

OKOTOKS EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

LIFEHACKS

STEP 1 (ACTS 16:25-34)

MAY 13, 2018



SERMON OUTLINE

LifeHack: a strategy or technique adopted in order to manage one's time and daily activities in a more efficient way

Main Point: We are _____ and we are to _____

My Step 1

My Step 2

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When we _____, we find _____

What should I do with what I've heard today?

MAIN POINT

God uses His people in the ordinary moments of life to show extraordinary love to the world.

THINKING THINGS THROUGH

Connect the sermon to the study.

1. What is the most ordinary thing about your life; something you do that you often take for granted?

2. What do you want more, an ordinary life or one that is considered extraordinary? What are the pros and cons of each?

Leader: Paul and Silas faced a difficult situation in the city of Philippi and responded in gratitude and praise to God for where He had them. As we learn in this text, God wants to use His people in the ordinary and difficult moments of life to show His love to others and draw them to Himself.

DIGGING DEEPER

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

> [HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 16:25-28.](#)

Leader: The situation looked ominous for Paul and Silas. Earlier in Acts 16, they were successful in reaching Lydia for Christ and liberating a slave girl from Satan's control. But their success got them in trouble. They were beaten and jailed. Instead of letting fear hush their testimony of Jesus, however, Paul and Silas turned their prison cell into a worship center. Instead of mourning their pain, they gave themselves to worshiping God by praying and singing to Him. Luke said they sang hymns, or songs of praise directed to God. Every word they uttered in prayer and song reflected the joy and peace God gave them in their ordeal. This ordinary moment would be the means God would use to show His love to those in the jail.

3. If you were the jailer, what would you think of Paul and Silas singing? Why were Paul and Silas singing at midnight (see Colossians 1:24)? What would you think of them remaining in the prison when they had the chance to escape?

4. When you face ordinary or trying situations, how do you generally respond? How can Paul and Silas' example change your perspective?

SERMON BASED GROWTH GROUP

Leader: Unjustly imprisoned and still smarting from the untreated wounds of their beating, they prayed and sang hymns of praise to God. What a testimony to those around them! They sang in their adversity, a powerful witness to their vibrant faith.

5. If you had been the jailer, how would you have reacted after the earthquake? What indications of the jailer's fear do you see?

6. What did Paul's and Silas's actions communicate about God? How did their actions show God's love to the jailer in a practical way?

Leader: An earthquake suddenly shook the foundations of the prison and broke loose the fetters of the prisoners. The prison doors flew open, but no one fled. The jailer was roused by the earthquake. Finding the prison doors open and supposing that the prisoners had escaped, he prepared to kill himself. In the Roman world, guards often were executed for negligence (see 12:18-19). Paul told the jailer that no one had fled. Paul was more concerned about the life of the jailer than about his own freedom. His concern was not only for the physical well-being of the jailer but also for his spiritual condition. The jailer must have sensed this. Note that Paul's response is what impacted the jailer, even more than the powerful movement of the earthquake.

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 16:29-34.

7. How does the manner in which we respond to suffering and invest in the day-to-day lives of others give opportunities to demonstrate God's love to them?

8. How did the seemingly ordinary actions of Paul and Silas result in extraordinary action by God in the life of the jailer?

9. How did the jailer see God through this situation and what was the chain of events that resulted from that?

Leader: Paul and Silas were open to God's use of their difficult circumstances to bring about good. Instead of letting fear or discouragement hush their testimony of Jesus, they turned their prison cell into a worship center. The end result was that they were liberated from physical bondage and the jailer and his family were liberated from spiritual bondage. God used an ordinary situation in the lives of Paul and Silas to show His love to the jailer and his family.

SERMON BASED GROWTH GROUP

10. The jailer's newfound faith brought him joy. Why is joy a common response to the gospel? How should this joy lead us to demonstrate the love of God with others in all circumstances?

DOING LIFE TOGETHER

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

11. What current situation have you viewed as ordinary or taken for granted that God might want to use to show His love to others?

12. How might our group encourage one another in seeking to show the love of God to others on a daily basis, even in the seemingly routine moments of life?

Leader: Remind your group of the importance of communicating with one another about day-to-day life in order to speak into seemingly ordinary opportunities with the extraordinary love of God. Encourage them to engage with one another through the week via social media, email, text message, etc.

PRAYER

Pray for the Lord to use the daily circumstances of life to show His love to others. Pray that God would guide your perspective and remind you that every situation has purpose for those who have trusted in Him and seek to live for Him.

MEMORIZE

³¹ They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household."
Acts 16:31

SPOTLIGHT ON THE PASSAGE

ACTS 16:25-34

16:25-28. Here Luke gives us one of the most beautiful scenes in Scripture. Beaten, bleeding missionaries, their feet in stocks, literally turn this prison into Sing-Sing—that grim state facility in Ossining, New York. It bears no connection whatsoever to this account, but the fascinating name helps form our picture. Not only did they sing and pray, but the rest of the prisoners listened to them!

SERMON BASED GROWTH GROUP

Then God visited Philippi with another one of his open-door miracles. This time, rather than the quiet angel of chapter 12, we see a violent earthquake. All the prison doors flew open, and everybody's chains came loose.

As we recall 12:19, we understand the behavior of the jailer. If his prisoners escaped, it would be his life anyhow. Why not do the deed now and save beatings and suffering along the way? Accustomed as we are to prison breaks in Acts, this time the account differs. Rather than escape, Paul and Silas stayed right in their cell and somehow persuaded the rest of the prisoners to do so as well. God's intent on this occasion was not the physical deliverance of his servants, but the spiritual deliverance of the jailer and his family.

16:29-30. We have no trouble understanding why the jailer showed gratitude to Paul and Silas; they had literally saved his life by not leading a mass exodus of prisoners. What could he possibly have meant by his now-familiar question, what must I do to be saved? Was it the earthquake, a clear demonstration of the power of the God these men served? Had he been told of the words of the slave girl so he would know why these men were in his prison? Had he listened to the hymns and heard the gospel proclaimed in song and prayer? Luke does not tell us, though quite possibly all these factors were involved. In any event, the jailer demonstrated three attitudes needed for salvation—recognition of his need, awareness of a Savior, and response to the gospel.

16:31-34. Whatever the jailer intended, Paul and Silas directed his focus immediately to Jesus and offered a response still heard on the lips of Christians proclaiming the gospel around the world. The missionaries further explained God's message not only to the jailer, but to others in his house. Luke carefully reminds us that the faith of the jailer would not automatically transfer to the rest of the household. The promise of salvation depended upon the individual response of everyone who heard the message.

Those who glibly use the quotation of verse 31 should not ignore the emphasis of verse 32. We don't know how long Paul and Silas explained the message of salvation to these people, but obviously that explanation was essential for them to make sense of the initial answer. Furthermore, proclamation of the Word held priority over their physical condition and comfort. First, the jailer and his family were reconciled to God, then to their former enemies—these two most unusual prisoners.