

St Paul on Justice

Paul and Silas

Acts 16: 16-40

One day as we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a young servant woman who had an evil spirit that enabled her to predict the future. She earned a lot of money for her owners by telling fortunes. She followed Paul and us, shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God! They announce to you how you can be saved!"

She did this for many days, until Paul became so upset that he turned around and said to the spirit, "In the name of Jesus Christ I order you to come out of her!" The spirit went out of her that very moment.

When her owners realized that their chance of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them to the authorities in the public square.

They brought them before the Roman officials and said, "These men are Jews, and they are causing trouble in our city.

They are teaching customs that are against our law; we are Roman citizens, and we cannot accept these customs or practice them."

And the crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas. Then the officials tore the clothes off Paul and Silas and ordered them to be whipped.

After a severe beating, they were thrown into jail, and the jailer was ordered to lock them up tight.

Upon receiving this order, the jailer threw them into the inner cell and fastened their feet between heavy blocks of wood.

About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them.

Suddenly there was a violent earthquake, which shook the prison to its foundations. At once all the doors opened, and the chains fell off all the prisoners.

The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he thought that the prisoners had escaped; so he pulled out his sword and was about to kill himself.

But Paul shouted at the top of his voice, "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!"

The jailer called for a light, rushed in, and fell trembling at the feet of Paul and Silas.

Then he led them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

They answered, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your family."

Then they preached the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in the house.

At that very hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; and he and all his family were baptized at once.

Then he took Paul and Silas up into his house and gave them some food to eat. He and his family were filled with joy, because they now believed in God.

The next morning the Roman authorities sent police officers with the order, "Let those men go."

So the jailer told Paul, "The officials have sent an order for you and Silas to be released. You may leave, then, and go in peace."

But Paul said to the police officers, "We were not found guilty of any crime, yet they whipped us in public—and we are Roman citizens! Then they threw us in prison. And now they want to send us away secretly? Not at all! The Roman officials themselves must come here and let us out."

The police officers reported these words to the Roman officials; and when they heard that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens, they were afraid.

So they went and apologized to them; then they led them out of the prison and asked them to leave the city.

Paul and Silas left the prison and went to Lydia's house. There they met the believers, spoke words of encouragement to them, and left.

Answer these questions in full sentences:

1. What was unjust (unfair) about what happened to the two men?
2. How did God provide justice.

3. Look at the following passages, all written by St. Paul. Choose the two that you think are the most interesting. Copy these two out and write down what you think each one says about justice

Galatians 3:28

So there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles, between slaves and free people, between men and women; you are all one in union with Christ Jesus.

Galatians 5:22

But the Spirit produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

Romans 8:38-39

For I am certain that nothing can separate us from his love: neither death nor life, neither angels nor other heavenly rulers or powers, neither the present nor the future, neither the world above nor the world below—there is nothing in all creation that will ever be able to separate us from the love of God which is ours through Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 12:17-21

If someone has done you wrong, do not repay him with a wrong. Try to do what everyone considers to be good. Do everything possible on your part to live in peace with everybody. Never take revenge, my friends, but instead let God's anger do it. For the scripture says, "I will take revenge, I will pay back, says the Lord." Instead, as the scripture says: "If your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them a drink; for by doing this you will make them burn with shame." Do not let evil defeat you; instead, conquer evil with good.

1 Corinthians 13: 4-7

Love is patient and kind; it is not jealous or conceited or proud; love is not ill-mannered or selfish or irritable; love does not keep a record of wrongs; love is not happy with evil, but is happy with the truth. Love never gives up; and its faith, hope, and patience never

4. Complete this sentence to sum up what you have learnt:
Justice, to a Christian means ...