

The Blessed Life

With Staci Wallace



WEEK NINE: Remembering.....Jesus, the CEO

CHIEF ETERNAL OMEGA

READ ACTS 16:16-40

Beat Up and Thrown in Jail

¹⁶⁻¹⁸ One day, on our way to the place of prayer, a slave girl ran into us. She was a psychic and, with her fortunetelling, made a lot of money for the people who owned her. She started following Paul around, calling everyone's attention to us by yelling out, "These men are working for the Most High God. They're laying out the road of salvation for you!" She did this for a number of days until Paul, finally fed up with her, turned and commanded the spirit that possessed her, "Out! In the name of Jesus Christ, get out of her!" And it was gone, just like that. ¹⁹⁻²² When her owners saw that their lucrative little business was suddenly bankrupt, they went after Paul and Silas, roughed them up and dragged them into the market square. Then the police arrested them and pulled them into a court with the accusation, "These men are disturbing the peace—dangerous Jewish agitators subverting our Roman law and order." By this time the crowd had turned into a restless mob out for blood.

²²⁻²⁴ The judges went along with the mob, had Paul and Silas's clothes ripped off and ordered a public beating. After beating them black-and-blue, they threw them into jail, telling the jailkeeper to put them under heavy guard so there would be no chance of escape. He did just that—threw them into the maximum security cell in the jail and clamped leg irons on them. ²⁵⁻²⁶ Along about midnight, Paul and Silas were at prayer and singing a robust hymn to God. The other prisoners couldn't believe their ears. Then, without warning, a huge earthquake! The jailhouse tottered, every door flew open, all the prisoners were loose.

²⁷⁻²⁸ Startled from sleep, the jailer saw all the doors swinging loose on their hinges. Assuming that all the prisoners had escaped, he pulled out his sword and was about to do himself in, figuring he was as good as dead anyway, when Paul stopped him: "Don't do that! We're all still here! Nobody's run away!" ²⁹⁻³¹ The jailer got a torch and ran inside. Badly shaken, he collapsed in front of Paul and Silas. He led them out of the jail and asked, "Sirs, what do I have to do to be saved, to really live?" They said, "Put your entire trust in the Master Jesus. Then you'll live as you were meant to live—and everyone in your house included!"

³²⁻³⁴ They went on to spell out in detail the story of the Master—the entire family got in on this part. They never did get to bed that night. The jailer made them feel at home, dressed their wounds, and then—he couldn't wait till morning!—was baptized, he and everyone in his family. There in his home, he had food set out for a festive meal. It was a night to remember: He and his entire family had put their trust in God; everyone in the house was in on the celebration. ³⁵⁻³⁶ At daybreak, the court judges sent officers with the instructions, "Release these men." The jailer gave Paul the message, "The judges sent word that you're free to go on your way. Congratulations! Go in peace!"

³⁷ But Paul wouldn't budge. He told the officers, "They beat us up in public and threw us in jail, Roman citizens in good standing! And now they want to get us out of the way on the sly without anyone knowing? Nothing doing! If they want us out of here, let them come themselves and lead us out in broad daylight."

³⁸⁻⁴⁰ When the officers reported this, the judges panicked. They had no idea that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens. They hurried over and apologized, personally escorted them from the jail, and then asked them if they wouldn't please leave the city. Walking out of the jail, Paul and Silas went straight to Lydia's house, saw their friends again, encouraged them in the faith, and only then went on their way.

HISTORY: Paul and Silas were in Phillipi and had been imprisoned and tortured for over 24 hours. Phillipi was the greatest Roman city outside of Rome itself. Citizens were treated like royalty and given preferential treatment. The city was extremely caught up in “high society” thinking, where nobility and status was the norm.

SIGNIFICANCE: Paul and Silas chose to be beaten and imprisoned for 24 hours BEFORE they disclosed their royal citizenship as members of Phillipi. Why? 360% leaders know that sometimes you must go DOWN in order to empower others to go up.

COLASSIANS 3:12-14 So, chosen by God for this new life of love, dress in the wardrobe God picked out for you: compassion, kindness, humility, quiet strength, discipline. Be even-tempered, content with second place, quick to forgive an offense. Forgive as quickly and completely as the Master forgave you. And regardless of what else you put on, wear love. It’s your basic, all-purpose garment. Never be without it.

1. Great leaders redefine _____status_____.

READ PHILIPPIANS 2:5-8 - ⁵⁻⁸ Think of yourselves the way Christ Jesus thought of himself. He had equal status with God but didn’t think so much of himself that he had to cling to the advantages of that status no matter what. Not at all. When the time came, he set aside the privileges of deity and took on the status of a slave, became human! Having become human, he stayed human. It was an incredibly humbling process. He didn’t claim special privileges. Instead, he lived a selfless, obedient life and then died a selfless, obedient death—and the worst kind of death at that—a crucifixion.

Academy Awards Red Carpet - “What are you wearing?”

2. Great leaders define _____selflessness_____.

READ MARK 10:42 ⁴¹⁻⁴⁵ When the other ten heard of this conversation, they lost their tempers with James and John. Jesus got them together to settle things down. “You’ve observed how godless rulers throw their weight around,” (lord over others) he said, “and when people get a little power how quickly it goes to their heads. It’s not going to be that way with you. Whoever wants to be great must become a servant. Whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave. That is what the Son of Man has done: He came to serve, not to be served—and then to give away his life in exchange for many who are held hostage.”

Weak leaders put others down in order to make themselves look bigger or better than they are. GREAT leaders allow themselves to be made low so others can become great.

Paul's Maturing Process:

Eph 1:1 – I am Paul, the apostle

Col: 1:1 – I am Paul, the apostle

Phil 1:1 – I am Paul, the servant

John 13:4-17

³⁻⁶ Jesus knew that the Father had put him in complete charge of everything, that he came from God and was on his way back to God. So he got up from the supper table, set aside his robe, and put on an apron. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the feet of the disciples, drying them with his apron. When he got to Simon Peter, Peter said, "Master, you wash my feet?"

⁷ Jesus answered, "You don't understand now what I'm doing, but it will be clear enough to you later."

⁸ Peter persisted, "You're not going to wash my feet—ever!" Jesus said, "If I don't wash you, you can't be part of what I'm doing." ⁹ "Master!" said Peter. "Not only my feet, then. Wash my hands! Wash my head!"

¹⁰⁻¹² Jesus said, "If you've had a bath in the morning, you only need your feet washed now and you're clean from head to toe. My concern, you understand, is holiness, not hygiene. So now you're clean. But not every one of you." (He knew who was betraying him. That's why he said, "Not every one of you.") After he had finished washing their feet, he took his robe, put it back on, and went back to his place at the table.

3. Great leaders embrace _____**submission**_____.

Who has ever shown their "papers"? (Ordained into ministry, doctorate, graduate certificate, pedigree, etc.) You don't need a pedigree, you need humility. No one really cares how much you know....the test is in your humility and how much you care for others.

Do you need to give up your right to be right. Do you listen or do you wait to talk? Do you have to have the last word? Do you need to be in control? Are you challenged by authority figures? Do you have a hard time forgiving? Do you feel the need to correct people? Do you judge others and the things they do?

Take time this week to reflect on what God is saying to you through this message!