in the city. When the Sabbath came, Paul and Silas went to a riverbank where they knew people gathered to pray. There, they began speaking to the women about Jesus. One of the women was called Lydia. She sold purple cloth and worshipped God. But Lydia had never heard the good news about Jesus Christ. As Paul was teaching them about what Jesus had done, the Lord opened Lydia's heart toward Paul's words. She believed that the Lord Jesus had come to die for her, so she decided to get baptized. After her baptism, Lydia invited Paul and Silas to stay in her house while they

preached in Philippi.

A Slave Girl

While Paul and Silas continued to preach in Philippi, a slave girl began following them, shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God. They are telling you how you can be saved." She followed Paul and Silas around for many days. How would you feel if someone followed you for many days? Yes, you would be very annoyed and you wouldn't be able to preach as well. The slave girl had an evil spirit inside her that allowed her to predict the future. Many people would pay her masters great sums of money for her to tell them their future.

At first, Paul just ignored her but after a few days, Paul finally turned around and said to the evil spirit, "In the name of Jesus Christ, I command you to come out of her!" The evil spirit immediately left the girl, and she stopped shouting and following Paul.

Paul and Silas Are Imprisoned

When the slave girl's masters saw that she was unable to tell people their futures, they were very angry. They could no longer make lots of money because she did not have the ability to tell the future anymore. They took Paul and Silas and brought them to the leaders. The owners said, "These Jews are making much trouble in our city. They are teaching things that are against Roman law." The leaders tore off Paul and Silas' robes and commanded that they be beaten. The crowd joined in the attack against them and beat them with rods. They hit them with these rods many times and then threw them into prison.

The jailer placed Paul and Silas in the inner prison. He placed their feet in stocks to keep them from fleeing. That

night, Paul and Silas were alone in a dark prison cell. If you were Paul and Silas, how would you feel? [Allow students to respond.] Normally, we would be very upset. We would wonder why we have been treated so badly when we have not done anything wrong. We may cry and just want to go home. Furthermore, we may feel that God's work is too difficult. We may even be angry with God for allowing us to suffer unfairly. To most people, it may have seemed like God had forgotten about Paul and Silas and that He had left them in prison without any way to escape. But God did not forget them.

Paul and Silas Praise God

As Paul and Silas sat in the prison cell, they did not feel sorry for themselves nor were they upset or angry with God. Rather, they prayed and sang praises to God. Paul and Silas knew that though their suffering was great, the Lord Jesus' suffering had been greater. The Lord Jesus was beaten, laughed at, and crucified on the cross. Paul and Silas were joyful that they too could suffer like the Lord Jesus for doing something good, for preaching the gospel.

As Paul and Silas sang and prayed, the other prisoners listened to them. They must have wondered: who were these two people who could be so joyful in such a horrible prison? Who was this Jesus to whom they were praying and singing? How can I also believe in Jesus, so I can have this joy?

An Earthquake

While Paul and Silas continued to pray and sing hymns, the ground began to shake and tremble. The trembling turned into a great earthquake and the whole prison began to shake. The walls and floor shook so hard that the doors of the cells swung open and the chains fell off each prisoner. What would you have done if you saw the doors opened and you were no longer chained? Yes, most prisoners would have thought that this was the perfect chance to escape.

When the jailer saw that the cell doors were open, he assumed that all the prisoners had escaped. He became very afraid because his job was to make sure the prisoners were securely locked in their cells. If even one prisoner

escaped, he would be killed. He decided to kill himself instead. He drew his sword and was ready to take his own life when Paul cried out with a loud voice, "Do not harm yourself, we are all here."

The jailer dropped his sword and then asked for a torch so that he could see more clearly. He ran into Paul and Silas' cell and saw that all the prisoners were still there. Not one had escaped!

The Jailer Accepts the Gospel

The jailer brought Paul and Silas out of their cell. He knelt before them and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household." Paul and Silas then preached to the jailer and his household. The jailer was amazed by the earthquake that freed the prisoners. But he was more amazed that God made the prisoners stay and not escape. Since they did not escape, he did not kill himself. Thanks to all these amazing events, the jailer and his family accepted Jesus and were baptized that night. Afterwards, the jailer invited Paul and Silas to his home, where they ate and rejoiced together.

Paul and Silas Set Free

The next day, the leaders sent messengers to the jailer to release Paul and Silas. The jailer was very pleased with the news and ran to tell them that they were now free. Upon hearing the news, Paul said, "We are Roman citizens and yet we were beaten and put into jail without cause. I will not leave. Let the leaders come themselves and get us out."

When the leaders learned that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens, they were afraid. They had made a big mistake by beating and imprisoning Roman citizens without hearing their story first. The leaders could be punished for this. So they came and apologized to Paul and Silas. They begged them to leave the city because they didn't want any more trouble. Paul and Silas left the prison and returned to Lydia's house. They continued to travel to other towns to tell people about Jesus and His wonderful deeds.

