

Encounter Church
Sunday September 17, 2023

When the Church Prays
The Attitude of Prayer

Our attitude can propel us to the things of God or it can prevent us from moving beyond our current circumstances!

Our attitude is expressed in our behavior! (Let's look at an example)

Paul, Silas and Luke are in Philippi, a major city of that district of Macedonia. It's a Roman colony.

One of the first things they did when they arrived was to try and find some people who were praying. They started looking for a place of corporate prayer! Prayer with others!

Acts 16:13- "On the Sabbath we went a little way outside the city to a riverbank, where we thought people would be meeting for prayer,...."

CATCH THIS! When Paul and his companions reached Philippi they started looking for praying people!

Acts 16:16- "One day as we were going down to the place of prayer, we met a slave girl who had a spirit that enabled her to tell the future. She earned a lot of money for her masters by telling fortunes."

(Share the experience of Paul and Silas after this)

Acts 16:23-24- "They were severely beaten, and then they were thrown into prison. The jailer was ordered to make sure they didn't escape. So the jailer put them into the inner dungeon and clamped their feet in the stocks."

AT THIS POINT WOULD YOU RATHER HAVE PITY OR POWER? A DECISION HAS TO BE MADE!

Were they going to start singing "*If it weren't for bad luck I'd have no luck at all!*"

That's a pity party! No doubt it was hard, no doubt it was difficult.

BUT THEY WANTED POWER!

Acts 16:25- "Around midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening."

Here Luke gives us one of the most beautiful scenes in scripture! Beaten, bleeding, missionaries, their feet in stokes, literally turn the prison into prayer and praise!

Though their bodies were still bleeding and tortured in the stocks, their spirits, under the expulsive power of a new affection, rose above suffering, and made the prison walls resound with song!

EVEN THOUGH THEIR FEET WERE IN STOCKS, PAUL AND SILAS WERE FREE FROM THE SHACKLES OF A BAD ATTITUDE!

It is wonderful that in such pain, with lacerated backs and aching limbs, Paul and Silas, at about midnight, were praying and singing hymns to God!

Not groans but songs came from their mouths! Instead of cursing men, they blessed God!

Here we have a concrete depiction of the Christian ideal of joy and a good attitude amid suffering!

Romans 5:3- "We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance."

James 1:2- "Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy."

Even though you may be on your way to Heaven, your life on this earth will largely be decided by your attitude!

Your attitude is the advance man of your true self! *It's roots are inward but it's fruits are outward!*

Our attitude is our best friend or our worst enemy! It is more honest and more consistent than our words!

Our attitude is the librarian of our past, the speaker of our present and the prophet of our future.

"Nothing can stop the man with the right mental attitude from achieving his goals on earth and nothing can help the man with the wrong mental attitude." -Thomas Jefferson

3 TRUTHS ABOUT ATTITUDE

1. We Choose our Attitude

Your attitude is your decision! Paul and Silas chose prayer and praise.

Your prayer attitude is YOUR CHOICE!

Psalm 100:4- “Enter his gates with thanksgiving; go into his courts with praise. Give thanks to him and praise his name.”

Deuteronomy 30:19- “Today I have given you the choice between life and death, between blessings and curses. Now I call on heaven and earth to witness the choice you make. Oh, that you would choose life, so that you and your descendants might live!”

An attitude can run in families! Choose life! Choose a great attitude!

2. Your Attitude is not caused by people or circumstances.

I'd be happy if it weren't for all the jerks in my life!

THE DECEPTION- ***If my circumstances were better I'd have a better attitude. No you wouldn't!***

Paul and Silas attitude of prayer and praise was certainly not determined by their circumstances!

Rather than being depressed or plotting escape, Paul and Silas displayed confidence in what God had in store for them.

Habakkuk 3:17-18- “Even though the fig trees have no blossoms, and there are no grapes on the vines; even though the olive crop fails, and the fields lie empty and barren; even though the flocks die in the fields, and the cattle barns are empty, yet I will rejoice in the Lord! I will be joyful in the God of my salvation!”

3. The Holy Spirit will help you with your attitude.

Your attitude is the advance man of your true self! *It's roots are inward but it's fruits are outward!*

Galatians 5:22-23- “But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!”

WHAT IS THE HOLY SPIRIT SAYING TO YOU THROUGH THIS MESSAGE?