

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

ACTS 15-16

Every year our church hosts a pastors conference for the Calvary Chapel churches in the Deep South.

Pastors make the pilgrimage with their leaders. It's an opportunity to *worship, catch up, brief each other on what God is doing, pray for each other, listen to encouraging teaching, and to eat lots of barbecue!*

Our conference is a vital time for the churches! And, in Chapter 15 we follow Paul to a pastors' conference!

Acts 15 opens twenty years after the Day of Pentecost. In the Upper Room God's Spirit was poured out on the disciples, and it was like a rock splashing in a lake. Ripples of faith went out in all directions. The Gospel spread to Judea, Samaria, North Africa, even Damascus... ***Then THE breakthrough occurred...***

Gentiles, folks other than Jews, were born into God's family. In seaside Caesarea God saved by faith a Roman soldier and his house - full-blooded Gentiles.

Soon after, a church was established in Syrian Antioch targeting Gentiles as candidates for the Gospel. And in Acts 13-14 the church in Antioch sends out Paul and Barnabas on a mission to reach Gentiles.

Which brings us to Acts 15:1, "And certain *men* came down from Judea (to Antioch) and taught the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved." When you think of *villains*,

"Nazis," "Al Qaida," "Taliban," "Mafia" come to mind. But add to the list the name, "**Judaizers.**" These guys were *theological thugs!* The Judaizers picked on new believers, and robbed them of their faith and joy.

When Philip brought the Gospel to the Samaritans I'm sure there were Jews who raised an eyebrow...

When Peter preached to the Romans at Centurion Cornelius' house, Orthodox Jews began to talk...

But when Paul traveled to Galatia, and deliberately targeted the Gentiles for salvation, the Jewish legalists went ballistic... The Hebrews had spent 1500 years trying to keep the Law of Moses, *and now how dare Paul offer salvation to the Gentiles by faith alone?*

The Judaizers were party poopers. Where was the blood, sweat, and tears? How could faith in Jesus accomplish what rigorous legalism had failed to do?

These Judaizers wanted to sentence the Gentiles to the same hard labor they had served. They wanted to add some elbow grease to the blood of Jesus.

And these prideful Jews came to Antioch to correct Paul. They put more confidence in the *blood of goats* than in *the blood of Christ* - they hoped in their *own righteousness* not *Christ's righteousness* - they relied on *their own good works* rather than in *God's grace*.

The Judaizers scoffed at the all-sufficiency of Jesus.

They pushed a "**Christ plus**" theology. *OK, if you put your faith in Jesus as long as you require elements of the Jewish*

*Law. It was **Christ plus** Sabbath keeping - kosher laws - sacrifices - and above all *circumcision*.*

Circumcision was the logo of Judaism. A Gentile convert had to go under the knife. *How could you be saved if you neglected such a vital Jewish tradition?*

But Paul fought back! He resisted the arguments of legalism. This was a crucial issue. Verse 2, "Therefore, when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and dispute with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem, to the apostles and elders, about this question." Luke skips over in one sentence what Paul takes almost a whole chapter in Galatians to describe.

In Galatians 2:5 Paul remembers the moment, "**To whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.**"

When these legalists arrived in Antioch even the Apostle Peter was intimidated. In Acts 10 he'd been schooled in grace, but in Antioch Peter preferred his Jewish visitors over his Gentile brothers. He treated Gentile believers like second class Christians. And Paul went toe-to-toe with Ole Pentecost Pete. He rebuked his fellow elder with the truth of God's grace.

The Gospel is *grace for every race*. Gentiles and Jews are both saved one way - by faith in Jesus! God's righteousness comes apart from the Law - by faith. Paul stood up for the Gentiles that Jesus died to save. *He won the argument in Antioch*, but now the Judaizers move the debate onto their own turf in Jerusalem.

“So, being sent on their way by the church, they passed through Phoenicia and Samaria, describing the conversion of the Gentiles; and they caused great joy to all the brethren.” It’s been said, “A person who lives out the grace of God brings joy *wherever he or she goes* - a legalist brings joy *whenever he or she goes.*”

In verse 4 the Gentile evangelists arrive. “And when they had come to Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders; and they reported all things that God had done with them.”

