

OCTOBER WEEK TWO: JAILER OF PHILIPPI

Monday

Acts 16:16–40

Not everybody wanted to believe – or even listen – to the good news that Jesus is the Savior. While Paul and Silas were preaching in Philippi, a wicked man got so angry with them that he started a riot. Then he lied to the officials about Paul and Silas. The officials had them beaten and taken away to prison.

In the prison, a jailor put Paul and Silas in a deep, inner part of the jail and locked their feet in pieces of wood called stocks. The prison was a terrible place, and Paul and Silas did not know what would happen to them when morning came. So they passed the long hours of the night by praying together and singing hymns.

Suddenly, around midnight, there was an earthquake! The foundations of the prison shook, all the prison doors opened, and the chains fell off all the prisoners!

When the jailor woke up, he saw that the prison was compromised with the doors open. He thought the prisoners had escaped. He knew he would be in terrible trouble if the prisoners had escaped, because he was held responsible for them. He was about to fall on his sword and die rather than face the punishment for letting the prisoners escape.

But Paul cried out, "Don't harm yourself, we are all here." The jailor called for lighted torches to be brought, and he rushed in to see for himself. When he found Paul and Silas, he trembled with fear and fell down before them. He recognized it was the power of God that had opened the prison.

He brought Paul and Silas out of the prison and asked them, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Paul and Silas were glad he asked. They told the jailor that there was nothing that he could do to save himself, but Jesus had already done it all!

They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your entire household." The jailor took Paul and Silas to his home to wash their wounds, where they shared God's Word with the jailor and to all who were in his house. That very night the jailor and his whole family believed in the Savior and were baptized! Then the new believers shared a meal with Paul and Silas, and the jailor and his family were filled with joy. Paul and Silas showed their love for God even while they were unfairly in prison, and that led to them having the opportunity to share the gospel with an entire family and save them!

- **What did Paul and Silas do at night in prison?**
- **What caused the earthquake in the middle of the night, and what happened to the prisoners?**

OCTOBER WEEK TWO: SAMARITAN WOMAN

Tuesday

John 4:1–44

Jesus and his disciples were walking home to Galilee on the dusty roads. Jesus was tired from the hot sun and the long walk, so he stopped to rest by a well outside a town in Samaria. Jesus sat down by the well while his disciples went into the town to get some food.

Soon a woman came to the well with a large jar to get water for her daily washing and cooking. As she pulled her full jar out of the well, Jesus asked her for a drink.

The woman was surprised, and asked, "Why are you, a Jew, asking for a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" In those days, the Jewish people and the Samaritan people did not like each other and would usually have nothing to do with each other. And this woman didn't have many friends. Women typically did not go to the well alone, but this woman doesn't seem to have any friends who are willing to go with her. So she was probably pretty used to people just ignoring her. She's surprised when Jesus talks to her.

"If you knew the gift of God," Jesus answered, "and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water."

The woman did not understand what Jesus was talking about. She could see that Jesus did not have a jar or bucket to let down into the deep well. "Where," she asked, "do you get that living water?"

Jesus replied, "Everyone who drinks of this well water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

Now the woman was really confused, but also very interested. "Sir," she said, "give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water."

Then Jesus told the woman that he knew about her sins. And then she was sure that Jesus must be a prophet, a person who spoke truths from God. She said, "I know that the Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things." The woman was amazed when Jesus then said, "I who speak to you am he."

The woman knew she had met the Messiah! In her excitement, she left her water jar and ran all the way to town to spread the great news. She told the people, "Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did wrong, and tells me I'm forgiven! Can this be the Christ?"

The people were curious and came to see Jesus. Jesus stayed to teach them for two more days, and many of the Samaritans believed in Jesus. "We have heard for ourselves," the people said, "and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world."

This true story teaches us something wonderful: No matter who we are, where we are from, or what we have done, the undeserved love of Jesus Christ saves us through faith in Christ. He saves us from our sins and gives us the refreshing water of eternal life.

- What did Jesus ask the Samaritan woman to give him, and what did Jesus offer to give her?
- What is the wonderful thing this story teaches us?

Close with prayer

OCTOBER WEEK TWO: GOLDEN CALF

Wednesday

Exodus 32

Across the Red Sea from Egypt, in the desert wilderness, God miraculously provided for his people. Each day, he placed a thin, light bread called manna on the ground. In addition, God sent flocks of quail for the people to eat. He gave them water to drink, even causing it to pour out of a rock. God wanted his people to know the best and happiest way to live, so at Mt. Sinai God gave them the Ten Commandments.

The Commandments were written on two tablets of stone. Moses was their leader, and he went up to the top of Mt. Sinai to receive the Commandment on the tablets from God. While Moses remained on the mountain listening to God, the people grew impatient, restless, and discontent. They started to doubt if Moses was going to ever return. They complained to Aaron, who was Moses' brother. They asked Aaron to make them a god to worship, a golden statue like the Egyptians had. Aaron did as the people demanded. He told them to give him the gold from all their jewelry.

