

When Things Go Wrong

Jared Roth referred to one of his favorite kids' books, *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*. Jared also shared a story from the Bible about a horrible day and what we can learn and what to do when things go wrong.

This story is recorded in Acts 16 about Paul's experience planting a church in Philippi. Paul had a vision from God. He was in the middle of God's will, and was doing the right thing...when all hell broke loose. We see in this story what to do when we are assaulted by the: Devil, Business, Religion, Neighbors, and the Government.

Text

²⁵ About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them.²⁶ Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everyone's chains came loose. ²⁷ The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. ²⁸ But Paul shouted "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!" (Acts 16: 25-28)

Back-story

This was a place of prayer where a female slave spirit predicted future, and her owners received money through her fortune telling. She followed them around town many days shouting about them, it annoyed Paul and Silas. Paul turns around and says; "In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!" The spirit left her. Her owners realized their source of money is now gone so they seized Paul and Silas. They are taken to the city hall to face the authorities. The city leaders said, *"These men are Jews, and are throwing our city into an uproar"* The crowd joined in the attack, the magistrates ordered that they be stripped and beaten with rods, severely flogged. A prison jailer was tasked to guard them carefully in the cell with their feet fastened to stocks.

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That could have been called *Paul and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*]

Paul and Silas were assaulted by the:

1. Devil— a spirit predicted the future
2. Business people – lost their hope of making money
3. Religious people – yelling ‘these men are Jews’ – prejudice minority population
4. Neighbors - crowd joined in the attack
5. Government - magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten

What do you do when things go wrong?

Jared pointed out that we are living in a troubled time. Just in the last two weeks we have experienced:

Orlando, Istanbul, Bagdad, Baton Rouge Falcon Heights, Minnesota and Dallas.

What do we do when all hell breaks loose? Whatever the source, the devil, racial tensions, economic divide, religious conflict, political division and more.

What did Paul and Silas do when things went wrong? They:

1. **Prayed** – *Pray* first always “praying”
2. **Sang** – *Thank* God in spite of... “singing hymns to God”
3. **Influenced others** – *Think* and help others think
4. **Gave direction** – *Do* something helpful – suicide intervention

Paul reflected on this experience a few years later. While imprisoned in Rome he writes to the church he started in Philippi about what to do in anxious times. In **Philippians 4** he writes:

⁶Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

⁸Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. ⁹Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice [do]. And the God of peace will be with you

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Pray-Thank-Think-Do

Pray – first, not last resort, but the first response. Get honest with God and tell him what you’re experiencing, how you feel, and what you’re asking him to do. Pray first. Don’t post first – pray first. Don’t tweet first – pray first. Don’t talk first – pray first.

Thank - It doesn’t say thank God *for* all things. There are a lot of things you shouldn’t be thankful for. There’s pain in the world. There’s evil in the world. Somebody gets cancer; you don’t have to thank God for cancer. Somebody dies; you don’t thank God for their death. But it says *in all things* give thanks.

When you ask God also thank him. Ask with thanks. 1 Thess 5:18 say’s *“In everything. It doesn’t say in most things. It says in everything. Not for, but in everything... give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”*

Think - This is extremely important because the battle is in your brain. It’s in your thought life. It’s in your mind. Your war is won or lost in your mind. What you fill your mind with will determine your attitude.

Here’s what we read in **Philippians 4:8** *“Fill your mind with those things that are true and good and right. Think about things that are pure and beautiful and respected. If anything is excellent, if anything is worthy of honor, think about those things.”*

Notice the Bible gives us six tests of whether we should allow something in our mind or not. I should ask, is it *true*? Is it *noble*? Is it *right*? Is it *pure*? Is it *beautiful*? Is it *respected*? If so, it is excellent and worthy of honor. Think about these things – true, noble, right, pure, beautiful, and respected.

Do – be helpful! Now it the time to act! After you’ve prayed, thanked, and thought.

When things go wrong you will always be right if you Pray, Thank, Think, Do

Bill George in his book *True North*, writes, *“The difference with authentic leaders is in the way they frame their stories. Reframing our stories enables us to recognize that we are not victims at all but people shaped by the experiences that provide the impetus for us to develop great character.”*

Jared challenged us to think about someone that is irritating or something that is going wrong. How will you work through these four

Jared challenged us to think about someone that is irritating or something that is going wrong. How will you work through these four steps: pray, thank, think, and do?

