

“18 And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.

19 And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew *them* into the marketplace unto the rulers, 20 And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, 21 And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans.

22 And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat *them*. 23 And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast *them* into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely: 24 Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks. 25 ¶ And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. 26 And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one’s bands were loosed.

27 And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. 28 But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. 29 Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, 30 And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? 31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. 32 And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. 33 And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed *their* stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. 34 And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.

35 ¶ And when it was day, the magistrates sent the serjeants, saying, Let those men go. 36 And the keeper of the prison told this saying to Paul, The magistrates have sent to let you go: now therefore depart, and go in peace. 37 But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast *us* into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out. 38 And the serjeants told these words unto the magistrates: and they feared, when they heard that they were Romans. 39 And they came and besought them, and brought *them* out, and desired *them* to depart out of the city. 40 And they went out of the prison, and entered into *the house of* Lydia: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed.” (Ac 16:18-40 AV)

Introduction. There is no question that God had created man to be free. Adam and Eve were created in maturity, in beauty, with great riches, without diseases, in the image of God in holiness, wisdom, and understanding. The whole earth was under their authority and for their use and pleasure. They were absolutely free and the only bound placed upon their free-

dom was the restriction concerning the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil in the midst of the Garden.

I. The Beauty of Liberty

- A. Ro 8:21 Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.
1. Sin is an ugly bondage, and involves men in wicked and filthy deeds.
 2. The effects of sin in the world brings all different kinds of bondage—as we will see later in this sermon, and all have their ugliness.
 3. The corruption of sin is seen everywhere in the world, in the horrible behavior of people toward each other, the poverty that comes from sin, the diseases that God has sent upon all mankind, and the ugliness of death which holds us all in bondage until the last resurrection.
 4. We do not believe that these things are the results of specific sins necessarily, but are the common lot of all of us in this vale of tears, as the catechism puts it. Compared to Adam and Eve in their glorious beginning, we live a life of pain and misery until the purposes of God are fully implemented in Christ, his enemies are overcome, all the elect are saved, and we enter into the resurrection of the dead and the eternal state of everlasting life.
- B. As Zechariah prophesied: “And the LORD their God shall save them in that day as the flock of his people: for they shall be as the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon his land. For how great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty!”

II. The Kinds of Bondage. There are many kinds, but I would speak of the kinds that are found in the passage we read a moment ago in Acts 16. One we spoke of last week, and the others will be considered today.

- A. Bondage of unclean spiritual possession. She had a familiar spirit which prophesied and spoke “sooths” or “truths” that brought much gain. This was common in the ancient world, and is also still found in pagan lands. And is returning to the nations formerly Christian in the West. In bondage to false prophecies from spiritual possession.
- B. Bondage of idolatry: false worship based upon greed, using false prophets and prophecies.
1. The whole city of Philippi was so organized. Just as Samaria was around the sorcery of Simon.
 2. False teaching is a bondage.
 - a. False teaching hates creeds and considers them a bondage, because they want to keep their people in bondage.

- b. Seek a church that binds itself to the creed, the faith once delivered to the saints. Truth was once revealed by Christ and the apostles.
- c. Beware of other messages: Fun is better than faith; excitement than obedience; etc.
- d. Be sure that the information coming into your house is in conformity to what you believe.
- e. If you are not a servant of Christ, you will be a servant of something else. But as a servant of Christ you will walk at liberty.

C. External bondage by evil men. Paul and Silas went to jail.

1. They were beaten with many stripes. Unjust. They were put in stocks
2. They were free in their souls, though not their bodies, and prayed and sang praises to God. The prisoners heard them.
3. An earthquake set everyone free.
4. This has not always been the lot of those imprisoned unjustly in the hell holes of the world, in concentration camps and dungeons many have languished and died for the sake of the Lord Jesus. Camp 14 in North Korea. Get the book and read it.
5. There were many in that prison, and we might suppose injustice, for Rome was harsh and cruel.
6. But the victory is our faith and our strength is the joy of the Lord.

D. The bondage of unbelief: the root of all bondage.

1. What must I do to be saved: the jailor himself recognized his own misery, triggered perhaps by the terror that he would be held responsible for the escape of the prisoners.
2. Paul’s answer show that the question went deeper than that, however, and he pointed to the cure for all bondage. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house.”

III. The Way of Liberty Look at John 8:30-36

- A. Sin holds us in bondage because of guilt. Guilt brings torment.
- B. The law shows us our guilt and our bondage. Ro 3:19 Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.
- C. You break the Ten Commandments because of bondage to sin. You do not show your liberty by breaking God’s law; you show your bondage to sin.
- D. You begin your path to freedom by confessing your sins and believing in Christ for justification: that his righteousness is counted to you. This makes you free from the guilt of sin, but not absolutely from its control over your old man, that you inherited from Adam.

- E. But this faith is a new person, a new seed in you that points you to the way of life in Jesus Christ so that you begin to get your life in order. Faith, continue, discipleship, truth, liberty. The fourfold path of faith unto liberty.

This jailer found the way to liberty by faith in Christ, just as you can. Beginning today, if you have not found it. This is yours in Christ.

May God bless you.

- a. Application