

[3 : 52] Jim was a 65-year-old pilot that was flying his little commuter airplane all by himself from Scotland to England when everything went dark.

Literally. He was about 40 minutes into his four-hour flight when he lost his vision. Initially, he thought he had just been temporarily blinded by the sun.

But he soon realized it was a lot worse than that. Here's what Jim said. Quote, As it turns out, he had had a stroke in midair.

And he's unable to see. And so he takes his hands and he searches around the cockpit until he finally finds the radio and he issues a mayday alert. Immediately, a man by the name of Paul Girard, an Air Force commander, was contacted by air traffic control.

And he took off in his plane in Jim's direction. He found Jim and he began to talk to him, giving him instructions and reassuring him that everything was going to be okay.

[5 : 06] Paul stayed with Jim in the air the entire time, guiding him along to the nearest runway. And then came the final test.

Jim was going to have to land the plane by faith, not by sight. So sure enough, unable to see the runway ahead of him, Jim had to listen to another voice, guide him to where he was supposed to be.

He would start to land the plane and Paul would tell him, no, pull up, circle around again. And this went back and forth and back and forth for a while until finally on the eighth try, Jim landed the plane safely.

All at the guidance of someone else's voice. Faith family, I don't know about you, but I can relate to Jim O'Neill.

I bet some of you can as well. Not that any of us have gone blind while flying an aircraft. I mean, you've been flying along in life and everything went dark.

[6 : 22] You couldn't see the dials in front of you. You didn't know up from down. You weren't sure what your next move would be. You had no sense of direction at all.

And you had no idea how you would land the plane. When it came to life, it felt like you were flying blind. Can anybody relate to that?

And for you, maybe it wasn't a stroke like it was for Jim. Maybe for you it was the conversation about divorce. Maybe for you it was that medical report that revealed a massive tumor.

Maybe for you it was the sudden job loss and you had no idea how you'd make ends meet. Maybe it was the sharp downturn in the economy that crashed your retirement plans.

Maybe it was the out of nowhere betrayal of a friend that left you completely numb. Maybe it was the sudden death of a loved one. Whatever it was, you had no idea where you'd land the plane.

[7 : 29] You had no sense of direction in that moment. And all you knew to do was offer up some kind of mayday prayer in hopes that someone would help you find a safe place to land.

Amen? Listen to me, faith family. How do you respond when life goes blind? Everything you had mapped out and everything you had planned out crumbles like a stack of cards.

And you have absolutely no idea what you're going to do or how you're going to respond. And the reason why I prayed that this is an appropriate passage for us to start a new year is this.

I want to be very, very optimistic with you. At some point this year, life is not going to go the way you planned it. That is as optimistic, call it realistic, as I can be.

And I don't know what level that might be for you, but at some point this year, your plans, your direction in life will change. And the question is, will you listen to another voice, guide you and direct you safely to where you're supposed to be?

[8 : 39] That is exactly what happens in the life of Paul and Silas here in Acts chapter 16. Pick it up again in verse 6. It says, We see here, first of all, the mission of Christ in a change of direction.

At this point in the book of Acts, Paul and Silas are flying along in the mission of Christ. They've been to Reno, Chicago, Fargo, Minnesota, Buffalo, Toronto, Winslow, Sarasota.

They've traveled like they've had their share, man, because they've been everywhere. Johnny Cash, don't judge me, right? They've been everywhere. They've seen everything.

I mean, you remember back in Acts 14 and 15, they are all over the place. They've had plans. They've set out on those plans. And they've come to pass.

And now in Acts chapter 16, they plan, emphasis on the they, to go to Asia. But the Spirit of God won't let them go there.

[10 : 02] They attempt, emphasis on the they, to go into Bithynia. But the Spirit of Jesus says no.

Here's the point. Paul and Silas had a plan. They had a direction in life. They had a direction in strategy and ministry. And here's what Jesus does. He slams the door shut.

Have you ever been there before? Have you ever felt that before? When door after door just kept getting slammed in your face? Every relationship you started didn't seem to last.

Every job application didn't call you back. Every conversation seemed to go nowhere. Every door you tried to open seemed to be double bolted. That's how Paul and Silas feel.

As they attempt to go in a certain direction, and God won't let them go there. He shuts the door.

Now, Scripture doesn't tell us how the Spirit stops them, just that the Spirit does.

