

A dramatic scene inside a dark stone prison cell. A small, high window with vertical bars is the source of a bright beam of light that cuts through the darkness, illuminating a patch of the floor. The walls are made of rough, grey stone blocks. The floor is dark and appears to be made of concrete or stone, with some colorful speckles visible in the lit area.

# THE BIRTH OF A CHURCH



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Acts 16:12-34 . . . And we were staying in Philippi for some days.

<sup>13</sup> And on the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made; and we sat down and spoke to the women who met there.

<sup>14</sup> Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul.



# THE BIRTH OF A CHURCH

*<sup>15</sup> And when she and her household were baptized, she begged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." So she persuaded us.*



# THE BIRTH OF A CHURCH

*<sup>16</sup> 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.*

*<sup>17</sup> 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."*

*<sup>18</sup> 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.*



# THE BIRTH OF A CHURCH

*<sup>19</sup> 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.*

*<sup>20</sup> And they brought them to the magistrates, and said, "These men, being Jews, exceedingly trouble our city;*

*<sup>21</sup> "and they teach customs which are not lawful for us, being Romans, to receive or observe."*



# THE BIRTH OF A CHURCH

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

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

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



# THE BIRTH OF A CHURCH

*<sup>25</sup> But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.*

*<sup>26</sup> 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.*



# THE BIRTH OF A CHURCH

*27 And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself.*

*28 But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here."*

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



# THE BIRTH OF A CHURCH

*<sup>30</sup> And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"*

*<sup>31</sup> So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household."*



# THE BIRTH OF A CHURCH

*<sup>32</sup> Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house.*

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

*<sup>34</sup> 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.*



# The Woman, The Slave, & The Prison Guard

Racially Different

*Lydia*

*Asian*

*Slave Girl*

*Greek*

*Prison Guard*

*Roman*



# The Woman, The Slave, & The Prison Guard

Economically Different

*Lydia*

Upper Class

*Slave Girl*

Lower Class

*Prison Guard*

Middle Class



# The Woman, The Slave, & The Prison Guard

Socially Different

*Lydia*

Social Insider

*Slave Girl*

Outcast

*Prison Guard*

Average Roman



# The Woman, The Slave, & The Prison Guard

Relationally Different

*Lydia*

Gentle

*Slave Girl*

Mental

*Prison Guard*

Brutal



# The Woman, The Slave, & The Prison Guard

Spiritually Different

*Lydia*

Spiritually Open

*Slave Girl*

Demonically Hostile

*Prison Guard*

Indifferent



# The Woman, The Slave, & The Prison Guard

Luke want to teach us three things:

1. *The Gospel is for everyone: Everyone needs the gospel.*



# The Woman, The Slave, & The Prison Guard

Luke want to teach us three things:

- 1. The Gospel is for everyone: Everyone needs the gospel.*
- 2. The Gospel brings people together.*

Acts 16:40 *When they came out of the prison, they entered Lydia's house, and when they saw the brothers, they encouraged them . . .*



# The Woman, The Slave, & The Prison Guard

Luke want to teach us three things:

1. *The Gospel is for everyone: Everyone needs the gospel.*
2. *The Gospel brings people together.*
3. *The Gospel gives true freedom.*



# Continuing The Discussion

- Was there anything you heard for the first time or that caught your attention, challenged, or confused you?
- Out of the characters in Acts 16, who do you feel you relate to the most? Why?