

The Power of Praise

Acts 16:16-40 Picture Paul and Silas in stocks in prison. They should have been so discouraged and depressed, but this was not their state at all. They had been beaten, and I am sure the stocks were irritating their fresh wounds, yet they made a quality decision. They decided to praise the Lord anyhow. They began to sing praises to God. Suddenly there was a great earthquake, and the foundations of the whole prison were shaken, causing the doors of their cell to fling open. The guard of the prison awakened and was in great fear. This guard was about to kill himself because he knew he would be killed if Paul and Silas escaped. Paul cried out, "Do not harm yourself, for we are here." Then this prisoner fell at their feet and asked, "What must I do to be saved?" Paul answered, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you and your house will be saved." The guard took them to his house, where Paul and Silas explained to the whole household about the Lord. The guard washed their wounds and then everyone in his household was baptized.

What a story, and it all began with the decision Paul and Silas made to praise the Lord in spite of their circumstances. I heard someone say that they believed the earthquake occurred because God was tapping His toes in rhythm with their praises.

Perhaps we are not in stocks as Paul and Silas were, but there are days that we feel we are bound by oppression and tied up with doubt and unbelief. Sometimes life can be overwhelming, but we can overwhelm whatever circumstance we are experiencing if we will make the decision to praise God anyhow. No matter what we are experiencing in this life, we can praise the Lord for His goodness, mercy, longsuffering, delivering power and on and on. As we get our focus off the circumstances and onto our mighty God, suddenly we too experience an earthquake. The chains that were binding us begin to fall off, the prison door swings open and we are free. We should not, however, take our

freedom for granted. We are set free for a purpose, and that purpose is to set others free. Remember the guard took Paul and Silas to his home where his whole family heard the gospel and was saved.

Has God set you free from oppression and depression through praise? The garment of praise always lifts the spirit of heaviness. Then tell somebody. The same liberating power you experienced is available to all those who are oppressed. The joy of salvation awaits all those you will tell of God's liberating power. Tell someone today how Jesus set you free.

Lord, I have experienced the liberating power of praise many times in my life. Help me to be faithful to testify about these times to others. They too can be set free, but they need someone to tell them how. May I be that person who shares the power of praise with them.

**READ: 2 Kings 8:1-9:15; Acts 16:16-40; Psalm 143:1-12;
Proverbs 17:26**