[11:08] We don't know if, for instance, their camel runs out of gas. Maybe that's how the Spirit stopped them. Maybe they ate at the Waffle House in Lystra. I thought the IHOP was a dump until I went into a Waffle House.

Wow, they're not even trying in there. Here's something you'll never hear in a Waffle House. Nice job cleaning up! Now, if you've never been to a Waffle House, just imagine a gas station bathroom that sells waffles.

All right, that's funny because it's true. So, listen, I don't know how. Maybe it was a stomach issue. Maybe it was...I don't know. The text doesn't tell us how they get stopped, just that they do get stopped.

And you have to know, because you've been there before, how frustrating that is. When you want to go in one direction, and God won't let you go there. When you've planned out the path of your life, and God shuts the door.

Listen, this is what God is teaching Paul and Silas, and it's what he's going to teach us at some point this year in some way. Look at Proverbs 16, 9. The heart of a man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps.

[12:21] You see, Jim, if you're going to land the plane in the right place, you're going to be guided by a different voice. Or what about James 4, verse 13? Come now, you who say, hey, today or tomorrow, we're going to go into such and such a town, and we're going to spend a year there, and we're going to trade, and we're going to make a profit, yet you don't know what tomorrow will bring.

Here's what you ought to say. You ought to say, if the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.

Listen, our lives are guided by a different voice, by a different plan.

That's the way it works in the mission of Christ. And there are few things more frustrating than flying along directionless. Can I get an amen? Let me say that again.

There are few things more frustrating in life than flying along directionless, like you're floundering in the skies. And the very idea that somebody would have another plan more superior to our plan, even if it's God, seems blasphemous.

It really does. I mean, who knows better than we do? And yet sometimes God says, no. I know you want to go to Asia, but you're not going there.

[13:34] I know you're going to try to get into Bithynia, but I'm going to slam the door. And what is Paul's response? Oh, it would do us well to learn from Paul's response. Verse 10 of chapter 16.

And when Paul had seen the vision, immediately he sought to go on into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

Notice the text says he concluded that. That is, the answer as to why he was supposed to go to Macedonia wasn't in the vision. It was just a vision to go to Macedonia.

He concluded that if God is taking us to Macedonia, it must be because he wants us to minister there. Notice this on the screen, Faith Family.

Paul understood that in the mission of Christ, it's guided by faith and not by sight. You have to listen to the voice of another, not your own.

[14:31] Notice this as well on the screen. To us, it looks like a change of direction when in reality, it's a change in mission. That'll preach. Here's what I mean.

And this is hard to do. This is hard to do. I've said stuff like this before. I know it sounds crazy, but could it be that your job loss was more than a job loss? Might it be that the next job you get is where Jesus really wants you to be?

And so what it feels like in the moment is that all your plans just fell apart, and they did. But it could be just a change in mission. What if the transferring of schools is bigger than just the transferring of schools?

What if, I know I'm getting heavy here, and I know some of you will want to push back, but what if being in the hospital room, going through what you're going through is bigger than just being in a hospital room?

What if there's a nurse or a doctor or another patient that needs to hear the gospel? What if your prison, whatever that might look like, is bigger than your prison?

[15:40] See, it feels like a change of direction, but if you live with mission glasses on, it's just a change in mission. To the different neighborhood, to the different job, to the different relationship, to the different wherever it may be, Jesus is simply putting you where he wants you to be for the sake of his mission.

And the only way you're going to trust that is by faith and not by sight. You're going to have to listen to someone else's voice. Paul and Silas knew that when you surrender to the mission of Christ, there's going to be times when he recalculates your life.

And in those frustrating moments, be confident. Listen, be confident, Christian. God is not trying to frustrate you. He simply wants to use you in a different place, in a different way.

And God's people said, amen. Oh, that's not the end of the sermon. Point number two. Not just the mission of Christ and the changing of direction, which is obvious in those verses, but notice now the mission of Christ and the changing of people.

Luke is going to shift here in Acts 16 to focus of the change of plans of Paul and Silas to the change of people that will happen as a result of the change of plans.

[17:03] That is, they want to go to Asia, but God says, no, you're going to go to Macedonia. And that change of plans results in the change of people.

And so what I'm going to do is lay out quite quickly four profiles of changed people as a result of God changing their direction. And this, again, what a great New Year's message, right?

