

TO WHOM SHALL WE GO?...

A Video Bible Study Series

(John 6:68, NIV)

EPISODE 3 – ACTS OF WITNESSING

HOLY SPIRIT – THE FLAME WITHIN ME SERIES (ACTS 16:16-34)

- Just before Jesus was taken up into heaven, He told His disciples in **Acts 1:8**; *“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you. Then you will tell people about me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria. And you will even tell other people about me from one end of the earth to the other.”*
- You might remember on Day 2 we learned about a man names Saul, who we now know as Paul. He was a man who persecuted the followers of Jesus. He wanted them all arrested and punished for believing that Jesus was the Son of God.
- But Jesus appeared to him when he was traveling to Damascus to arrest Jesus’ followers. Jesus made him blind but healed his heart so that he could understand who Jesus really was.
- In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to Ananias in a vision and told him to go to Saul. He was to place his hands on him to restore his sight.
- Ananias had every reason to be afraid. He responded to the Lord, *“This man has harmed your holy people in Jerusalem. And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name.”*



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- But the Lord replied, *“Go! I have chosen Saul to proclaim my Name not only to Jews but Gentiles and their kings. I will also show him how much he must suffer for me.”*
- Ananias went to the house and placed his hands on Saul. Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes, and he could see. Saul got up and was baptized. Saul not only received his sight, but also received the Holy Spirit.
- It was the Holy Spirit who changed Saul’s heart and gave Ananias the courage to go to Saul to lay hands on him. Later Saul, who we know as Paul preached about Jesus and planted churches throughout the known world. His letters to these churches make up a large portion of the New Testament.
- In this lesson, we are going to talk about witnessing. Does anyone know what it means to witness to another person?
- Witnessing to someone is when we share the love of God with them. As Christians, we all have a story to share! Telling others what God has personally done in our lives can help others think about the impact God can have on their lives.
- It’s ok to be nervous when witnessing to other people. Just remember that you are not alone! The Holy Spirit is present with you. He will give you the courage and boldness to share what Jesus has done for you.
- You may think you need to be a preacher who can speak to large crowds to tell people about Jesus. We learned on Day 1 that Peter spoke to a huge crowd about Jesus Christ. This was a good example of witnessing.
- But, just talking to one person about God, or showing love to someone else is witnessing! God wants us to share His love with everyone, whether it be to a crowd or just one person who needs to hear about Him. Our story today is that kind of story. You can find it in **Acts 16:16-34**.
- Paul and a fellow disciple, Silas, were in Philippi sharing the Good News of Jesus. They were staying with a Christian woman, Lydia, and her family.

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- One day while Paul and Silas were going to the place of prayer, they were met by a female slave who was possessed by an evil spirit. Her owners were making a lot of money from the evil spirit telling people their future.
- She followed Paul and Silas, shouting; *“These men serve the Most High God. They are telling you how to be saved.”* She did this for many days.
- Finally, Paul had enough. He turned to the girl and said to the evil spirit inside her, *“In the name of Jesus Christ, I command you to come out of her!”* Immediately the evil spirit left the girl.
- The girl’s owners were very upset. It was the evil spirit that gave the girl the ability to tell people their fortunes and this is how the girl’s owners made money.
- They grabbed Paul and Silas and dragged them to the Roman authorities. *“These men are Jews,”* they exclaimed. *“They are making trouble in our city. They are practicing things which go against Roman law.”*
- The judges ordered for Paul and Silas to be stripped and beaten with rods. The crowd also attacked them. They were thrown in prison and the jailer was told to guard them carefully.
- The jailer put Paul and Silas deep inside the prison. He fastened their feet in stocks that were both painful and made sure they couldn’t get away. About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God. The other prisoners were listening to them.
- It’s amazing that Paul and Silas could praise God while they were beaten, in stocks, and in prison. In **Acts chapter 4** after Peter and John healed a cripple man, the Jewish leaders questioned them.
- The Jewish leaders were disturbed because Peter and John were preaching about Jesus and so they arrested them. The next day the Jewish leaders commanded them to stop teaching in the name of Jesus. Peter and John refused to be silenced, and after more threats from the Jewish leaders, they were released.

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- Peter and John returned to the other believers and they prayed. In **Acts 4:31** it says, *“And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.”*
- It is the Holy Spirit who gave Peter and John, and the other disciples boldness. In today’s story The Holy Spirit gave Paul and Silas the courage to pray and praise God while in prison.
- While the other prisoners were listening to Paul and Silas praise God, suddenly there was a powerful earthquake. It shook the prison from top to bottom.
- All the prison doors flew open, and everyone’s chains came loose. The jailer woke up and saw that the prison doors were open. He grabbed his sword and was about to kill himself, because he thought the prisoners had escaped.
- But Paul shouted, “Don’t harm yourself! We are all still here!” The jailer rushed in, shaking with fear. He fell on the ground in front of Paul and Silas. Then he brought them out of the jail cell. He asked, *“Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”*
- Paul and Silas replied, *“Believe in the Lord Jesus. Then you and everyone living in your house will be saved.”*
- The jailer took Paul and Silas and washed their wounds. Then he and everyone living in his house were baptized. He brought them to his house and prepared a meal for them. Everyone was filled with joy, for they had become believers in God.
- Through the power of the Holy Spirit, Paul and Silas weren’t afraid to tell others about God, even though they had been beaten and thrown in prison.
- Witnessing to others is contagious! Paul and Silas first witnessed first to the jailer. But his entire family also came to know about Jesus and were baptized. It is important for Christians to witness to others; God wants everyone to know about Him!

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- Our love for God can be like a ripple from a pebble splashing in a pond. When we share about Jesus it will result in more people hearing about Him.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does it mean to witness to someone?

- Witnessing to someone is when we share the love of God with them.

2. Why are some people afraid to witness to others about Jesus?

- We might think telling people about Jesus should be done by a pastor. We might be afraid to say something wrong. We think people will make fun of us, reject us, or even hurt us.

3. Why were Paul and Silas arrested?

- Paul said to the evil spirit inside the girl, *“In the name of Jesus Christ, I command you to come out of her!”* This caused the slave owners to lose their source of income. Paul and Silas were accused of making trouble in the city.

4. Who made it possible for Paul and Silas to pray and sing songs of praise to God while beaten and in prison?

- It is the Holy Spirit who gave Paul and Silas the courage to pray and praise God while in prison.

5. What were Paul and Silas doing when they replied the jailer’s question, *“What must I do to be saved?”*

- They were witnessing by telling the jailer to believe in the Lord Jesus. If he believed, everyone living in his house would be saved.

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PERSONAL QUESTIONS

1. What are some ways you can witness to others?

- You can share the blessings God has given you with people at work.
- Invite your housemates to your church or Friendship Group.
- Write encouraging notes or Bible verses and give them to your roommates, staff, or co-workers.
- Pray with someone you know is struggling, or who doesn't know God.
- Look for ways you can help someone.

2. How can you rely on the Holy Spirit to help you witness with others?

- In **Acts 4:31** it says, *“And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.”*
- Before talking to others about God, it is always best to pray first.

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