



BIBLE RADIO PRODUCTIONS

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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

A1744 ~ Delivered from Prison.

Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.

How many prisoners held in jails around the world wish they could escape their jail situation and be free to go wherever they liked again? A few have escaped, some by their cleverness to find an escape, while others by God's hand. A story of Brother Yun of China has caused many people to be amazed at his leaving prison.

Christian leaders of the underground churches in China have suffered imprisonment often since the Communists took over that country. Brother Yun had been held for many years in a maximum security prison thought to be totally secure, as no one had ever previously escaped. In his book, he told how he heard the voice of the Holy Spirit tell him to simply walk out the heavily guarded prison gate.

Brother Yun risked being shot dead on the spot but he obeyed the voice. He walked straight through several prison doors that were somehow left open in front of many prison guards. He then crossed the prison yard and finally walked through the main gate. He said it was as though he had become invisible to the guards who stared straight through him.

Some prison guards lost their jobs over this incident. An official investigation by the authorities concluded that Yun received no human help in his escape. A number of other prisoners from Yun's prison cell confirmed the report. Yun remains the only person to have escaped from that horrible jail.

In today's *Bible Adventure* drama, everyone, including Paul and Silas in the prison at the Roman colony of Philippi, were settling down to get some sleep on their first night. The rumble sound of an earthquake brought everyone back awake.

It's a fearful thing to have no means of escape when the walls of a building are shaking during an earthquake. Often when a bad earthquake happens somewhere around the world, there are many aftershocks. People can be too afraid to sleep inside for up to months afterward.

DRAMA - [The Bible In Living Sound](#).

Paul and Silas were being held fast in stocks so they couldn't walk around. What could they do? They passed the time by singing songs to God and praying to Him. Most prisoners would cry out in pain from the discomfort their body was forced to endure, so the other prisoners must have certainly been amazed that Paul and Silas were singing.

Then God, by means of an earthquake, caused the prison doors to open and the chains of all the prisoners to come loose. Those chains would have been securely attached to the walls and floors of the prison, but God made them all fall apart. When the earthquake woke up the jailor, he ran to the jail. Seeing all the doors of the jail wide open, he immediately assumed that all the prisoners had escaped.

For a Roman jailer, there could be no greater disgrace. Knowing that he would receive the death penalty for allowing his prisoners to escape, the jailer decided he would kill himself first. As the prison was in darkness, the jailor couldn't see into the prison or see any prisoners. But Paul heard him draw his sword and he called out, "We're all here!" The other prisoners hadn't even tried to escape. Maybe they were thankful just to be alive after such a bad earthquake. Or they understood that something miraculous had happened and that those prisoners named Paul and Silas weren't like ordinary criminals.

The jailer called for a light and he went to the dungeon and fell down at the feet of Paul and Silas, trembling with fear. He may have heard about the slave girl who cried out: “These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved.” The jailer understood that Paul and Silas were men with supernatural power as they had healed that slave girl. His thoughts now turned to his own spiritual need for salvation.

The jailor asked Paul and Silas what he must do to be saved. They told him, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.” They explained God’s Word to the jailor, his family and personal staff who were still outside after the earthquake. The jailor washed the wounds inflicted on Paul and Silas from their beating. Then Paul baptised them all as believers. They all rejoiced together and the jailer took Paul and Silas into his house and fed them there.

Although grateful for these acts of kindness from the jailor, Paul and Silas wouldn’t have expected such things to be done for them. These days, we live in an age of entitlement. This means we think we deserve something because we’re important and others owe us something. In the 1500s and 1600s, a group of churchmen fostered a strong sense of deserving to be given privileges because of the position they held. Heads of churches took a great interest in the politics of the day and when given favours, sided with whoever the ruling king or queen was in Europe at that time.

This meant that soon the church leaders were siding with policies forbidden in the Bible. In England, for example, when a new king came to the throne, he would enforce the keeping of traditions that were promoted by the pope of the day. The church leaders controlled the issuing of licences for preachers to speak in public. You might remember John Bunyan spent years in jail because he couldn’t get a licence to preach.

