**Taking the “Bad” out of a bad Day!**

***Acts 16:16-34 (read)***

During our Scripture reading this morning we heard the story concerning Paul’s adventure in Greece.

Paul & Silas were on a missionary journey in the area of Philippi and initially things seemed to be going ok.

One day, however, things began to change. A certain woman, who was a fortune teller, began to follow Paul and Silas declaring, *“These men are bond-servants of the most high God, who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation.”*

Now, at first this might have seemed like a good thing — free advertising!

But this didn’t just happen once or twice; she kept up this chant for “many days.”

What might have appeared at first to be a good thing was becoming a nuisance & a distraction.

Finally, Paul cast the demonic spirit from her and she was delivered. Of course, she also lost her powers of telling the future.

This woman was being used by certain influential men in the community to make money!

When her masters saw What Paul and Silas had done, they seized them and dragged them to the marketplace.

And things just go from bad to worse for Paul & Silas.

They were brought before a makeshift court and were stripped, beaten severely and thrown into the “inner” prison where their feet were fastened in stocks. **This had turned out to be a bad day!** Or so they must have thought! Remember the old song, “Momma said?”

Have you ever had, “One of those days?

I think of the old TV show “The Honey Mooners.” When Ralph Cramdon would look at his wife Alice and say, “One of these days Alice!”Ralph was having a bad day and wanted Alice to likewise have a bad day even if he had to force it upon her.

Have you ever had one of those days when there was a “hint” that things were not starting out well?

One of those days when one bad thing after another seems to hit you?

One of those days when you’ve just told someone, “Well, at least things can’t get any worse.” But they did!

Let me share some true examples of what I’m talking about. And some of these people probably earned the right to a bad day.

1. A man in Cleveland was so mad after being given a speeding ticket that he raced away from the traffic stop peeling rubber. The officer nabbed him a second time and not only wrote him a second ticket for speeding, he received a third ticket for wreck-less driving!

2) Surprised while burglarizing a house, a thief fled out the back door, clambered over a nine foot wall and dropped down – right in the city prison!

3) A woman came home to find her husband in the kitchen, shaking frantically with what looked liked a wire running from his waist to the crock- pot on the counter. Intending to knock him free from the deadly current, she quickly found a large piece of wood and whacked him on his arm. Breaking his arm in two places.......What a shame.....he had only been listening to his old Walkman.

The text that we are looking at clearly indicates that Paul & Silas were having, “ one of those days!”

***Bad days only get worse for those that do not know Christ!***

What about you? Have you ever had a bad day? A bad week? I know I have

In fact, If we are not serving Christ, those days can get pretty stressful.

But thank God, if we confess our sins, or simply bring our concerns to the Lord He is faithful to forgive us from all unrighteousness. But an unrighteous person really hasn’t got much hope of things getting much better.

**Amos 5:19 - “As when a man flees from a lion, and a bear meets him, Or goes home, leans his hand against the wall, and a snake bites him.”**

**NOW THAT WOULD BE A BAD DAY**

While it is true that even a Child of God can and will have a bad day**, a bad day will not have the last word!** God gets the last word! And His word says, **in Psalm 30 –**

**“ weeping may last for the night, but shouts of joy come in the morning!”**

In Romans we learn that God causes “all” things to work together for good to those that love Him. Notice He says “all” things. Even those “bad days” God will use them to work out some good. We may not know how, as those days are upon us, but He will! We just need to be patient.

And in John we see God’s promise for His children, overc**“ In the world you have tribulation, but take courage....I have** **overcome the world!”**

Again, chill out! “Be patient.”

**So how do we turn around a bad day?**

How did Paul & Silas handle it? (V25) of our scripture reading for today. It says that about midnight Paul & Silas were **“Praying and Singing hymns of praise to God**” and the prisoners were listening to them. My first reaction to this; What? Are you kidding me? After all they have just been through? I can understand praying, but singing praises? Looks like I got a lot to learn!

**The victory in overcoming a bad day comes down to this simple equation*----“Prayer + Praise = Deliverance”***

First we must begin with prayer - calling upon the name of the Lord. A simple prayer from the heart, a time one on one with the God that loves us so very much; **then listen**, Remember Christ’s promise to **us “ My sheep hear My voice!”**

**My yoke is easy, My burden is light**. Have you ever used the term, “ take it easy on yourself? You know, we as Christians need to do that!

Have you ever been in a situation which caused you great distress and you didn’t know where to turn?

