

Doors Are Still Opening

Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 468–469.

Acts 16:16–23 (NKJV)

16 Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling.

17 This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, “These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation.”

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18 And this she did for many days. But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.” And he came out that very hour.

19 But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to the authorities.

20 And they brought them to the magistrates, and said, “These men, being Jews, exceedingly trouble our city;

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21 and they teach customs which are not lawful for us, being Romans, to receive or observe.”

22 Then the multitude rose up together against them; and the magistrates tore off their clothes and commanded them to be beaten with rods.

23 And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely.

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- No sooner are lost people saved than Satan begins to hinder the work. In this case, he used a demonized girl who had made her masters wealthy by telling fortunes.
- As Paul and his “*team*” went regularly to the place of prayer, still witnessing to the lost, this girl repeatedly shouted after them, “*These men are the servants of the Most High God, who show us the way of salvation!*”
- Paul did not want either the Gospel or the name of God to be “*promoted*” by one of Satan’s slaves, so he cast out the demon.



- Satan may speak the truth one minute and the next minute tell a lie; and the unsaved would not know the difference.
- The owners had no concern for the girl; they were interested only in the income she provided, and now that income was gone.
- Their only recourse was the Roman law, and they thought they had a pretty good case because the missionaries were Jewish and were propagating a religion not approved by Rome.



- Moved by both religious and racial prejudices, the judges acted impulsively and did not investigate the matter fully. This neglect on their part later brought them embarrassment.
- Paul and Silas were stripped and beaten and put in the city prison.

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2 Corinthians 11:23–25 (NKJV)

23 Are they ministers of Christ?—I speak as a fool—I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often.

24 From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one.

25 Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep;

- It looked like the end of their witness in Philippi, but God had other plans.

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Acts 16:24–26 (NKJV)

24 Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

25 But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.

26 Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed.



Prayer And Praise Help To Open Doors

- Instead of complaining or calling on God to judge their enemies, the two men prayed and praised God.
- When you are in pain, the midnight hour is not the easiest time for a concert, but God gives “songs in the night”.

Job 35:10 (NKJV)

But no one says, ‘Where is God my Maker, Who gives songs in the night,

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Psalm 42:8 (NKJV)

The LORD will command His loving-kindness in the daytime, And in the night His song shall be with me— A prayer to the God of my life.

- “It is easy to sing when we can read the notes by daylight; but the skillful singer is he who can sing when there is not a ray of light to read by ... Songs in the night come only from God; they are not in the power of men.”

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Prayer And Praise Are Powerful Weapons

2 Chronicles 20:18–22 (NKJV)

18 And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem bowed before the LORD, worshiping the LORD.

19 Then the Levites of the children of the Kohathites and of the children of the Korahites stood up to praise the LORD God of Israel with voices loud and high.

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20 So they rose early in the morning and went out into the Wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, “Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem: Believe in the LORD your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper.”

21 And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who should sing to the LORD, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army and were saying: “Praise the LORD, For His mercy endures forever.”

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22 Now when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated.

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- God responded by shaking the foundations of the prison, opening all the doors, and loosening the prisoners' bonds.
- They could have fled to freedom, but instead they remained right where they were.
- For one thing, Paul immediately took command; and, no doubt, the fear of God was on men.
- The prisoners must have realized that there was something very special about those two preachers!



- Paul's attention was fixed on the jailer, the man he really wanted to win to Christ. It was a Roman law that if a guard lost a prisoner, he was given the same punishment the prisoner would have received; so there must have been some men in the prison who had committed capital crimes.
- The jailer would rather commit suicide than face shame and execution.
- A hard-hearted person seeking vengeance would have let the cruel jailer kill himself, but Paul was not that kind of a man.



Matthew 5:10–12 (NKJV)

10 Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 “Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.

12 Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

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Matthew 5:43–48 (NKJV)

43 “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’

44 But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,

45 that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

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46 For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?

47 And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so?

48 Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.

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The Door Of The Jailer's Heart Is Open

Acts 16:29–32 (NKJV)

29 Then he called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas.

30 And he brought them out and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”

31 So they said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.”

32 Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house.

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- “What must I do to be saved?” is the cry of lost people worldwide, and let us give them the right answer.
- Paul knew the right answer—faith in Jesus Christ.
- In the Book of Acts, the emphasis is on faith in Jesus Christ alone.



Jesus Christ Is Our Answer For Salvation

Acts 2:38–39 (NKJV)

38 Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.”

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Everyone Must Confess

- The phrase “and your house” does not mean that the faith of the jailer would automatically bring salvation to his family.
- Each sinner must trust Christ personally in order to be born again, for we cannot be saved “by proxy.” The phrase means “and your household will be saved if they will also believe.”



An Open Heart Shows A Changed Attitude

Acts 16:32–34 (NKJV)

32 Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house.

33 And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized.

34 Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household.

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- It is touching to see the change in the attitude of the jailer as he washed the wounds of these two prisoners who were now his brothers in Christ.
- One of the evidences of true repentance is a loving desire to make restitution and reparation wherever we have hurt others.
- We should not only wash one another's feet, but we should also cleanse the wounds we have given to others.



Matthew 5:23–24 (NKJV)

23 Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you,

24 leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

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- God open doors that no man will ever be able to shut, and we must believe doors are still opening.

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