

Acts 16:16-34

Freeing captives

Paul and Silas are in Philippi going to prayer, and meet a girl being exploited as a fortune-teller. They bring freedom to the exploited girl but end up in prison themselves. Singing in their chains, an earthquake opens the prison doors, but instead of escaping, Paul and Silas bring the gospel to the jailer and his family.

Read this week's passage:



Living Scripture

'Suddenly there was an earthquake, so violent that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were unfastened.' Acts 16:26

It is not only prison walls that can hold us captive. Sometimes it is oppressive systems or governments, poverty, addictions or lies we believe about ourselves or God. Paul and Silas bring freedom to the slave girl and the jailer in Jesus' name, but are then imprisoned and suffer for their faith. Galatians 5:1 tell that it is for freedom that Christ has set us free, but also warns that although we are free, we can easily be made slaves again through fear and sin. In what ways do you feel trapped? In what ways are you free? What freedoms might you surrender to help others?

Nelson Mandela said, 'To be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others.' Jesus came to set us free from sin and death, and we are to share that gift of freedom with others. What people around you need freedom? How could you stand with them or champion their cause as they fight for freedom?

First impressions

- What makes you feel free?
- There are many ways to feel trapped. What situations are on your heart right now?
- Are there practical ways that you/your church can support prisoners and prison staff in the coming weeks?



WATCH

this short video, explaining the experience of a woman who faces modern slavery.



Research

what is being done to stop modern-day slavery. You may want to look up The Children's Society, the Salvation Army, Hope for Justice, Unseen, and Stop the Traffik.

Read

the story of the Olympic athlete Sir Mo Farah, who was trafficked as a child.



Pray

Loving God,
give us eyes to see those around us who are sad or in trouble,
and ears to listen to their story.
Give us understanding minds,
loving hearts and a willingness to help.
Let your love shine out of us so that all can see your glory. Amen.



CREATE

a paper chain. Write down things that are a burden or oppressing you on the links. Join the chain links together and then say a prayer as you break it.