And so when your direction gets changed, what is God trying to do? Here's the first profile I want to show you that Luke gives us. Look at verse 12 of chapter 16, verse 12.

And from there to Philippi, which is in Macedonia, which was the leading city of district of Macedonia in the Roman colony, we remained in the city some days.

And on the Sabbath, we were outside the gate to the riverside, where we supposed there was a place of prayer, and we sat down and spoke to the women who had come together. And one who heard us was a woman named Lydia from the city of Thyatira, a cell of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God.

[18:06] The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul. And after she was baptized and her household as well, she urged us saying, if you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.

So here's the first profile I want to lay out for you, and her name is Lydia. She goes from religious to radical living, and I'll unpack that. She's the first convert that we know of here in Macedonia.

As Paul and Silas have their plans changed, she's the first person changed. And so they show up in Macedonia, they find a women's Bible study down by the river, and Paul goes in and begins to share with them.

And Lydia has her heart opened to what Paul has to say about the gospel, and she's saved and is then baptized.

What do we know of Lydia? I need to paint this mosaic because when I put it all together here in just a moment, it really is a beautiful thing that Luke is doing here by inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

[19:19] Lydia was rich. The text says that she was a dealer of purple goods, and in the ancient areas, purple was a very, very expensive commodity.

So if you want to think about Lydia, think of this kind of image. She's kind of a businesswoman, maybe with her own fashion company, but she's quite wealthy. She would likely be on Shark Tank if she were here today.

She's that kind of woman. She's that kind of wealthy person. And the text says she's not only rich, she's religious. She says that she's a worshiper of God.

All that means is she's a Gentile who has adopted the moral customs of Judaism, much like others that we have seen earlier in the book of Acts.

So we know that she is financially secure. She is likely morally pure in that she's following the Judaic value system and law, but her heart hasn't been opened.

[20 : 19] Now that will preach. You can be really religious and very moral and not have your heart opened by God.

And yet in Acts 16, it says the Lord opened her heart. And she doesn't just believe this woman goes crazy for Jesus.

You say, how do you know she goes crazy? How do you know she goes radical? It's because Paul is going to say something later in the New Testament about this church in Macedonia.

Anybody remember a book called Philippians? That's not where the verse is found. But Philippians was the church in, I went to seminary for this, Philippi.

I'm glad you're sitting down at my brilliance, right? And Philippi was the church here in Macedonia. And what does Paul say about the church of Philippi, of which Lydia is the very first convert?

[21 : 21] He tells the Corinthians about them. This is 2 Corinthians 8, verse 1 and 2. We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia.

Acts 16. For in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part.

It doesn't take much to put it together. Lydia and all of her wealth got radical when it came to how she used her wealth for the sake of the mission of Christ.

Listen, I don't know everything about you. I know there are some of you and some of you watching online. You've done well. You are upper class at income and you are upstanding in your lifestyle.

Here's maybe the issue. Jesus hasn't captured your heart. And it's great that you've done well and it's great that you're trying to be moral, but none of that will get you into the kingdom of God.

[22 : 37] What will get you into the kingdom of God is when God has your heart because when he has your heart, he takes over your life. And you become like Lydia, someone who is very religious but turns to what others would call radical for the mission of Jesus.

God opened her heart to embrace everything she had for the mission of Jesus. That's the first profile we see here with Lydia. Here's the second. And it couldn't be any more different than Lydia.

Pick it up in verse 16. So as we were going from the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by fortune-telling.

She followed Paul and us and crying out, these men are servants of the Most High God who proclaim to you the way of salvation. And this she kept doing for many days.

Paul, having become greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, I command you in the name of Jesus Christ, come out of her.

[23 : 45] And it came out that very hour. Here's profile number two. It's a slave girl who goes from oppressed to free.

We know that she's a physical slave. That means she is the exact opposite of Lydia. Here's what I mean. Lydia owns her own business.

This girl is the business. Lydia makes products to sell. This girl is the product for sale. Lydia is a CEO living in a high-rise condo.

She's the drug addict woman on the street. If Lydia is known for her morality, this woman is known for her immorality. She is a physical slave.

And she's not only a physical slave, she's a spiritual slave. Luke tells us that she has a spirit of divination. That is, she's not only oppressed, she is possessed.