“But some of the sect of the Pharisees who believed rose up, saying, “It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command *them* to keep the law of Moses.” Here was the heated debate in a nutshell - *did a Gentile have to become a Jew before he could be saved?*

In his letter to the Galatians Paul says not only did he and Barnabas go to Jerusalem, they took evidence, a convert, an uncircumcised believer named Titus. This outraged the Judaizers. They tried to put Titus under the knife. Paul refused. *He insisted that circumcision just won’t cut it... We’re saved by faith in Christ alone!*

Verse 6, “**Now the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter.**” **Here was the first Church council...** In the first 700 years of Christianity there were eight major councils where Church leaders met to settle disputes and hammer out doctrine.

But this initial Church council was crucial. If the Judaizers had prevailed, Christianity would've been reduced to a Jewish

sect, and the spread of the Gospel stunted among the Gentiles. This was a vital moment.

“And when there had been much dispute, Peter rose up *and* said to them: “Men *and* brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe.” He’s referencing what happened ten years earlier in Acts 10. The Spirit fell on the household of Cornelius before Peter finished his sermon. Without clipping a single circumcision God saved the Gentiles.

“So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as *He did* to us, and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.” *How do you argue with God?*

God purified the hearts of the Gentiles and poured out His Spirit on them, just as He did the Jews - not because of their good works or their compliance to the Law, but for no other reason than their faith in Jesus!

These Gentiles probably *went to football games on the Sabbath, smoked fat cigars, chewed tobacco, ate pork BBQ, listened to rock and roll, and wore shorts to church.* They were ignorant of religious protocol. When they heard the name Moses - they thought of Charlton Heston... Not only had they never kept the Law, they’d never read it - yet God accepted, and forgave, and sealed, and filled the Gentiles with His Spirit *“by faith!”*

Peter says in verse 10, “Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?”

The Hebrews had failed to keep their own Law. They tried, but it was too comprehensive. They worked hard to be *good*, but they were never *good enough*.

Despite all their well-meaning effort Jews were still sinners just like the Gentiles. *Religious sinners, well-groomed sinners, sanitary sinners, healthier sinners, but sinners nonetheless*. And all their legalism had made them proud and self-righteous. Judaism was a treadmill - **always doing, but going nowhere**. So *why expect Gentiles to keep a standard that alluded Jews?*

Peter confesses, “But we (i.e. the Jewish leaders of the early Church) believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they.” Neither Jews or Gentiles are made right with God by their own efforts. We all approach God the same way - **by faith through God’s grace**.

“Then all the multitude kept silent and listened to Barnabas and Paul declaring how many miracles and wonders God had worked through them among the Gentiles.” They discussed the recent results of their trip to Cyprus and Galatia... *how God blinded a sorcerer, and healed a lame man*. He’d worked miracles in the midst of the Gentiles - further proof of His acceptance.

Verse 13, “And after they had become silent, James answered, saying, “Men *and* brethren, listen to me:”

This is James the brother of our Lord. And he had several nicknames that reflected his godly character.

One was "The Just" due to his impeccable integrity. Another was "Ole Camel-knees," since his knees were calloused like a camel from his much time in prayer.

Yet in Galatians 2:12 Paul refers to the Judaizers who showed up in Antioch as "certain men came from James." Certainly, James believed in salvation by faith through grace, but from the letter he wrote bearing his name, we know James had strong convictions on the importance of good works. According to James "we're saved by faith alone, but faith is never alone." Real faith produces practical evidence of a changed life.

Evidently though, there were Jewish believers who'd misinterpreted James, *while claiming to represent him*. The importance he placed on works didn't diminish his appreciation of grace. Salvation is by faith alone.

I think this was one of the reasons James spoke up at the council. James set the record straight. He stood with Paul and Peter in their defense of the Gospel.

