

‘ACTING THE BIBLE’
at
Beckley School

**PAUL AND THE FORTUNE
TELLING SLAVE GIRL
(Acts 16:16-34)**

11 July 2024

Joint Benefice of

**The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Beckley St. Nicolas, Forest Hill with Shotover
St. Barnabas, Horton-cum-Studley St. John the Baptist, Stanton St. John**

The Four Parishes 'Acting the Bible' team (previously known as 'Open the Book') leads assembly once a fortnight in Beckley School. The team take stories fresh from the pages of the Bible, and make them into mini dramas, to be acted out by themselves, together with Beckley schoolchildren. Through this, it is hoped that the Bible stories are brought alive, and remembered by the children, especially as they too are involved in the acting.

The team is led by Betty Dye, a Licensed Lay Reader, and includes members from Forest Hill, Stanton St John and Beckley. They meet once a fortnight to write the scripts, with the aim of adhering as closely as possible to the original Bible texts. This often involves comparing different Bible translations and even reading the New Testament in the original Greek!

ACTING THE BIBLE

Paul and the Fortune Telling Slave Girl

Acts 16 v16-34

SILAS; SLAVE OWNERS x 2; SLAVE GIRL; PAUL; MAGISTRATE;
JAILER; PRISONERS; CHORUS

SILAS: My name is Silas. I am a friend of Saul, who we now call Paul. I want to tell you about what happened when I travelled with Paul and his other friend Luke to the town of Philippi. Everywhere Paul went he always spoke out boldly about the amazing things Jesus had said and done. But not everyone wanted to listen. In Philippi there were two men who owned a slave girl who could see into the future. She was well known as a fortune teller, and she made a great deal of money for her masters.

(SLAVE GIRL walk on from behind the curtain followed by SLAVE OWNERS)

SLAVE GIRL: Come here everyone! Give some coins to my masters, and I will tell your fortune!

(PAUL and SILAS walk on from hall door side)

PAUL: No! Listen to us! We will tell you the good news about Jesus.

SLAVE GIRL: Give some coins to my masters, and I will tell your fortune!

SILAS: Listen to us! We will tell you the good news about Jesus.

SLAVE GIRL: *(walks over to PAUL)* Look! These men are the servants of the most high God. They will tell you the pathway to salvation!

SLAVE OWNER: *(angrily beckoning SLAVE GIRL to come back)* Give us some coins, and our girl will tell your fortune!

SILAS: Paul, what should we do? This child is being led to speak in ways that are making things difficult for us all.

PAUL: Silas, this has been going on for days. It needs to stop now! *(to the SLAVE GIRL)* Poor child, you have a wrong spirit inside you. *(firmly)* Spirit, in the name of Jesus Christ I order you to come out of her!

(SLAVE GIRL blink, shake head, smile and walk back behind the curtain)

CHORUS: The slave girl is free, but her masters are angry!

SILAS: Oh, no, here come her masters! They look very angry. They won't be able to make money out of that child's fortune telling any more.

SLAVE OWNER: What do you think you are doing? We don't want troublemakers like you in our city. We are arresting you now. The magistrate will know how to deal with you!

(SLAVE OWNERS drag SILAS and PAUL off behind curtain)

CHORUS: They can't make any more money! They have arrested Paul and Silas!

(SLAVE OWNERS come back dragging PAUL and SILAS into the centre. MAGISTRATE and JAILER march in from hall door)

MAGISTRATE: Who are these ruffians?

SLAVE OWNER: Sir, these men are troublemakers. They are teaching people to do things which we Romans are not allowed to do.

MAGISTRATE: Indeed? In that case they must be locked up in prison. Tomorrow we will put them on trial. *(to the JAILER)* Jailer, these are

wicked men who have been causing riots in our city. You must put them in your strongest prison cell!

(MAGISTRATE and SLAVE OWNERS walk back to hall door. JAILER hustle PAUL and SILAS off behind the curtain)

CHORUS: Now Paul and Silas are in prison. How will they get free?

PRISONERS, with hands in [paper]chains, come in from behind curtain and sit down. PAUL and SILAS are hustled in by JAILER. PAUL and SILAS sit on stools near the middle of the stage)

JAILER: I am in charge of the prison in Philippi. No-one ever escapes from my prison! Look! I am putting heavy chains on these wicked men! *(put [paper] chains on Paul and Silas)*. Now I am locking them in with my biggest key! *(mime with key)*. No-one ever escapes from my prison! *(exit JAILER towards hall door)*

PRISONERS: He's right! No-one has ever escaped from here!

PAUL: Cheer up Silas, it could have been worse. Let's pray to God our Father! Let's sing praises to Jesus our Saviour!

SILAS: Sing praises?

PAUL: If we sing loudly, the other prisoners will hear our message of good news about Jesus.

(SILAS starts singing 'Jesus' love is very wonderful.' PAUL joins in, as do PRISONERS).

SILAS: Stop, Paul, what is happening? Can you feel it? Oh! The ground is shaking!

(PAUL, SILAS and PRISONERS ROCK VIOLENTLY FROM SIDE TO SIDE)

PAUL: It's an earthquake! A massive earthquake! The whole prison is shaking!

SILAS: The chains holding our hands and feet are broken. (*PAUL and SILAS break their chains and leap up*). The locked prison doors are wide open!

(*PRISONERS shake off chains and stand up.*)

PRISONERS: Look! The door is broken. We can all escape now!

JAILER: (*comes in from hall door*) No! My prison doors are open! My prisoners have escaped! I will be executed for this failure! I will kill myself with my sword now.

PAUL: No, no! Don't do that! We are all here. Don't hurt yourself!

JAILER: I don't understand. Why didn't you run away?

PAUL: We didn't need to run away because we knew that God would take care of us. We prayed to the Lord Jesus and he saved us.

JAILER: How amazing! You didn't run away and it was the Lord Jesus who sent the earthquake to set you free?

PAUL: If you believe in him, you too will be saved.

JAILER: I do believe! Come home with me now. I will wash and bind your wounds and give you food and wine to eat and drink.

PAUL: We will come with you, and I will baptize you and your whole family this very night.