

Key text: Acts 16:16-26

Paul & Silas on their way to pray (bear in mind the stretch of events prior to this chapter); doing what Christians do and a distraction comes; in the form of a girl overtaken by an evil spirit. In dealing with it, Paul & Silas are falsely accused, flogged and imprisoned.

Distractions come; they are unplanned, unexpected. Their nature by definition is to 'cause to turn away from original purpose'. Our focus is Jesus (our eyes are set on Him, and what He does in our lives and what He does in the lives of others, around us). Many things can try and take our attention away from the will of God.

Distractions do not always come as a result of sin. Circumstances do not always go our way. In fact, sometimes the more focussed we are, the greater the challenge of avoiding diversion. The term distraction does not in any way diminish or belittle whatever the circumstances might be, but the term does denote the ability of these circumstances to divert our attention.

'Will you serve Me, whether the circumstances are changed or not?' distractions will come; it is not if, but when the storms come. How we respond to them is the critical point.

See verses 25-26. Paul & Silas' response. PRAYING AND SINGING; Loud enough for others to hear. They could have been asking questions, placing blame but they were praising despite the circumstances. 'Yet will I praise You'. **WE MUST PRAY AND SEEK GOD FIRST.**

Cannot allow distractions to turn us away from the God, nor His will. Paul said, 'Count it all joy....' why? Because there is something that God can do.

It is darkest at the midnight hour, but it is also closest to a new day. Paul & Silas sang and prayed before the chains fell off! They could not free themselves, trusted God to sort it out His way and He came.

Others were listening; people are watching us to see how we respond. The result in Acts 16; prisoners, jailer, jailer's household saved.

We are the different ones. We can't stop distractions but we can control our response to them. See problems as opportunities? How can we use this to make God's name great? Build us? Help others?

The enemy would love to knock us off track. It is a narrow road that Christians travel on - & life gets tight at times; but stay there. Victory comes when we stay focussed, realise that we are part of a fallen world but have a great God who can turn our circumstances around.

Do people around us want what we've got?

Hope, a smile, praise, .. Consider Rheinhard Bonnke's dream.

2 Corinthians 4:18; fix our eyes on the unseen and the eternal; not distracted because our eyes are fixed on Jesus and on God's big picture. This works. Christ kept His eyes on the Cross and we are the result.