And it helps to recall the stand James takes in Acts 15 when you embark on study of the book of James.

James continues his speech in verse 14, "Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written:"

He quotes Amos 9:11. *'After this I will return and will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; I will*

rebuild its ruins, and I will set it up; so that the rest of mankind may seek the LORD, even all the Gentiles who are called by My name, says the LORD who does all these things.” James turns to the OT to validate the New. He quotes Amos who speaks of the end times.

Gentile believers will seek the Lord in a rebuilt place of worship - *“a Tabernacle.”* And not just Jews, but *“the rest of mankind”* will come to Jerusalem to worship the Messiah. James concludes in verse 18, *“Known to God from eternity are all His works.”* History is *His Story!*

Here’s James’ point, the Jewish prophecies teach God’s love for the Gentiles and His desire to save all men. What was happening *at the time, in the Church, among the Gentiles* was a part of God’s eternal plan.

Peter recalled God’s work in the **past**. Paul recounts His work in the **present**. Now James speaks of God’s work in the **future**. When *God’s Word* and *God’s works* line-up - when the *past, present, and future* align - you can be sure you’re witnessing the hand of the Lord. **What bothered the Judaizers, was no bother to God.**

Understand, Paul might’ve wanted to *shut the mouth* of the Judaizers, but James hoped to *open their eyes*.

He wasn’t just trying to win an argument, James’ goal was to win a brother, *and this is the motivation behind what happens next*. We’re reconciled to God by faith, but the Gospel also seeks to reconcile us to our fellow man. Jews and Gentiles are to be one in Christ.

Thus, James empathized with his fellow Jews and their loyalty to the Law. He knew how difficult it was for an Orthodox Jew to transition from legalism to grace.

And Acts 15 occurred before Romans, Galatians, and Hebrews were written. Relating to God by grace was new to Jewish believers. It was clear to James and the council that God was forging a new direction, but James wanted to take his Jewish brothers with him, not leave them behind, so *James makes a suggestion!*

Verse 19, “Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God, but that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, *from sexual immorality, from things strangled, and from blood.* For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the *synagogues every Sabbath.*” James hopes to ease the Jews into grace.

He insists that the Gentiles believers maintain their freedom from the Law, *but can't they do that while not offending their Jewish brothers needlessly. Can't the Gentiles limit their freedom until the Jews catch up?*

Dwight Eisenhower spoke of **the art of compromise** as “*the ability to employ all of the usable surface.*” He said, “*the extremes, right or left, are in the gutters.*” If James had sided with Jews without recognizing the freedom we have in Christ he'd been in *the right hand gutter*. If he'd sided with Gentiles without any sensitivity to the conscience of Jews he'd be in *the left hand gutter*. Instead, he empathizes with both groups.

While being faithful to God's truth and love, he finds usable surface to both support Gentiles, and encourage Jews.

The Mosaic Law contained 613 rules, James whittles them down to four, that were of particular importance to the Jews - *meat sacrificed to idols, sexual immorality, meat not properly prepared, and the drinking blood.*

Later in the NT, once the Jews have an opportunity to grow in grace, Paul removes even these four sanctions. Of course, sexual immorality is never permissible, *but not because of law - because of love.*

With all the divisive issues the Church faces today we need leaders like James who between truth and love can find usable surface to help keep us together.

Verse 22, "Then it pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas, *namely*, Judas who was also named Barsabas, and Silas, leading men among the brethren." "*Barsabas*" means "[son of the Sabbath.](#)"

It's ironic, the Son of the Sabbath went to Antioch with Paul to free Gentiles from keeping Sabbath rules.

"They wrote this, *letter* by them: the apostles, the elders, and the brethren, to the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia: Greetings." How sweet the sound... *Jews now call Gentiles "brethren."* The Gospel can bridge even the steepest divisions.

"Since we have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, "*You must be circumcised and keep the law*" - to whom we

gave no *such* commandment - it seemed good to us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who will also report the same things by word of mouth.” And here’s the verdict they reached...