[24 : 41] And Paul commands in the name of Jesus for that spirit to come out, and the woman is set free.

She goes, like Lydia goes from religious to radical. This woman goes from slave to free in Jesus. That's the power of the gospel.

And see, like Luke, think, and Luke, you don't get any credit because it's really the Holy Spirit doing this in terms of writing what's written in Acts. But the beauty of putting these two profiles back to back, where you see Lydia who gets saved out of religion, and you see this slave girl that gets saved out of reckless living.

It's like the older brother, younger brother. Are you with me? The older brother who's religious and stays home, and he's goody-goody and does everything the right way, and yet still needs the grace of the Father.

And then there's the younger brother who goes off and just recklessly lives however he wants to live, and he too is in need of the grace of the Father. Some of you here, I don't know everything about you or those watching online, but some of you have a background that if I ran a background

check, there wouldn't be enough paper in the printer.

[26 : 02] I mean, like literally, we have people, some of you are like confessing by nature of your laughter, but anyways, listen, there are things in your past, there are things that you've been saying.

We have people here, obviously not calling names, who've spent time in prison, and God has saved them out of that and is doing great and mighty things in their life today.

You see, the beauty of the power of Jesus is that he came to set the captives free. And I don't care what you're enslaved to. I don't care what has held you captive or addicted in your past.

Jesus has the power to set you free. Whether you are Lydia caught in religion or a slave girl caught in reckless living, Jesus can set you free.

Profile number three. It's a jailer. You see, here's the deal. The owners of the slave girl don't like what happened to her because now she's set free and that ain't good for business.

[27 : 13] In fact, they will actually say in Acts 16, you can read it, it's in verse 19 and 20, they actually go and they say, these men are disturbing the city. We're going bankrupt.

We're losing our jobs because all of these people are being saved. They're experiencing the way of salvation. And so guess what they do to Paul and Silas? Oh, it won't be the first time, won't be the last time.

They throw them into maximum security prison. Verse 25. About midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God and the prisoners were listening to them.

Now, how's that for a response when you've been thrown into prison? Praying and singing hymns and the prisoners were listening in and suddenly there was a great earthquake and the foundations of the prison were shaken and immediately all the doors were open and everyone's bonds were unfastened and a jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open and he drew his sword, watch, and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped.

So let me introduce you to this jailer. He's a blue collar worker. Probably look, maybe something like this, the kind of occupation where if you have a bad day at work, you're likely to get killed.

[28 : 38] Roman jailers were on a very short leash with the Roman authorities. A prisoner escapes. Guess who pays for that? The jailer. At what cost? His life.

And here is a man that assumes when he looks out and he doesn't see any prisoners that they've all escaped and he assumes rightly he is a dead man.

Come here. So rather than have the Roman authorities do it, he'll do it himself. And he takes the sword, probably puts it right up to his head, and then he hears this.

Verse 28. But Paul cried out in a loud voice, Do not harm yourself, for we are all here.

And the jailer called for the lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear, he fell down before Paul and Silas, and they brought them out and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?

[29 : 45] And they said, Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household. And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and all who were in his house. And they took him that same hour of the night and washed their wounds.

And he was baptized at once, he along with his family. And they brought them up to the house and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God. Now you talk about a life change in a matter of seconds. This man was on the verge of death, and now he has new life.

That's the power of Jesus. A Roman now identifying with a man killed by Romans. And it doesn't just impact him, it impacts his entire family.

Can I have a very serious moment? I don't know how you would zone out, not because the preaching is good, because the word of God is good. I don't know how you would have zoned out. But if you have, please zone back in, and I want you to listen to me very closely.

[30 : 56] There are some of you here tonight, and there are some of you that will listen to this online, who have been thinking about ending it all. You have felt at the end of your rope.

I know this because I've preached for many years, and I have emails, and I have kitchen table conversations where people have confessed to me I was that close to taking it all, but the Lord used your sermon, or the Lord did this, or the Lord did that, and turned my life around.

Listen, I know there's more going on here than what I see, and I have a word for you. It is the very words of the Apostle Paul.

Do not harm yourself, for we are all here. We are all here, and we will stand with you, and we will walk with you through whatever you need to walk through till you get to the runway, the runway of

life, life abundant in Jesus Christ.

