



JULY 9: PAUL AND SILAS I CAN CHOOSE THE DOOR OF JOY

Around midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening.” – Acts 16:2

The world is made up of optimists and pessimists – people who see the glass half-full and those who see it half-empty. There are benefits to both types of these personalities. Optimists can typically see the good in any situation or person and the pessimists are realistic about life and see situations for what they are. It is important to feel sadness sometimes, but God does not want us to dwell on that sadness. He wants us to use that sadness as an opportunity to praise Him through it. We do not need to all be optimists, but we do need to seek God and His purpose through our trials.

Paul and Silas faced a huge trial: They were thrown in prison for casting out a demon in the name of Christ. Of course, there was likely sadness, disappointment, and frustration when they sat in their prison cells. But the men were stuck and sitting around being sad was not going to fix their problem. They turned their sadness into praise and sang hymns and prayers to God. Suddenly, God sent an earthquake to break the men free of their chains, which led to all of the men being freed and even leading the jailer to Christ.

Paul and Silas took a tough situation and turned it into an opportunity to bring praise to God. Sadness was not going to make any progress, but choosing to be joyful in that situation ultimately brought them freedom. We will experience many trials in our lives and it is okay to feel sad or burdened by them. But God calls us to choose joy in those situations and use them as an opportunity to trust Him and how He may be working in those trials.

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT:

1. What are some feelings and thoughts you typically have when facing a trial?
2. What are some feelings and thoughts you can replace those with?
3. What are some ways (big or small) you can choose joy during tough times?