“For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell.” The Jerusalem Church recognized that in Christ God frees us from the Law, but by with some sensitivity toward the Jews, the Gentiles, can help bring the Jews into the liberty paid for by Jesus.

Once a millionaire explained his success to a young protégé, "I started out by buying an apple for a nickel. I took that apple and shined it until it was brilliant. Then I sold it for a dime... I took that dime and bought two more apples, shined them and sold them for 20 cents. I took the 20 cents and bought four apples. I turned the four apples into eight, and the eight into 16, and the sixteen into 32... After selling them I had \$3.20. Then my father-in-law died and I inherited \$10 million.”

As a child of God this is your story. You’ve been blessed with untold spiritual treasure, but your windfall had nothing to do with your hard work and cleverness.

We're rich because someone died! Jesus paid for God's incredible mercies - and as *the Gentiles learned* and *the Church confirmed* - we receive it all by faith!

Verse 30, “So when they were sent off, they came to Antioch; and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the letter. When they had read it, they rejoiced over its encouragement. Now Judas and Silas, themselves being prophets also, exhorted and strengthened the brethren with many words. And after they had stayed *there* for a time, they were sent back with greetings from the brethren to the apostles.

However, it seemed good to Silas to remain there.

Paul and Barnabas also remained in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also. Then after some days Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us now go back and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, *and see how they are doing.*” Now Barnabas was determined to take with them John called Mark.

The Greek word translated *"determined"* means *“to keep on insisting.”* Barnabas was adamant. Mark's presence on their second trip was a non-negotiable.

“But Paul insisted that they should not take with them the one who had departed from them in Pamphylia, and had not gone with them to the work.” On their first trip, when they left Cyprus, and *sailed* to the Turkish coast Mark *bailed*. *He proved chicken to go to Turkey.*

Uncle Barnabas wants to give his nephew a second chance. But in Paul's mind, John Mark, had proven he wasn't up to the challenge. When you're in a battle you've got to be able to trust the men in your platoon. Paul had lost confidence in Barnabas' nephew.

“Then the contention became so sharp that they parted from one another.” *And we gasp!* These men were apostles, founders. Yet they argued so violently they split ranks. It occurred even in the early Church...

“And so Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus; but Paul chose Silas and departed, being commended by the brethren to the grace of God. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.”

Here are men of spiritual stature. They've just made a brave stand, and wisely resolved a major schism. They averted a bust-up between Jew and Gentile, but now just days later, they endure their own bust-up.

Mark had been a chicken, but Paul and Barnabas acted like turkeys. **They should've gotten along, but didn't.** Here's an amazing truth, **God still used them.**

Commentator Warren Wiersbe states the obvious, "If God had to depend on perfect people to accomplish His work, He would never ever get anything done."

God actually used *their obstinacy* for *His glory*. Instead of one team on mission among the Gentiles, there're now two! The division doubled their efforts.

And it's amazing that years later, Paul writes to Timothy (2 Timothy 4:11), and tells him, **“Get Mark and bring him with**

you, for he is useful to me for ministry.” Apparently, Paul’s attitude toward John Mark changed.

Though Acts charts only Paul and Silas, it seems Mark grows, Paul softens, and God blesses both men.

Verse 1, “Then he came to Derbe and Lystra.” These were cities in Galatia. On Paul’s first journey he sailed to Galatia. This time he and Silas come overland.

“And behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, *the* son of a certain Jewish woman who believed, but his father was Greek.” This woman was named “Eunice.” Her mom was “Lois. In his second letter to Timothy, Paul describes their godly influence.

Timothy’s dad was an unbeliever, so it was the nurturing of his mom and grandma, as well as Paul’s example that witnessed to a young Timothy. Six times in the NT Paul calls Timothy, “my son in the faith.”

Every Christian should be a Paul and a Timothy. Like Timothy, we need to be mentored by an older, wiser Paul... and like Paul, we need to take a younger Timothy under our wing and invest in their life... *Who is your Paul? Who is your Timothy?* There should both.