My yoke is easy and my burden is light says the Lord.....**give it to Jesus**....He has already made the sacrifice and paid the price.

Sometimes our bad days are bad days because we did not take it to the Lord in prayer!

Joseph Scriven became keenly aware of the power of prayer. It sustained him when all seemed lost in his life. You see, his fiancee drowned the very night before their scheduled wedding. Soon thereafter when his mother was ill, he wrote his mother a poem......

We all know the words of that poem..... It was written in 1855. We sing it from time to time. “What a friend we have in Jesus”

In the first verse of that song Joseph expresses this ironic truth....

O what peace we often forfeit, O what needles pain we bear, All because we do not carry “everything” to God in prayer! **Prayer + Praise = Deliverance**

Many of the songs we sing have roots in hardship. Of people that were having a bad day, a bad month, a bad year, and although at the time couldn’t foresee a way out let alone God’s blessings that would follow. And when they did, wrote a poem or a song, all of us can share in their expressions of deliverance and find strength when “we” encounter bad days.

I have a short video that shows the origins of the song we sometimes sing. When we come to realize what brought about these verses it adds meaning to the words expressed.

**(Show video)** -

In the video we learned what led to the song, “Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus.**” Again, prayer + praise = Deliverance!**

There is a story of a son that when his father who had his truck parked in the back yard and was about to leave hopped up on the tail-gate and held tight to the sides. As his father sped off the boy dropped off the back of the truck but held on as the truck pulled through the yard. Hearing yelling, the dad stopped and ran around the back of his truck to see his son scratched and bruised still holding on to the truck.

The father asked, “Why didn’t you let go?” Kinda an obvious question, don’t ya think? (*Water Skiing)*

God must be looking at us and wondering, **“Why didn’t you let go?**

Why didn’t you let go of your **fears**, your **stress**, your **worries**? Don’t let yourself or others drag you through life battered and scarred!

**How do we turn around a bad day?** ....Pray! When those storms come, pray, and God will sustain you.

Secondly...., continue with **praise**, after Paul & Silas prayed they began to sing hymns of praise to God. Some have asked, “How could they have done that considering what they have just gone through and what they are going through? Beaten, and in stocks in the bowels of a filthy, dark, stinky bug and rat invested cell.

Simple.....They trusted the Lord! ***They laid their burdens*** ***on Jesus***. And because they believed that Jesus took up their burdens they felt relief. They felt confidence that God would not only sustain them but deliver them!

 Even in the most of dire circumstances when we truly let go and let God we will feel the burdens of life lifted. We will become confident that light **is** at the end of the tunnel! The Lord will get us through whatever comes our way. The Lord will deliver us! **Praise God?**

Paul & Silas prayed and trusted God, so what else is there to do but speak the language of faith. ***Praise, weather it is in song or word, praise is the language of faith!***

The “mind” of man would have tried to convince Paul & Silas that their situation had not changed and there was nothing to sing about. But through eyes of faith, they saw that God had not forsaken them!

**Prayer + Praise = Deliverance!**

Even though it had been a bad day up to this point, even though they were in prison and chained in stocks, God was with them!

***It takes faith to praise God when the day has been a bad one.!***

It takes faith to sing praises to the Lord for what He has done while to those around you, it doesn’t look like the Lord has done anything.

But once we have prayed and put our problems in God’s hands, what else is there to do but praise Him! (as one old preacher used to ask the flock), **Amen to that?**

To do anything less is to suggest that either God didn’t hear, or God doesn’t care!

**If you believe He hears, and you know He cares, then praise Him!**

As Paul & Silas sang the prison was shaken, the doors were opened and they were delivered!

Now that was a pretty good day after all.

Closing: If we as Christians hold to this simple truth, ***Prayer + Praise = Deliverance***, God will bless us beyond our limited mental understanding and perspective of things.

God may deliver you immediately, or He may have you wait awhile. Only God knows what is in store for us in the future. The video we watched demonstrate that Although we may not readily see the good, it is there, and God will be glorified through our ups and our downs. What we think of as a bad day may be the beginning of something wonderful! Some truth that we would have otherwise never come to of known.

 Perhaps it took that bad day to bring us into a closer relationship with our Lord! Or it taught us to depend more on others or more on God.

All we need do is lay our burdens on the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Prayer + Praise = Deliverance!**

If you have yet to accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior, won’t you do so this morning? Right now! I can promise you this, it will be a good day both here and for you and in heaven! His arms are outstretched to you and His shoulders are ready to bear your burdens.

Lets stand and sing!