



## Approaching God

Read Psalm 33 and use it as a basis for your opening prayer

*Sing joyfully to the LORD, you righteous; it is fitting for the upright to praise him. Sing to him a new song; play skillfully, and shout for joy. For the word of the LORD is right and true; he is faithful in all he does. (Psalm 33:1-4)*

“We pray because it is our most human response. We’re made by and for the voice of God - listening to and answering that voice is our most characteristic act. We are most ourselves when we pray.” (Eugene Peterson) Start your time today by doing what you were made for - connecting with the Lord.

## Acts 16:25-40

Passage Introduction: The Philippian Jailer

In the Roman Empire, a prison not only housed convicted criminals but also held individuals awaiting their impending judgment. Although an initial judgment (the beating) has occurred, the fact that Paul and Silas have been thrown into prison implies that more judgment is coming. Such judgment could entail exile, additional beatings, or execution. Since Paul and Silas are accused of trying to subvert the Roman Empire by means of sharing the gospel, the consequence would likely be capital punishment. And yet, at this precise moment, a remarkable turn of events occurs.

## Bible Reading, Study & Meditation

Start with Engaging the Text: Take a few minutes to highlight, circle, or underline key words.

Use the space in the margin to jot down notes, or themes/ideas that stand out as important.

“filled with joy” translates Greek *agalliaō*, a word not used by secular Greek writers & which always in the NT signifies a deep spiritual joy

**Acts 16:25-40** - **25** About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. **26** Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everyone’s chains came loose. **27** The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. **28** But Paul shouted, “Don’t harm yourself! We are all here!” **29** The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. **30** He then brought them out and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” **31** They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.” **32** Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. **33** At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his household were baptized. **34** The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole household. **35** When it was

## Notes:

daylight, the magistrates sent their officers to the jailer with the order: “Release those men.” **36** The jailer told Paul, “The magistrates have ordered that you and Silas be released. Now you can leave. Go in peace.” **37** But Paul said to the officers: “They beat us publicly without a trial, even though we are Roman citizens, and threw us into prison. And now do they want to get rid of us quietly? No! Let them come themselves and escort us out.” **38** The officers reported this to the magistrates, and when they heard that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens, they were alarmed. **39** They came to appease them and escorted them from the prison, requesting them to leave the city. **40** After Paul and Silas came out of the prison, they went to Lydia’s house, where they met with the brothers and sisters and encouraged them. Then they left.

## Questions for Reflection & Meditation

- What is the scene in the prison just before and just after the earthquake (vv. 25-28)?
- What radical changes come over the jailer because of “the word of the Lord” (vv. 29-34)?
- Paul’s response to suffering drew the jailer to ask him about salvation. In what way are you walking through trials right now? Who might be watching how you handle them? How might they be the means of giving you opportunities to share the gospel?

## Key Takeaway:

As you read today’s passage, what are 1 or 2 main takeaways that you wrote down in the margins? How would you briefly summarize your observations and meditations for today?

## Close in Prayer:

Is your heart’s desire to be able to tell people around you what Paul told the jailer? Why / why not? What do you need to pray about?