Verse 2 continues to speak of Timothy, “He was well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Iconium. Paul wanted to have him go on with him. And he took *him* and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in that region, for they all knew that his father was Greek.” *Now wait just a minute!* Paul had just fought tooth and nail in Jerusalem

to keep Titus from being circumcised. *Why is he now clipping Timothy?*

Recall Paul's strategy. In most cities he went first to the Jewish synagogue; then to the Gentiles. If Timothy isn't circumcised he won't be able to accompany Paul into the synagogue... This had nothing to do with *righteousness*, but with *effectiveness* for the Gospel.

Often, being used by God requires foregoing a liberty for love's sake. As a Christian I'm free to smoke a big, fat cigar while I teach, but it would probably turn-off a few folks. Thus, I'm happy to forego that liberty. Every leader needs this attitude. We should be willing set our own freedoms on the shelf to spread the Gospel.

Verse 4, "And as they went through the cities, they delivered to them the decrees to keep, which were determined by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. They shared the letter written by the Church Council.

"So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily. Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia." And again, "After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them."

Now here's the challenge, *Jesus said go into all the world, but the Holy Spirit tells us where in the world to go.* Paul is traveling west. He turns south toward Asia, and God's Spirit says "*no, don't go.*" He turns north to Bithynia, and again the Spirit says "*no.*" We need to be as quick to obey God's "*nos*" as we are His "*gos.*"

When the Holy Spirit puts a check in your heart, or closes a door, it's best to wait or move in another direction. **Don't knock down a door the Lord closes.**

Verse 8, **“So passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas.”** Ancient Troy was near the Aegean Sea, south of today's Istanbul, and the Dardanelles Strait. Headed west it was the last stop before crossing into Europe.

“And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, “Come over to Macedonia and help us. Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them.” When Paul obeys this vision, for the first time in history God's Gospel will come to Europe.

And don't overlook the lesson, **God doesn't close one door without opening another.** We may have to wait at times, but God is always faithful to lead us.

Notice also the change of pronoun in verse 10. Luke starts writing in the first person. He says **“we sought to go to Macedonia.”** Apparently, the good doctor joined Paul in Troas and accompanied him to Macedonia. It could be Luke came along to treat Paul's illness.

In fact, some Bible teachers believe Doctor Luke was the man from Macedonia in Paul's vision.

“Therefore, sailing from Troas, we ran a straight course to Samothrace, and the next *day* came to Neapolis...” about 150 miles northwest of Troas.

“And from there to Philippi, which is the foremost city of that part of Macedonia, a colony. And we were staying in that city for some days.” Philippi was ten miles inland from Neapolis. Some folks believe it was Luke's hometown, because of the glowing description he uses, “*the foremost city of that part of Macedonia.*”

“And on the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made; and we sat down and spoke to the women who met *there.*”

There were few Jews who lived in Philippi, so there was no synagogue. The Jews who lived there went to the river to pray, and read Scripture on the Sabbath.

The male chauvinism of the Jews would've deemed a band of women unworthy to receive the words of God, but not Paul. He realized Christ died for us all.

“Now a certain woman named Lydia heard *us*. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul.” Lydia was a businesswoman, the Mary Kay of Philippi, an importer of purple cloth. And now the “[first European convert to Christianity.](#)”

“And when she and her household were baptized, she begged *us*, saying, “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.” So she persuaded us. Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling.” This slave girl told

fortunes *and made a fortune for her owners*. Yet no one cared about the poor girl trapped, and controlled by demons.

“This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, “These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation.” And this she did for many days.” What she said was true, *but what pastor wants publicity from a demoniac?* You could put it, **the message was right, but the medium was wrong.**

“But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.” And he came out that very hour.” She was instantly delivered. And you'd think her masters would be rejoicing for her, *but...* “When her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged *them* into the marketplace to the authorities.” They cared about *gold* not the *girl*.

“And they brought them to the magistrates, and said, “These men, being Jews, exceedingly trouble our city; and they teach customs which are not lawful for us, being Romans, to receive or observe.” It's amazing how intolerant people are of the Gospel when it cuts into their profits. “Then the multitude rose up together against them; and the magistrates tore off their clothes and commanded *them* to be beaten with rods.”