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

1. Paul was instructed by God to go to Macedonia through a vision. True.
2. The slave girl's masters became angry and had Paul arrested because Paul had cast out the evil spirit in the slave girl so she could no longer tell people their future and earn money for it. True.
3. When the earthquake shook the ground and opened the prison doors, all the prisoners escaped. False; none of the prisoners escaped.
4. Paul stopped the jailer from killing himself by revealing that the prisoners were still there. True.
5. How did Lydia respond to Paul's message? The Lord opened Lydia's heart to understand and she chose to get baptized.
6. What did Paul and Silas do in prison? They prayed and praised God by singing hymns.
7. What did the leaders find out about Paul and Silas that made them afraid? They were Roman citizens.

MEMORY VERSE PRACTICE

Please reinforce the memory verse every week.
You can practice the memory verse with your students anytime during class.

"Sing to God, sing praises to His name." (Psalm 68:4a)

SPIRITUAL TEACHING & LIFE APPLICATION

The Power of Hymns

From our story, we learned that Paul and Silas loved to sing hymns, even when they were hurting and suffering in prison. Do you like to sing hymns to praise God? We can sing hymns to praise God anytime, anywhere.

God loves to hear our voices, and He values our praises very much. When we sing and praise God, it can do wonderful things because we are glorifying God.

One time, when the people were moving the ark into the temple, the people sang and played instruments praising and thanking the Lord. As they were praising God, a huge cloud filled the temple and the glory of the Lord filled the temple.

Through singing hymns and reflecting on the lyrics, God comforts, strengthens and draws us closer to Him. As a result, we have the power to overcome the fear, sorrows, and temptations from our trials.

Hymns can also help us overcome evil spirits. King Saul

was possessed by an evil spirit that troubled him. Whenever the evil spirit disturbed him, he would have David play a psalm from his harp. The evil spirit would leave King Saul and he would be at peace again.

We should remember to sing hymns to God regardless of how we feel. Try to memorize the hymns that we sing, so that we can glorify God anytime and anywhere.

Testimony

There was a little boy who was afraid to go to the bathroom by himself at home. He asked his mother to go with him. His mother encouraged him to be brave because Jesus was always with him. She then told him that as he went to the bathroom, he should sing the chorus to "Do Not Be Afraid" and she would sing with him. As the little boy went alone to the bathroom, he sang the hymn loudly. He could also hear his mother singing the hymn from another room. He learned that he did not need to be afraid because Jesus was with him everywhere and that he could sing hymns to God whenever he felt afraid.

The Power of God's Protection

As God's most precious children, we are protected by God's power. Just as it was with Paul and Silas, as long as we turn to God and trust in Him, His protection is always with us. Let's listen to the following testimony and see how the power of God protected this church member.

"You are my hiding place; You shall preserve me from trouble; You shall surround me with songs of deliverance." (Psalm 32:7)

Testimony

In the name of Jesus Christ, I would like to bear testimony of how God saved me from serious bodily injury. If it were not for His compassion and His grace, I would have become an invalid, or even worse, I would not be around to write this testimony.

On September 24, 1995, which was a Sunday, my wife and I rushed home (in Vancouver, Canada) at about 9:30

a.m. after shopping for flowers. We were in a hurry so that I could get to church by 10:00 a.m. to attend to some work. Just as we pulled into the driveway, we noticed a friend waiting for us. It was not usual for her to rise early on weekends, so we were pleasantly surprised when she showed up unannounced. My wife promptly got into the house, while our friend followed me up to the sundeck to help me hang the big basket of flowers from the roof rafter. I stood on a foot-high milk carton so that I could reach the edge of the roof. To hang the basket of flowers, I leaned over the railing as far as my body could flex. Since I had elevated myself higher than the protective level of the deck railing, I instinctively realized that it offered no barrier should I tip over. Sure enough, I suddenly plunged head first over the railing towards the driveway some 4.5 meters (14 feet) below. It happened so fast that I did not have time to be afraid. In a blink of an eye, I laid prostrate on the asphalt, totally dazed and unable to focus on or comprehend my surroundings.

When I recovered minutes later, I crawled on my hands and knees into the house and waited for the ambulance. I was rushed to hospital. Before departing, first aid staff tested my faculties to make sure that I had not suffered a serious concussion. I responded well, and they told me that I was very lucky. I could have hit my head hard on the driveway or the big clay flowerpot nearby. It was like there was a protective shield. A cursory examination of the rest of my body also revealed no injury. I was even able to walk, albeit slowly, to the ambulance without help. My wife and our friend followed in her car. Thank God for the presence of our friend, for it was very unusual for her to show up on the day and time that she did, considering that she has never visited us on a Sunday morning. Was it coincidence? Or was it God's plan? At the hospital, the attending physician checked me up, and discharged me on the condition that I rested from work for at least a week just to be on the safe side.

At this juncture, it is important to mention one other thing. Because I am extremely myopic, I wear very thick glasses. Even if I had not broken any bones, one would have expected my glasses at least to be shattered due to the impact. By the grace of God, my spectacles were lying on the driveway, about two meters (7 feet) from where I landed, in a position as if someone had carefully left them on a shelf. They were not even chipped or scratched. The only rational explanation I can offer for this rather miraculous occurrence is that God knew how important my glasses were to me. They would have been very expensive to replace because of their specification and I cannot function at all without them.

