

Lesson 5	:	<b>God Never Changes</b>
Bible Story	:	<b>Paul and Silas Freed and Led a Jailer to Jesus</b>
Lesson Scripture	:	Mal. 3:6; Heb. 13:8; Acts 16:16-40
Teaching Aids	:	Video clip/big pictures for the Bible story, CoD (Clearing of Difficulties) names and words written on separate sheet or cardboard, chalkboard/whiteboard or laptop computer, notebooks and pens for students, activity pages for enrichment, big copy of SoF#5

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1. **Our faith comes from Jesus Christ who is the same yesterday, today, and forever.**
  2. **God never changes. He can still change lives and do miracles today.**
  3. **Our praises can cause God to send His help to us.**
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By the end of this lesson, the students should be able to:

1. name the two disciples of the Lord who got jailed;
  2. explain the reason why they got imprisoned;
  3. tell what Paul and Silas did while in prison;
  4. recall what happened in the prison when Paul and Silas sang praises to God;
  5. tell and sing their favorite song for the Lord;
  6. lastly, recite the 5<sup>th</sup> statement of our faith.
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***"We believe that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever."***

1. Singing of Praises and worship (short songs only)
  2. Opening Prayer
  3. Roll Call & Welcoming newcomers and introducing them to your class
  4. Review of Past Lessons and Recall SoF's 1-4 (5 min.)
  5. Clearing of Difficulties
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1. **prison/jail** – a place where criminals or prisoners (bad people) are locked up

2. **imprison** – to put in prison
3. **jailer** – a keeper of a jail
4. **kidnap** – a verb meaning to carry away a person by unlawful force and against his or her will

As humans, we have many natural responses to difficulties. We don't always react the way Jesus would in difficult situations. As believers, we have power to respond in a very supernatural way that is so different that what most people act like when they are facing difficulties. Believers have the power from the Holy Spirit to respond with faith and courage.

Paul and Silas will show us how the Holy Spirit enables believers to respond in a very difficult situation.

### **Bible Story:**

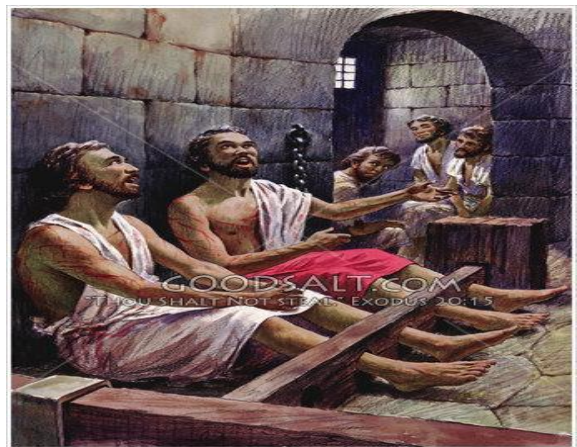
#### **"Paul and Silas Freed and Led a Jailer to Jesus" (Acts 16:16-40)**

Paul and his missionary team stayed in Philippi. One day as they walked to the place by the river to meet for prayer, a slave girl started to follow them and began to shout, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved." She followed Paul and Silas

around for many days. This slave girl was not a believer and did not have the Holy Spirit living inside her heart. She had an evil spirit and this spirit enabled her to predict the future. Her owners made a lot of money from her because many people paid them to have her tell them their future.

The Holy Spirit enabled Paul to realize that it was time to put a stop to what the slave girl is doing. The Holy Spirit empowered Paul to command the evil spirit controlling her to leave and in Jesus' Name, the evil spirit obeyed and left the girl.

The slave girl had been set free and was no longer controlled by this evil spirit. This was a good thing but her owners were not very happy with what Paul did. Her owners made lots of money from her. Now that she was not able to be a fortune teller, they weren't going to be able to make money. This made them very angry with Paul and Silas.



Enraged, they grabbed Paul and Silas and dragged them into the market place and brought them before the rulers of the city. They told the authorities, "These men were causing trouble for our city!" The leaders commanded that they be thrown into prison. The leaders commanded the man in charge of the prison to make sure that they were secure and could not get out. When the jailer received the leaders' orders, he took Paul and Silas far back into an inner prison that had no outside walls and put their feet into blocks of wood called stocks. These stocks were two pieces of wood that would clamp down over the prisoner's legs at the ankles. This type of imprisonment was meant for the most dangerous prisoners. Paul and Silas had not done anything wrong to be treated this way. ***(Show picture of Paul and Silas in prison)*** They were not a danger to anyone except Satan's kingdom of darkness. ***If they were free to share the Good News, people would be rescued from sin and saved to spend eternity with Jesus.***

Paul and Silas were aching in their bodies as they lay in their prison cell. If you were Paul and Silas what do you think you would do as you lay there in the dark, cold cell? (They could have cried and said they wanted to go home. The work was too hard and they couldn't take being punished as a criminal for obeying Jesus. They could have been asking God, "How could God allow such treatment to happen to His servants?")