Jewish justice was tempered with mercy. A scourging was limited to 39 lashes. But a Roman whipping was brutal. There were no limits. It's severity was up to the judge. Verse 23 finishes their ordeal, “And when they had laid many stripes on

them, they threw *them* into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely.”

“Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.”

Prisons in the first century were usually in the jailor's basement. They were cold, dark, damp, rat infested. And the stocks stretched the victim's arms and legs. It wasn't just for restraint. Stocks were a form of torture.

So imagine Paul and Silas... their torso a crisscross of cuts and oozing tissue - their limbs dislocated, pulled out of their sockets - their lacerated backs bumping up against the cold dirt wall - the prison rats nibbling at a set of fresh toes - unrelenting pain is ricocheting through their bodies... If this were me, I'd be having a New Year's Eve size pity party, but not Paul and Silas.

Verse 25, “But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.” Rather than sulk they sing. Rather than whine they worship. They've been beaten within an inch of their lives, and they still praise God.

Charles Spurgeon wrote, "Any fool can sing in the day. It is easy to sing when we can read the notes by daylight; but the skillful singer is he who can sing when there is not a ray of light to read by... Songs in the night come only from God; they are not in the power of men." And God is the reason Paul and Silas sing here!

Then “Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all

the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed." Praise is powerful. As Paul and Silas glorify God, their chains break. God shakes the prison and sets them free... Paul is so in touch with his spiritual blessings (his joy in Jesus) he's not depressed by his physical circumstances. *What an example...*

"And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself." In Roman times suicide was a kinder fate for a jailer who let his whole prison population escape.

"But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here." *All accounted for!* "Then he (the jailer) called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved? So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household." Some people draw the wrong conclusion from this verse and teach a "household salvation." If a man gets saved, then everyone under his authority is also saved. But you need to read verse 31 in context...

For verse 32 follows, "Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house." If by default the jailor's salvation included the rest of his household; then why did Paul make a house call and share the Gospel with everyone in his family? Dads can influence, but faith is always a personal decision.

Verse 33 tells us, “And he took them the same hour of the night and washed *their* stripes. And immediately he and all his *family* were baptized.” This is beautiful!

The jailer washes and nurses Paul’s wounds; then Paul baptizes the jailer. *They wash each other.*

This jailer shows the mark of true repentance... **he’s willing to bring healing to the wounds he inflicted.**

“Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household.” The jailer didn’t believe *for his household*, but “*with his household.*” They all had faith. Now they invite the pastor over for a meal...

“And when it was day, the magistrates sent the officers, saying, “Let those men go.” So the keeper of the prison reported these words to Paul, saying, “The magistrates have sent to let you go. Now therefore depart, and go in peace.” Amazingly, after the earthquake breaks them out, Paul and Silas stay in the jailor’s custody, until city hall orders their release.

And you’d think their freedom would be welcomed news to Paul, *but* “Paul said to them, “They have beaten us openly, uncondemned Romans, *and* have thrown *us* into prison. And now do they put us out secretly? No indeed! Let them come themselves and get us out.” Paul had a Roman passport. He was a citizen of Rome, and due a fair trial - *but that didn’t happen.* The authorities acted illegally. Now they want to save face, and brush the whole thing under the rug.

Paul won’t comply. The Gospel’s integrity is at stake. He doesn’t want people thinking he committed a crime.

“And the officers told these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid when they heard that they were Romans. Then they came and pleaded with them and brought *them* out, and asked *them* to depart from the city.” Mistreating a citizen could bring down the wrath of Rome. To keep from being reported the magistrates try to smooth things over with Paul. He agrees to leave town, but not before encouraging the church.

Paul was always caring for the churches he planted.

“So they went out of the prison and entered *the house of* Lydia; and when they had seen the brethren, they encouraged them and departed.” Paul will later write a letter to these believers, *the book of Philippians*.