



Sons of Saint Joseph tm

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SOSJ: Attitude Adjustment 3 – Paul and Silas in Prison Saturday, December 21, 2024

Acts 16,16-40

As we were going to the place of prayer, we met a slave girl with an oracular spirit, who used to bring a large profit to her owners through her fortune-telling. She began to follow Paul and us, shouting, "These people are slaves of the Most High God, who proclaim to you a way of salvation." She did this for many days. Paul became annoyed, turned, and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." Then it came out at that moment. When her owners saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them to the public square before the local authorities. They brought them before the magistrates and said, "These people are Jews and are disturbing our city and are advocating customs that are not lawful for us Romans to adopt or practice." The crowd joined in the attack on them, and the magistrates had them stripped and ordered them to be beaten with rods. After inflicting many blows on them, they threw them into prison and instructed the jailer to guard them securely. When he received these instructions, he put them in the innermost cell and secured their feet to a stake. About midnight, while Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God as the prisoners listened, there was suddenly such a severe earthquake that the foundations of the jail shook; all the doors flew open, and the chains of all were pulled loose. When the jailer woke up and saw the prison doors wide open, he drew [his] sword and was about to kill himself, thinking that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul shouted out in a loud voice, "Do no harm to yourself; we are all here." He asked for a light and rushed in and, trembling with fear, he fell down before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you and your household will be saved." So they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to everyone in his house. He took them in at that hour of the night and bathed their wounds; then he and all his family were baptized at once. He brought them up into his house and provided a meal and with his household rejoiced at having come to faith in God. But when it was day, the magistrates sent the lictors with the order, "Release those men." The jailer reported the[se] words to Paul, "The magistrates have sent orders that you be released. Now, then, come out and go in peace." But Paul said to them, "They have beaten us publicly, even though we are Roman citizens and have not been tried, and have thrown us into prison. And now, are they going to release us secretly? By no means. Let them come themselves and lead us out." The lictors reported these words to the magistrates, and they became alarmed when they heard that they were Roman citizens. So they came and placated them, and led them out and asked that they leave the city. When they had come out of the prison, they went to Lydia's house where they saw and encouraged the brothers, and then they left.

Questions

1. How do we stay connected with God in the darkest moments of our lives? Paul and Silas continued to pray and praise God even in prison. What keeps us from doing the same?
2. How do we keep hope alive when all seems lost? In the face of adversity, how can we remain grounded in God's promises?
3. What does this story teach us about the power of praying together? How can we cultivate a community of believers praying for one another?
4. How can we turn suffering into an opportunity for spiritual growth? Paul and Silas turned prison into a place of evangelization.