I promise you, Jesus, however dark it feels right now, can give you hope. Amen? I mean, are you with me?

[32 : 27] Like, wow. Lydia, religious to radical. Slave girl, oppressed to free. Jailor right at the point of death, and now he has brand new life. There's one more.

And it's not easy to see, but if you know just a little bit of background about Judaism, and you knew the other three profiles, you'd see this one.

Here it is, Paul. Paul here has gone from self-righteous to a servant. You say, what do you mean? What was Paul before his conversion?

Paul was a zealous, devout Jew. He was a Pharisee. Read Philippians chapter 3. Does anybody know what a Jewish man would pray every single day? I'm not making this up.

This is historically true. A Jewish man, a Pharisee, would pray every day, God, thank you that you did not make me a woman, a slave, or a Gentile.

[33 : 28] Paul repeatedly in his life would have prayed, God, thank you that you didn't make me a woman, a slave, or a Gentile. And guess who the first three converts are in Macedonia?

A woman, a slave, and a Gentile. Jesus has changed this old Pharisee's heart where now he is ministering to the very people he couldn't stomach.

Listen to me. Ain't no sinner that he can't save. Let me tell you about my Jesus. whether it's Lydia, whether it's the slave girl, whether it's the jailer, whether it's the Apostle Paul, Jesus can change your life.

So let me give you the beautiful mosaic, the profile. Look at these all together. Here's the transforming power of the gospel. Jesus saves a rich business woman and turns her radical for the sake of the gospel.

Jesus saves a girl in bondage, both physical and spiritual, bondage, and gives her the freedom of Christ. He takes a jailer who was right on the point of death and gives him brand new life.

[34 : 50] And he takes a Pharisee who wanted nothing to do with women slaves or Gentiles who's now preaching to women slaves and Gentiles. That is the power of the gospel.

And what does it teach us? Quickly, what does it teach us? Number one, it teaches us this. Jesus saves all types of people. All types of people. That's why, because I think about this, like each one of those things were sermons in and of themselves.

And you say, why do you just preach a sermon on each of them? Because we'd be in the book of Acts forever. So I put them all together. And part of the reason I put them all together is not just because it get through the book of Acts quicker, it's because you need to see the mosaic, the beautiful mosaic that the Spirit through Luke is putting together.

And what he's saying is, it doesn't matter who you are or where you come from, the power of the gospel is powerful enough to save you. He saves all types of people.

If you say to me, Pastor, I am not the Christian type, I say, good, because there is no Christian type. God saves wealthy and poor, male and female, moral and immoral, white collar and blue collar, no matter who you are, where you're from, or what you've done, Jesus has the power to save you.

[36 : 07] That's what Luke is showing us here. He saves all kinds of people. And the second thing we see is that the gospel must be shared in all types of places. I mean, go back through each one of these profiles.

The gospel gets shared in religious settings like Bible studies down by the river, on the streets and in the marketplaces, in the prisons of life. Here's what we got to get as people on mission for Jesus. Notice it on the screen. When the gospel is shared in all types of places, it saves all types of people. When the gospel is shared in all types of places, it saves all types of people.

And that's why God wants to take this collection of individuals and scatter us this week. Bring us back together next week to be encouraged in God's word and the warmth of one another and then scatter us again.

Why? Because some of you are going to different grocery stores and some of you are going to go to different places of work and some of you are going to go to schools and some of you are going to go to all different places. Why?

[37 : 11] To reach all different kinds of people. This is what God wants us to see from his word is that when he changes directions in our life, it's just a reassignment of the mission.

Paul and Silas thought they were going to go to Asia and God said, my plans are better than yours, big boy. Sorry. I know that's where you want to be.

I know that's where you want to go. But no. I want you to go to Macedonia. Okay, well then I have to conclude that you're changing our direction for the sake of the mission.

And so I'm going to listen to the voice of another. Guide me where I need to go. And what happens there, that change of direction results in the change of people.

Lydia and the slave girl and the jailer and even the apostle Paul. But as I conclude this evening, I want to give you just a few unchanging things that we see in this.

[38 : 12] That even we got all this change, direction and people, there are some unchanging things I leave you with that no matter where we go, no matter what happens on the mission, these three things remain throughout the book of Acts.

I'm just going to give them to you quickly. Here we go. Number one is this, a sovereign God. A sovereign God. Notice the emphasis Luke gives, and Lydia garnered up the faith on her own and believed.