During my recuperation, many of our church brothers and sisters visited and prayed with me. I am grateful for their love and concern. Despite my condition, I was extremely happy to experience such true love. It has taught me that while we have our own families, we also have an extended family in church; and when catastrophe strikes unexpectedly, we can count on church members for hope and encouragement. Thank God for them.

It is important after such a traumatic experience to reflect, examine, and discover some reasons for its occurrence. Had I offended God in some way such that He had to give me a wake-up call to check myself, or was it pure coincidence? Was it sheer good luck that I came through safe and sound, or was it God's mercy and constant care? We often do not realize that we can offend God daily in our lives, through wrong speech, wrong thoughts, wrong actions or wrong intentions. And so, if we do not constantly examine ourselves, we may fail somewhat in our Christian living. In the one week of rest, I had plenty of time to do some self-examination. I wrestled with the issues and concluded that this was indeed a wake-up call for me. But God had, through His grace and compassion, protected me from serious physical harm. Two office colleagues of mine had fallen from lower heights before. One became a quadriplegic; the other shuffles around with a walking stick, whereas today, I am as good as new. Given this scenario, I am convinced that when we serve God in some way, His great love abides with us. When we meet with adversity, we can trust that He will deliver and protect us, so that we remain physically capable of doing more work for Him. This testimony is therefore given for the glory of His name.

Hallelujah, Amen.

HOMWORK ANSWER KEY

1. True
2. True
3. False; none of the prisoners escaped.
4. True
5. A
6. A
7. B
8. A
9. Answers may vary.

ACTIVITY

1

Sing Aloud to the Lord

- Objectives:**
1. To encourage students to praise God with hymns in all circumstances.
 2. To enable students to understand the power of singing hymns.
 3. To enable students to know that God speaks to us through the lyrics of the hymns.

Materials

- Index cards
- Hymn books
- Tape

Instructions

1. Write the hymnal numbers and scenarios from below onto separate flashcards.
2. Post the hymnal numbers on the board, but keep the scenarios.
3. Divide the class into teams of 3 or 4.
4. Distribute the scenarios evenly among the teams.
5. Have each team try to find a hymn that matches each of their scenarios.
6. Once all the teams are done matching their scenarios, ask the students to sit down.
7. Call up one team at a time to read their scenarios.
8. After each scenario, sing one verse from the matching hymn before moving onto the next scenario.
9. After all the teams have presented their scenarios and hymns, the teacher may ask the class to choose one to sing together to end the activity.

Teachers may create their own scenarios with appropriate hymns that are more familiar to the students.

Scenarios	Suggested Hymns
When I am happy	160, 162
When I should pray	410, 405, 259
When I am afraid of the dark and of being alone	151, 271
When I feel lonely and sad	265, 263, 339, 386, 406
When I want to thank God and praise Him for everything	393, 394, 248
When I need to pray for the Holy Spirit	358, 252, 408

E1 Year 3 Book 3 Lesson 10—Paul and Silas in Prison

Homework Assignment

Name: _____ Parent signature: _____ Date: _____

Bible Truths: 1. God protects His faithful workers.
2. God’s workers praised God in all circumstances.

Lesson Objectives: 1. To remind the students that God is with them when they face trials, and that He will help them through their problems.
2. To illustrate the importance of singing hymns in all circumstances to praise God.

Bible Reading: Please put a check mark in the space when you complete the reading each day.

Prayer: Please put a check mark in the space on the days you prayed to God.

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Bible Reading							
Prayer							

Memory Verse

Please write down this week's memory verse.

(Psalm 68:4a)

What I Learned from the Bible This Week

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Homework Assignment

Understanding What You Have Learned

True or False

1. Paul was instructed by God to go to Macedonia through a vision. _____
2. The slave girl's masters became angry because Paul had cast out the evil spirit in the slave girl so she could no longer tell people their future and earn money for it. _____
3. When the earthquake shook the ground and opened the prison doors, all the prisoners escaped. _____
4. The jailer and his family were baptized after Paul preached the word of the Lord to them. _____

Multiple Choice

5. ____ : What was the first city Paul and Silas arrived at in Macedonia?
 - a. Philippi
 - b. Philadelphia
 - c. Palestine
6. ____ : Who was the woman that accepted the gospel from Paul when he preached by the river?
 - a. Lydia
 - b. Miriam
 - c. Hannah
7. ____ : Who followed Paul and Silas when they were preaching in Philippi?
 - a. A dog
 - b. A slave girl that could predict the future
 - c. A beggar
8. ____ : What did Paul and Silas do in prison?
 - a. They prayed and sang hymns.
 - b. They got mad at God for letting them suffer.
 - c. They shouted at the jailer to let them out.

Short Answer

9. Name your favorite hymn that you sing to praise God. Why do you like this hymn?
-