**Let us learn from what Paul and Silas did while in prison. (Read Acts 16:25)**

**<sup>25</sup>About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing songs to God. The other prisoners were listening to them.**

Let's think of some songs we sing to praise God. What are some songs that Paul and Silas may have sung if they knew the songs we sing? (To God be the Glory, Contemporary – Our God is an Awesome God, etc.)

Because both men were filled with the Holy Spirit, ***they chose not to focus on their unfair treatment but focused on God's character.*** They knew that their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ had suffered far more than they had when He was crucified on the cross. Because they chose to worship and praise God in their difficulties it caused the other prisoners to listen to them as they prayed and sang. **The Holy Spirit enabled Paul and Silas to be a witness for Jesus to these prisoners.**

While the prisoners who were in prison for actually committing a crime were listening to the prayers and praises of Paul and Silas, they felt the ground begin to shake. The tremble turned into a great earthquake and the whole prison began to shake. All the doors were opened and the chains fell off each and every prisoner.

The jailer had fallen asleep but the shaking ground and noises of opening doors must have awakened him. As he rubbed his eyes and looked and saw every door opened, fear struck his heart. His job was to make sure the prisoners were securely locked into prison. If one prisoner escaped he would be killed. When he saw the doors open he knew his life was

over so he drew his sword and was ready to take his own life when Paul cried out with a loud voice, "Do not harm yourself, we are all here!"

The jailer asked for a torch so that he could see and when he ran into Paul and Silas' prison and saw that they were still there, he trembled and fell down before them. He brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

God's power had brought a mighty earthquake to shake this Philippian prison. The Holy Spirit caused this jailer to see and recognize that he needed to be saved. The Holy Spirit enabled Paul and Silas to know how to answer this man. They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, you and your household." Paul and Silas spoke God's words to this jailer and all that lived in his house.

The jailer believed in Jesus. This same jailer who had been rough with Paul and Silas earlier by throwing them into jail and locking their feet in stocks now wanted to do something kind for these men who had shared the Good News. He washed their wounds from where they had been beaten with rods. God's power saved this man and changed his life. Now he wanted to be baptized.

This was an exciting night! Not only did the jailer get saved, but everyone in his family did too. They were all baptized and went back to his house and had a meal and they all rejoiced that God had brought them the Good News through Paul and Silas.

**Discussion: You see children, God never changes.** God freed Paul and Silas because they praised God. The Bible tells that our praises to God bind our unseen enemies. **Our praises cause God to send His help. Until now, God never changes.** Listen to this news about a ten year old boy who was released by his kidnappers unharmed. **(Optional: Search and show the actual news footage from Youtube or other sites)**

*Willie Myrick, 10, is celebrating being let go by a kidnapper, who apparently became*



*frustrated because the child wouldn't stop singing a popular gospel song. Myrick was let go unharmed after singing Hezekiah Walker's "Every Praise" for three straight hours late last month.*

*Willie Myrick was in his driveway in Atlanta, Ga. March 31 playing with his pet Chihuahua when a stranger drove up and lured him to his car with the offer of money. When the 10-year-old got close enough, the kidnapper grabbed him, pulled him inside and drove off,*

*police said.*

*"He was cursing at me telling me to shut up and didn't want to hear a word from me," Myrick told WSB-TV. "He said if I told anyone, he would hurt me, like in a bad way."*

***However, Willie began to sing "Every Praise," a popular gospel song by Hezekiah Walker. Myrick sang continuously for three straight hours despite threatening warnings from the man, and eventually, he seemed to have had enough and let him out of the car at East Point.***

*"He opened the door and threw me out," the 10-year-old said. "He told me not to tell anyone."*

*When the testimony of Myrick's survival got out, his church decided to celebrate his return on his 10th birthday. Walker, who heard about the incident, flew from New York to Atlanta to celebrate with the child in the church's crowded sanctuary.*

*"It's just emotional to me because you never know who you're going to touch," Walker told ABC News. "I just wanted to hug him and tell him I love him. I really believe God spoke through me to save that young man's life."*

*Though Myrick has given a description of the kidnapper to police, he is still at large.*

*Authorities are encouraging anyone with information about the suspect to come forward.*

**God is so true to His Word! He freed Paul and Silas and He freed young Willie Myrick. God really never changes. He is the same yesterday, today and forever. Glory to God!**

**Let's memorize our Statement of Faith # 5.**

***"We believe that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever."***

***Ask the following questions:***

1. What is your favorite song for the Lord?
2. From our Bible story, who were the two disciples who were put to jail? Why were they imprisoned?
3. What did Paul and Silas do while in prison?
4. What happened when Paul and Silas sang praises to God?
5. What enabled God to rescue the prisoners and Willie Myrick?
6. Can you recite our SoF#5?

**Enrichment Activity:** a) Suggested project: Make your own Book of Praise Songs. Include at least 5 songs that are intended to praise God alone.

b) Choose activities which are appropriate to the age levels of the pupils/students.