No. God opened her heart. That was a sovereign work of God. The name of Jesus is what set the slave girl free.

Not the power of the apostle Paul. Who was it that sent the earthquake? You think Paul did that? Listen, he's good, but he ain't that good. All right? God is the one who sent the earthquake that would lead to the salvation of the jailer.

Here's the point. The success of the mission doesn't rest on us, but the sovereign hand of God. I'll just say this quickly.

[39 : 23] I remember one time I was asked to pray at a conference. It was a pastor's conference right after the main speaker. The main speaker decided to close his talk.

I don't even know that it was a sermon, but he closed it with a story. And for those of you that know me, I'm about to walk up and pray right after this guy. And he ends his message with a story, fictional, of Jesus coming back into heaven after the ascension.

And he has a conversation with the father. And the father asked the son, well, what now? And the son says to the father, well, it's up to them.

If they fail, the mission will fail. And I wanted to throw my Bible at him. And so I got up there and some of you are like, this doesn't surprise me that you would do this.

I got up there and this is my prayer. God, thank you that you will build your church and the gates of hell will not prevail. Faith family, the mission isn't going to fail because it's God's mission.

[40 : 41] And greater is he that's in us than he that's in the world. I'm not saying we don't have a role, but I'm saying this, if you think God's mission depends on you, you're God's way too small.

God will build his kingdom and nothing will stop it. If Acts teaches us anything, it's that.

Number two is a simple strategy. A simple strategy. Faith family, we make the mission way too complicated. I mean, really, if we just study the book of Acts, we see that it's simply just going places and sharing Jesus.

I'm not trying to overly simplify it, but don't make it so complicated. We're in such a, I've got to take a 16 week course and memorize 30 verses of scripture and have every apologetic question answered in my mind.

Man, just share Jesus. Because the power is in the name of Jesus, not your presentation. Let me say that again. The power is in the name of Jesus, not your presentation.

[41 : 43] And I'm not suggesting a lazy presentation. I'm simply saying if you're holding back of sharing Jesus until you've figured the right way to present it, that's called disobedience.

If you've experienced the saving grace of Jesus, just start there and tell other people what happened in your life because of Christ.

Faith family, don't make this mission too complicated. It's simply Paul and Silas going down by the river and if they get thrown into prison, will anybody know him?

And prisoners listen in because they want to know where that kind of hope is found.

Sovereign God, simple strategy, and lastly, yes, I would not exclude a steadfast people. The people of God going through prisons and beatings and accusations, and yet the church keeps singing.

[42 : 48] We keep on moving no matter what they bring our way. Sovereign God, simple strategy, and a steadfast people.

Faith family, there's nothing more frightening or frustrating than flying blind. Amen? When life is dark and directionless, and my word of hope to you is this, at some point this year, in one way or another, it's going to feel like you're flying blind.

Maybe some of you do right now. When that happens, don't forget there is a voice that speaks into and over your life. And listen, he's going to guide you where you're supposed to be.

And if you need assurance of that, all you need to do is remember Christ, who in his darkest moments of life, when the door to his will was shut in order that the Father's will would be accomplished, what did Jesus do?

He continued to trust the Father's plan. And sure enough, three days later, the Father brought the Son safely through.

[44 : 02] and he will do the same for you. And God's people said, amen, amen. Let's pray. Lord, thank you. Wow, there's a lot in this passage, but so much for us to learn and be challenged by.

Lord, you changed the direction of Paul and Silas. and it would have been easy to just feel like they'd have been abandoned, they weren't able to go where they wanted to go, where they planned to go, and yet you had a different mission for them, a different purpose for them, and there were people that you reached as a result of that.

I pray in our own lives that we would have that same perspective, that we would conclude that as you close those doors that we really wanted to go through, you open other doors that you have a purpose for us.

And so I pray that we would, even when that's frustrating and difficult to understand, that we would walk by faith and not by sight, that we would trust the voice that's guiding us to the runway that we're supposed to be.

So Lord, I don't know if that's needed in the life of everybody here right now, but at some point this year, this truth is what will get us through and keep us going. So Lord, plant that in our hearts, in our lives, and in us together as a faith family that we would trust you, that we would trust you.

[45 : 33] in Jesus' name, Amen.