

**DON'T SHUT UP  
WHEN YOU ARE  
SHUT UP!  
ACTS 16:22-26**

# OBSERVATIONS

- In the text for today we find that Paul and Silas, two Christian brothers, were sent to prison unfairly
- They were locked up (shut up) for exposing a local man's business that was using fraud as a means of acquiring money
- The business was guilty of using a woman, misrepresenting her as a fortune teller. Paul and Silas exposed her and the wrongdoing, and the owners took our brethren to court because of a loss of earnings (they ruined their scam operation)
- As a result, Paul and Silas were ordered to be beaten by the officials, and placed in prison for doing a good thing (as a Christian you may be punished for doing a good thing) for people; Matthew 5:11-12 *“Blessed are you when men shall revile you and persecute you.....”*

# **HOW DOES PAUL AND SILAS' SENTENCE COMPARE WITH US DURING THE PANDEMIC?**

- They were isolated from everyone
- Paul, being isolated from society, was a big thing
- Being shut up is never a nice thing for a long time
- We like to walk about and do things for ourselves
- That's one reason why being in prison is a punishment
- Freedom is taken away
- Paul and Silas were probably just a few feet from the others there, but they couldn't get out (shut up)

# OBSERVATIONS

- For the last twelve months we have been told, to avoid the invisible Coronavirus, we should isolate ourselves (wear a mask, diligently wash our hands)
- But there are those who have ignored the guidelines, won't wear masks; and restaurants are opening back up, albeit prematurely
- But to stop the virus from spreading, doctors and leading scientists are still telling us that we need to socialize only with the family with which we live, and remain “shut up!”

# **SO WHAT CAN CHRISTIANS DO WHEN WE ARE “SHUT UP?”**

## **#1 We Can Improve Our Prayer Life**

*“But at Midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God” Acts 16:25*

- **When thrown into prison, they did not know what would happen to them (no personal attorney or public defender)**
- **Paul and Silas chose faith over fear, refusing to be paralyzed by their situation**
- **They were certainly aware that many disciples who had found themselves in similar situations had died (Covid 19 has killed over 500,000 Americans; some were Christians)**
- **So, being a Christian doesn't necessarily protect you from COVID19 (Being Christians didn't protect them from being beaten and sent to jail)**

# **PAUL PRACTICED WHAT HE PREACHED!**

*“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God which surpasseth all understanding shall keep (guard) your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:6-7*

**We obviously need to pray all of the time; but in times like these, we need to pray more than we usually do**

**Why? Because prayer is the best “prescription,” that Paul says a Christian can have, for overcoming fear and anxiety when in a crisis. James 5:13, “Is any among you suffering (mental, social, physical, etc.)? Let him pray....)**

# ***“IS ANY AMONG YOU MERRY? LET HIM SING PSALMS.” JAMES 5:13***

- ***“Is anyone in good health?”***
- ***“Is anyone prospering?”***
- ***“Is there anyone happy?”***
- ***“Is there anyone with good family and friends surrounding them?”***
- ***“Is there anyone enjoying the benefits of Christianity?”***

**If So, Let Them Praise God in Songs About It! Psalms 100, “Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands.....”**

# OBSERVATIONS

*“God is our refuge and our strength, always ready in times of trouble. So, we will not fear when the earthquakes come, and mountains crumble into the sea.” Psalms 46:1-2*

**That is Exactly What Happened  
in this Story!**

*“Suddenly, there was a massive earthquake, and the prison was shaken to its foundations. All the doors immediately flew open, and the chains of every prisoner fell off! Acts 16:26-28*



*“The jailer woke up to see the prison doors wide open. He assumed the prisoners had escaped, so he drew his sword to kill himself. But Paul shouted to him, “Stop! Don’t kill yourself! We are all here!” Acts 16:27*

- **Don’t you think that Paul and Silas had the jailors attention NOW?**
- **Do you think that God has our attention NOW?**

*“At times I might shut up the heavens so that no rain falls, or command grasshoppers to devour your crops, or send plagues (diseases) among you. Then if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear them from heaven, and will forgive their sins and restore their land.” 2Chron. 7:14*

# **CHRISTIANS, DURING A CRISIS, CONTINUE TO DO WHAT IS PRACTICAL AND PRUDENT**

- That's why we continue to wash our hands
- That's why we continue to wear our masks
- That's why we continue to practice social distancing
- That's why we stand patiently in line, for vaccinations as Christians

**That's Why We As Christians Don't  
Tempt God! Matthew 4:5-7**

**(Don't willfully put yourself in a dangerous situation  
and demand God's deliverance)**

# #2 DO WHAT'S PRACTICAL AND PRUDENT

- In Nehemiah chapter 4, when the exiled Jews returned to their homeland of Jerusalem and started rebuilding the walls of their city, they were threatened by people who didn't want them to finish the work (*Arabs, Ammonites, Ashdodites*), so they did two things; Nehemiah 4:9

*“But we 1) prayed to our God and 2) POSTED A GUARD DAY AND NIGHT TO MEET THIS THREAT.”*

- **Be Practical.** During these difficult times, get accurate information-but don't overdo it (follow the C.D.C. and A.D.P.H. vs. Facebook) for your medical advice
- Don't be a *“Statistic Stalker”* - term given to people who are obsessed with keeping up with the daily numbers of the amount of Covid 19 infections and deaths (Thus more worry and anxiety)

# **#3 PAUL AND SILAS PUT GOD ON DISPLAY DURING THEIR DIFFICULTIES**

- **God was able to get the Jailer's spiritual attention by the faithfulness of Paul and Silas during their crisis (Their behavior was being watched by him)**
- **They didn't use the natural calamity as a literal door to run through for their selfish lives (they were prisoners of Christ) Ephesians 4:1-3**
- **Instead, they used the situation as an opening through which they could share Christ and His Church (They didn't, "shut up" while they were "shut up") They shared Christ with the Jailer and his family, ultimately Baptizing them. Acts 16:32**
- **When we put Christ on display in spite of COVID, Christ can be encouraging to others through us**

**Christians, Though the  
Pandemic Has Us Isolated Like  
Paul and Silas, We Can Still  
Glorify God With Our Lives  
and With Our Words and Be a  
Blessing to Others!**

**Matthew 5:16**

# **THE PLAN OF SALVATION**

- **Hear the Gospel** **Acts 15:7**
- **Believe the Gospel** **Acts 15:7**
- **Repent of Sins** **Acts 17:30**
- **Confess Christ** **Acts 8:37**
- **Be Baptized** **Acts 8:38**