

Continuing the Acts of Jesus Acts 16:16-40 **Living as ambassadors of Jesus**

Notes for homegroup leaders

We live in this world as Jesus ambassadors. He has put his spirit in us and has chosen to spread his kingdom through people like us who take his life to the world. We are God's great plan – there is no plan B. In doing this we face many challenges.

Our study aims to look at how Paul and Silas faced some of these challenges, and in particular discover the authority we have as Christ's ambassadors, the place of humility in living for Jesus, and the power released through prayer and praise. Please adapt the ideas in the study to suit your individual groups.

Introduction

1. Take a large sheet of paper write 'ambassador' in the middle of it. Brainstorm words that as a group you associate with ambassadors. Discuss what it might mean to be an ambassador of Jesus.

Or

2. The bible talks about Christians as ambassadors in 2 Corinthians 5:20 and Ephesians 6:20. Read these two verses and discuss what it means to be an ambassador of Jesus.

Read Acts 16:16-40

v16-18 Authority

1. What was the problem Paul and Silas faced in v16-18?
2. How did Paul deal with this problem in v18?
3. What is taught in these verses about the authority that we have as followers of Jesus? Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-18, John 14:12-14.

As followers and ambassadors of Jesus, we have been given the authority that he has to act on his behalf. Notice that Paul *does not ask God to take the spirit out of this girl, he commands the spirit to come out himself*. This doesn't mean that Paul has the power in himself. The **power** all belongs to Jesus, but flows through Paul by the Holy Spirit as he exercises the **authority** that we have as believers.

4. Think about how you exercise faith and the authority God has given you today. Is it something you do or shy away from? Does it feel risky to act in the way Paul does in Acts 16? How can we encourage each other to act more in the authority we have as God's followers?

v19-24, 35-40 Humility

This display of God's power led to Paul and Silas ending up in prison.

1. What injustices and persecution did Paul and Silas face? (v19-24)
2. What happened to Paul and Silas was against the law, since they were Roman citizens (v37). Why do you think they put up with such treatment?
3. What does this teach us about humility?

v25-34 Prayer and Praise

1. Why do you think Paul and Silas were praising God after all they had been through?
2. Do you think they were hoping that God would send a mighty act to get them out of prison? (v26)
3. Look up Romans 8:1, 2 Corinthians 10:3-4, John 17:14-15. How does understanding and really believing that we are living for a completely different world help us to imitate the example of Paul and Silas in Acts 16?
4. Think of situations that you currently find difficult. In these situations, praise God. Maybe as a group you can share ways that you can praise God, even in the most trying situations.
5. What were the results of Paul and Silas praising God and being his ambassadors? (v26-34)
6. What impact can we have on our world if we take hold of our God given authority, live in humility and praising God, live as his ambassadors?