What happens when you follow Paul's example in God's word?

Transformation

1. **Spirit world** as the devil's influence is stopped
2. **Your spirit** leads instead of thoughts or feelings or others
3. **Your emotions** moderate as your limbic system slows down
4. **Your mind's** frontal cortex engages and influences toward good decisions
5. **Your body** relaxes with less cortisol, epinephrine and other stress hormones
6. **Others** around you will be influenced to follow your healthy lead

You can change your world. **Pray. Thank. Think. Do.**

When the going got tough Paul did four things: Pray, Thank, Think and Do.

Paul and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day - Questions:

- 1) How will you 'Pray' when things go wrong?
- 2) How will you 'Thank' when things go wrong?
- 3) How will you 'Think' when things go wrong?
- 4) What will you 'Do' when things go wrong?

We must pray.

Racism, injustice and retaliation are poisonous darts. From Orlando, to Falcon Heights, to Baton Rouge, and to Dallas, there is an undercurrent of pain and anger.

There is also fear of being targeted due to the color of your skin or the uniform you wear. All the while, the enemy of our soul lurks to pit us against *each other* instead of against the *kingdom of darkness*.

Our nation can choose between the way of Jesus, a man of peace. Or we can choose the way of the world, and continue to experience the violence that leaves us all vulnerable.

Jared encouraged us to go out of our way this week to engage and befriend people of a different color or culture than your own. Listen to their stories and their pain. Be an advocate.

Support the men and women of law enforcement, who put their lives on the line daily.

Additionally, help hold accountable anyone who doesn't act in the best interests of our fellow citizens. We must stop injustice and oppression.

We are at war, but it is a war that began in the heavenlies and continues today. At stake are the souls of men and women. First, pray! **"For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty in God, for pulling down strongholds" (2 Corinthians 10:4, NKJV)**. As we pray and act

weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty in God, for pulling down strongholds” (2 Corinthians 10:4, NKJV). As we pray and act together, we can see our nation and our world healed.

And so we pray; God we:

- Pray that polarization in our nation would cease and that unity would prevail.
- Pray that the church will rise in love and in the ministry of reconciliation we have been given, and lead the way in healing our communities.
- Pray against injustice and that God would give us wisdom and to do our part to see injustice cease and to right the wrongs being done in our nation.
- Pray that in the midst of tragedies’ complexity and confusion, that people will find healing and hope in Jesus, the Prince of Peace.
- Thank you God for doing what only you can do – bring your justice and peace.
- Help us think your thoughts; what is true, noble, right, pure, beautiful, and respected.
- Show us what to do to help bring your peace in our troubled world.
- Help us pray, thank, think and do.

Discussion Questions

1) Jared talked about a children’s book and a story from Acts 16, where the people had a: “Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day”. Think back through your life on your worst days. For some of us it may have been something very tragic or horrific or maybe a crushing loss of someone you loved. If appropriate share about when things went wrong and what you did in response.

2) On this very bad day Paul and Silas were assaulted by the:

Devil – a spirit predicted the future

Business people – lost their hope of making money

Religious people – yelling ‘these men are Jews’ – prejudice minority population

Neighbors - crowd joined in the attack

Government - magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten

Discuss how each of these entities harmed Paul and Silas and can harm us.

3) So please talk over what did Paul and Silas do when things went wrong? Jared pointed out that they:

Prayed – **Pray** first always_“praying”

wrong? Jared pointed out that they:

Prayed – *Pray* first always_“praying”

Sang – *Thank* God in spite of..._“singing hymns to God”

Influenced others – *Think* and help others think

Gave direction – *Do* something helpful_– suicide intervention

- 4) Review your notes and the Philippians passage on page 3 and discuss: **“Pray-Thank-Think-Do ”**

- 5) Under the “think” category looking at Philippians 4:8, Jared pointed out that the Bible gives us *six tests* of whether we should allow something in our mind or not What are those six things and in a practical way what are they?

- 6) On page 4 of our notes, we learn what happens when you follow Paul’s example in God’s word...*Transformation*. Jared will give 6 areas that are affected, please discuss each.

- 7) On pages 5 and 6 Jared gave us several prayer points and challenges that directly relate to the context of July 2016. Please look over those points and discuss what catches your attention. If you were studying this lesson some time later, they still would be beneficial to look at and consider.