With their gold, Aaron made a calf figure. He built an altar for the calf, and the people began to worship it and party. When Moses approached the camp and saw the golden idol, he threw the two stone tablets containing the Ten Commandments to the ground, breaking them. In anger, Moses ground the calf into powder, mixed it with water, and made the people drink it. The people recognized their foolish sin and their rejection of God. Moses pleaded with God for the people, and God forgave them.

God wants us to fear, love, and trust him more than everything else. God loves us more than everything else, and he showed us that when Jesus died for us to forgive our foolish sins and all or our rejection of God.

- **Can you think of times when you loved something more than you love God?**

Dear God, thank you for filling our world with many wonderful things. Forgive us when we let any of those things be important to us in our lives than you are. Help us to love and serve you as you desire. Amen.

OCTOBER WEEK TWO: ELIJAH AND THE PROPHETS OF BAAL

Thursday

1 Kings 18

For three years no rain fell in the land of Israel. There was almost nothing to eat. Many people had forgotten about the Lord and prayed to idols instead. God sent his prophet Elijah to meet wicked King Ahab, who was leading the Israelites in worshipping the idol Baal. Elijah told King Ahab that the king and his family had turned their backs on the one true God and broken his commandments.

Elijah instructed King Ahab to bring the Israelites to Mt. Carmel, along with all the prophets of Baal. When the people gathered on the mountain, Elijah asked them how long they would keep switching back and forth from worshipping God to worshipping Baal. "If the Lord is God, follow him," Elijah told them, "but if Baal, then follow him." But the people did not answer a word.

So Elijah challenged Israel to a test. He told the people of Israel to bring two bulls and to choose one of the bulls for the false prophets of Baal. Then Elijah told the false prophets to prepare the bull as an offering to Baal, and to place it on an altar of wood. Elijah said that he too would prepare an offering and put it on the altar of the Lord. Then Elijah told the 450 prophets of Baal, "You call upon the name of your god, and I will call upon the name of the Lord – ad the God who answers by fire, he is God." The Israelites agreed that this would be a good test.

Baal's prophets prepared an offering for their false god. They prayed all morning, but no fire came. They danced around the altar, but nothing happened. They prayed louder and louder all afternoon, but still there was no answer of any kind from Baal.

Then Elijah built an altar with 12 large stones, one for each of the tribes of Israel, to honor God. Elijah poured water all over the offering, down the altar, into the ditch, until the ditch was full of water. The wood and the offering were soaking wet! How could they ever catch on fire now? Then Elijah prayed. "Answer me, O Lord, answer me, that this people may know that you, O Lord, are God, and that you have turned their hearts back."

Immediately, God sent fire from heaven and burned up the sacrifice! The fire burned up all the wood, it dried up all the water in the ditch, and it even burned up the 12 large stones! The people fell down and shouted, "The Lord, he is God; The Lord, he is God." Then, finally, after God sent fire, he sent rain to water the land and to take away the famine.

The true God is the Lord – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He is the God who made us, loves us, and cares for us. God the Father sent Jesus to die on the cross to take away our sins. God sends the Holy Spirit to give his people faith. Our God wants us to worship only him. He wants everyone to know that he is the true God and that he sent Jesus to be our Savior.

- What was the name of the false god – the idol that the wicked King Ahab worshiped?
- What was Elijah's test to show who is the one true God? What happened?
- How can we know today that our God is truly the only real God?

Close with prayer

OCTOBER WEEK TWO: MARY AND MARTHA

Friday

Luke 10:38–42

Jesus was often a guest at the home of others, including his friends, Mary and Martha, who were sisters, and their brother Lazarus. They welcomed Jesus to stay with them at their home in Bethany several times. Bethany was a tiny village not far from the big city of Jerusalem. While on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus often stopped to visit with these friends. Once when Jesus came for a visit, Martha kept busy working around the house getting things ready to serve Jesus. Mary, on the other hand, remained with Jesus, sitting at his feet, and listening to his words. Martha asked Jesus, “Lord, don’t you care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Ask her to help me.”

Jesus answered her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.”

The work that Martha was doing to serve Jesus was good. But the one thing Mary had chosen was to hear God’s Word, and Jesus didn’t want Martha to ask Mary to stop listening to God’s Word. Like Martha, we can let things get in the way of hearing God’s Word. We can think about other things, or think that other things are more important or more urgent. We can do other things at night instead of devotions; we can do other things on Sunday instead of going to church. And the other things that we choose to do might even be good things. But God wants us to make sure that we always have time to listen to his Word, just as Mary did.

- **What are some of the things in your life that distract you from listening to God’s Word?**

Dear God, thank you for the Bible. Open my ears and my heart as I read and hear your Word, which alone can lead me closer to Jesus, my Savior. Amen.