Some faithful preachers rejected ungodly traditions and called for holy living, to be faithful and true to what the Scriptures said and to walk humbly with their Lord. These preachers became known as dissenters and puritans. One of the best known of these men was John Owen. John was born as the 16th son to a pastor who was a purist. As John showed great learning abilities, his rich uncle paid for his fees to attend university.

However, the rich uncle followed the Royalist side of politics and when John spoke out against the ungodly things being forced on the churches, his rich uncle disinherited him. Owen had to leave university before he finished his course and depended completely on the Lord for guidance as to what he should do next.

John Owen didn't have an attitude of entitlement and neither did Paul and Silas. When the magistrates in Philippi quickly condemned them to a flogging and imprisonment, they never shouted out that they were Roman citizens and that they were entitled to certain privileges. On the morning after the earthquake, the magistrates decided to let Paul and Silas go. They thought a beating and a night in jail was enough punishment. A messenger was sent to the prison to tell them to go. But the magistrates were in for a surprise! Paul and Silas refused to go. Whoever heard of someone refusing to leave prison?

Both Paul and Silas were Roman citizens. According to Roman law, it was illegal to beat a Roman citizen. So the magistrates had made a terrible mistake and now were very fearful with this information. If the news of what they had done spread, they would be severely punished. Paul and Silas demanded that the city magistrates apologise to them openly. By forcing them to do this, Paul and Silas hoped that the people would have more respect for the Gospel of the Lord Jesus and His servants. This would help the new Philippian believers and a new church that had just been started there.

The magistrates did go to jail and apologise to Paul and Silas; they released the men and begged them to leave the city. On the way out of town, Paul and Silas went to Lydia's house to encourage and comfort the new disciples who had gathered there to see them off. Philippi was a leading city in Macedonia and Paul established a church which was mostly made up of Gentiles. This church was a special delight to Paul, because the Christians there had responded in a most generous way when Paul was collecting funds for the church in Jerusalem.

Paul and this church had developed a bond of love and mutual confidence with each other and more so than any other church. The church in Philippi grew rapidly and continued to send gifts to Paul to support him in his travels. And by their demonstrated love and faithful Christian witness, the Philippian believers continued to give Paul great joy.

Some 13 years after Paul wrote his first letter which was for the Galatians, he wrote a letter for the Christians at Philippi. Paul was a prisoner in Rome by this time and Timothy was with him. The Philippian Christians had sent Paul a gift and Paul wanted to thank them for it. He reported back on his own situation and encouraged the Philippians to stand firm in their faith, and to live in unity and humility.

Although Paul was a prisoner and his circumstances were bad, God brought good out of them. Paul's sufferings served to advance the Gospel in many profound ways. God can bring good out of bad circumstances for us too.

In Christ, we do not merely accept life as it comes, but use the resources He gives us to make life what it ought to be. Christianity transforms deep pessimism about human inadequacies with an uncrushable optimism that God can bring good out of any circumstance. We have the Lord Jesus Christ as the perfect example of this: As He stood before the Sanhedrin on His trial for His life, Jesus said: "But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God." Jesus brought future victory into His present situation.

Do feelings of tension and stress cause you to say that you can't cope with life? God has arranged for life to come to us in manageable portions – and at one day at a time. Worries from yesterday and worries about tomorrow can make today's workload unbearable. We must give them into God's hands and when we ask Him, He will provide His very own grace and power to meet them. Sometimes the pace of life pushes us to breaking point. We think we aren't achieving anything unless we are doing things in a hurry or in a particular direction.

The Lord Jesus achieved most here on earth but He was never in a hurry, never pushed people around and nor was He ever over busy. He stayed calm. How can we do that?

Only when we set about working out the cause of our stress that we can learn faith in God and ask for His help in doing something about it. We need to learn how to relax and keep things in perspective through our faith in God's complete sufficiency to deal with any situation. We also need to stop striving to meet our or others' expectations of us. Christ is our redeemer and life. When we are in a prison or in trouble, like Paul and Silas were in prison, then there's nothing left for us to do, except start singing praises to God as well.

Let us not forget that in Philippians, Chapter 4, Verse 19, the Apostle Paul said: "My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.

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