

=THE CONVERSION=
Lesson 10
The Philippian Jailer

Objects to have:

The objects that represent the past nine stories: A square of fabric, a pitcher, the two-sided black and white heart, the HIDE-AND-SEEK sign, a hammer, the completed jigsaw puzzle picture, a letter from the high priest, the ear and the picture drawn last week

Some keys or a picture of keys

Your Bible.

Introducing the lesson:

(Hold up the objects of review, get the children to name the main character of each story, or briefly tell something about each story.)

Right here in the Bible (show the children the location of Acts chapter 16) is the most wonderful story about the man named Paul. Paul had a friend named Silas. Paul and Silas were two men who loved Jesus very much. (Hold up your keys or picture of them.) Somebody ordered that some keys be used, thinking that they could keep Paul and Silas locked up so that they would not tell about Jesus anymore. Watch me and listen. You will find out whether doors can be locked against God.

Telling the story:

Paul and Silas were far away from their homes. They had been traveling together for many, many days. Paul and Silas knew something which they wanted other people to know; they knew a Person Whom they wanted other people to know. This is what Paul and Silas knew: They knew that everybody has to die. They knew that there is something living inside everybody and that something inside everybody would go someplace when the body dies. They knew that the person's soul would go either to Heaven or to hell. They knew the way to keep from having to go to hell. They knew how a person could go to Heaven when he dies. Paul and Silas wanted other people to know these things, too.

Paul and Silas were not far from the seashore. They had walked maybe ten miles from the seashore up to a little town. In this town they were walking through the marketplace where there were many stores in which people were shopping. Paul and Silas were in a place called Philippi. As people were buying food and clothing and maybe some pretty things for their houses in Philippi, Paul and Silas were walking among them. As Paul and Silas went, they would stop and talk to people about Jesus. Some people listened to Paul and Silas tell about Jesus, and some of them asked Jesus to be their Saviour. Some of them said, "That's the most wonderful thing we have ever heard, Paul and Silas. We know that we are sinners. We want Jesus to save us from our sins." Right there in the marketplace, not too far from the seashore, some people asked Jesus to save them.

After Paul and Silas had been in Philippi for a few days, a lot of the people learned to know their names. When they walked down the streets, people would wave to them and say, "Hi!"

A woman started following Paul and Silas. For many days, whenever Paul and Silas would go to the marketplace or walk to the homes or walk to the seashore, this woman would follow them. This woman was a woman whom we would call a fortune teller. She was doing the devil's ways. There were some men who followed the devil, too. They worked with this woman fortune teller. These men would set up a tent or a table right in the marketplace. The woman would sit down behind the table. The men would call out to people who were passing by, "Come and listen to this woman. She is a fortune teller." As people came and had their fortunes told, they would have to pay. These men were making a lot of money because that woman was telling fortunes.

This woman was controlled completely by Satan. She was following Paul and Silas every time they walked around the marketplace and to homes and to the seashore. She started to call out names after Paul and Silas. (Enact the following:) The woman would call after Paul and say, "I know who you are." (As you quote what the woman said, say it in a mocking, perhaps high-pitched voice.) "Listen, everybody, these men are servants of the Most High God. They show us the way of salvation." Now Paul would not want people to hear this from someone who did not love Jesus. Having the woman yell like this might spoil Paul's chances to talk to the people.

I think that Paul would turn and look back. "S-h-h-h," Paul would say. He wanted her to hush. He would go on to another place and talk to the people there. But this woman would constantly be calling as others were nearby, "I know who these men are. These men are the servants of the Most High God. They show unto us the way of Salvation." Paul would turn again and say, "S-h-h-h" to the woman.

Finally, one day, Paul had had enough of her shouting and of her spoiling his getting people to listen to the Gospel story. Paul turned to the woman and spoke. "Devil, get out of that woman." The woman wanted then to be helped by Paul. She was sweetly saved; she trusted Jesus as her Saviour. The fortune teller was no longer a fortune teller; she was no longer controlled by the devil. How wonderful!

After the woman was saved, the devil no longer controlled her, and these men could not make money because she was not telling fortunes any longer. The men were angry with Paul. The men wanted to get Paul and Silas out of the way of people. Those men started to say false things about Paul and Silas. They started to shout their lies about them: "Paul and Silas are causing trouble. They deserve to go to jail. They are disturbing the peace in our town."

