

## **Keeping in Step with God's Plan**

### **Acts 16:16-40**

#### **1. Proper Heart Response Vs. 16-25**

Paul and Silas' response to being publicly humiliated, flogged and thrown into prison without the opportunity of experiencing a fair trial was one of praying and singing hymns to God.

Our response in times of blessing and times of suffering, must be filled with prayer and songs of praise so we can focus on our eternal reality and respond in a God honouring way.

#### **2. Provides Gospel Opportunities Vs. 26-34**

God used Paul and Silas' heart response, and a violent earthquake to create an opportunity for the prison guard to seek; experiencing salvation and baptism for his whole family.

Wherever God guides, His plan involves us to prayerfully see where God is already working, and proclaim the gospel so that others might believe, be baptized and be filled with joy.

#### **3. Protecting Gospel Freedom Vs. 35-40.**

Paul stood up against the unlawful harassment that he and Silas experienced for the purpose of securing the freedom of sharing the gospel within the city of Philippi.

The freedom to proclaim the gospel could be forfeit if believers do not prayerfully stand up against any unlawful actions in a God honouring way.

#### **Main Idea:**

Having a heart response focused on our eternal reality will allow us to effectively respond to the opportunities to proclaim the gospel and stand up when unlawful actions take place that will hinder the gospel.

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#### **Deployment:**

- 1) Usually in times of distress, our minds can know and think about the eternal realities that accompany our faith. However, what we know does not necessarily influence our feelings, as our hearts remain engulfed by the problems. God has provided music (the language of the heart) to help Biblical truths minister to our hearts.
  - a) How often do you allow your heart to be impacted by songs to God? Is it often enough? What God songs do you tend to sing and listen to that help you focus on the eternal reality rather than on temporal things?
- 2) "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths." (Proverbs 3:5-6). Daily, we prayerfully look to God for the next steps to the plan He has for us. How often do we remember that within his plan, He

has gives us opportunities to share our faith with those He places in our path? With this truth in mind, how might that impact our perspective when we are experiencing times of difficulty?

- 3) Just like Paul, there will be times when the church will need to stand up against unlawful treatment; when authorities cause interference towards the church in proclaiming the gospel. Provide examples of times when the church should stand up towards authorities? How the church behaves while taking a stand can either draw people to the gospel or ruin their testimony. What actions would you consider to be God honouring, and what actions would you consider gospel hindering?