Well, the police heard these men shouting. They decided there was trouble in the marketplace. The police came and took hold of Paul and Silas. Even the people who were standing by started to shout bad things about Paul and Silas, because they believed the wicked men who told lies about Paul and Silas. The police took Paul and Silas to the police station. There the captain of the police said, "Take off the shirts from Paul and Silas." Someone with long whips came near to Paul and Silas and they beat them until their backs had long cuts and bruises on them. The backs of Paul and Silas were bleeding and hurting terribly! The police were doing what they thought they needed to do to quiet down the town. The real trouble-makers were the men who had been making money from the fortune-telling of the lady.

After Paul and Silas were beaten, the police chief ordered them thrown into prison. They were thrown into the inside room of the prison from which it would be very difficult to escape. The room down there was not a nice room at all. The floor of the room was just stone. The walls were stone, much like a cave. It was, no doubt, very dark down there and cold and wet. The guard who went in with them put chains around their legs so that they could not walk around. Then the guard left, locking the door after him.

Paul and Silas were left alone in prison. They had done nothing wrong, but they were being treated as criminals. They sat on the floor of the dark, dirty, cold, wet prison. Their backs were bleeding and sore. They knew they had been treated badly and did not deserve the treatment which they had received. But Paul and Silas did not cry. They prayed and asked God to release them because they knew they did not deserve to be there.

Suddenly, there was the strangest sound from the prison! It was very late at night. Prisoners were asleep; the jailer was asleep. There was singing coming from the prison. Paul and Silas were singing! Maybe they were singing, "Oh, How I Love Jesus," or "Praise Him, Praise Him," or "Jesus Loves Me." Even though they had been treated so badly and were suffering and were uncomfortable, still Paul and Silas loved Jesus and they could sing about Him. They were praising His name for all the things He had done for them. They were thankful that some people had listened to their preaching before they were thrown into prison and had gotten saved.

Suddenly, while they were singing, the prison walls began to shake. Prison doors came open by themselves! No one had unlocked the doors with the keys. God had made the earth shake! An earthquake shook the prison, and the doors flew open. When the jailer felt the earth shake and heard the doors clanging open, he woke up. The

jailer jumped up; he looked around. He was frightened! He saw that the doors to the prison were open. He just knew that all the prisoners would have escaped. He grabbed his sword. He knew that he would be killed by the chief of police if any prisoners escaped. He decided that he would not wait for someone else to kill him but that he would kill himself with his sword. He was about to push the sword through himself when Paul called out, "Don't kill yourself, Mr. Jailer. All of the prisoners are here. Even though our chains have dropped off, and the doors have opened, no one has left the prison." The jailer came to the room where Paul and Silas were.

The jailer fell down on his knees before them. "Sirs, I almost died just now. If I had died, I don't know what would have happened to me. I'm sure that I would have lived on after death. Do you know what I must do in order to go to Heaven? What must I do to be saved?"

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," said Paul. In that very moment the Philippian jailer asked Jesus to be his Saviour. Then He led Paul and Silas out of the prison. He took them to his house. He had someone wash their backs with cooling, clean water and soap. Perhaps he put medicine on their sores.

Then the jailer said, "Could I be baptized?" Since the Philippian jailer was saved, it would be all right for him to get baptized. Paul and the Philippian jailer went to a pool of water. Paul baptized the jailer.

The jailer told everybody in his family about Jesus. They believed in Jesus, too, and were baptized.

Then the jailer said, "Come home with me." Paul and Silas went home with the jailer. The jailer said, "Sit down to the table. You haven't had any supper. Please eat this meat and this other food." Paul and Silas ate hungrily. They began to feel so much better. Their backs felt better, too, and they were clean and now they were well fed. The jailer then had to take Paul and Silas back to the prison, for they must stay there until the police chief said they could get out. This time they were kept in a nicer room.

The next day the police chief said that they could get out of prison. He issued an order so that everybody in the town would know that Paul and Silas had not done any harm or done any criminal thing. The police chief said that Paul and Silas had been doing only good—the best kind of good that anyone could do. They had been telling others how to be saved.

How can anyone be saved? What was the jailer told by Paul? Paul told the jailer, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." Acts 16:31. (Teach this verse to the children.)