

Alley Rundown—May 15th, 2022

Today's Bible Story: Sing, Sing, Sing (Paul and Silas in Prison) • Acts 16:16-40

Today's Key Question: What helps you keep going?

Today's Bottom Line: You can choose joy when life gets hard.

Monthly Memory Verse: *But those who trust in the LORD will receive new strength. They will fly as high as eagles. They will run and not get tired. They will walk and not grow weak.* Isaiah 40:31 (NIRV)

CG: Dude Perfect Filler Videos

“Hey, friends! So glad to see you all here today. One of the things I appreciate about you all here in The Alley is the fact that you always come ready to have fun! I really love that about you guys! Show of hands: How many of you play sports? *(Pause for response.)* Wow! Lots of you love to compete through sports. For most professional athletes, their training starts around your age or younger! The dreams of succeeding and winning championships begin early.

“When I watch professional athletes, I marvel at their talent and ability. Often, I don't consider the obstacles they overcame to reach their skill levels. However, many survived homelessness, injuries, and other unthinkable challenges. There is one athlete I want to highlight who overcame a particularly difficult hurdle. In Hawaii, one of the popular sports is surfing. Many kids grow up dreaming about becoming professional surfers.”

SLIDE: Bethany Hamilton

“Bethany Hamilton started surfing at three years old and began surfing competitively around eight years old. When Bethany Hamilton was your age, she started surfing in competitions and was a natural talent. By ten years old, Bethany had gained her first sponsorship! However, everything changed when she was 13 years old. She was surfing with one of her best friends on the island of Kauai. While she was lying on her surfboard with her arm dangling in the water, a large tiger shark bit off her left arm near Bethany's shoulder. She was rushed to the hospital where the medical staff was able to save her life!

“As crazy as life seemed at the time, Bethany was confident of two things. First, God loved her. And second, she was still supposed to be a professional surfer. Less than a month after the shark attack, Bethany competed in her next major competition. Bethany has won many major surfing competitions since her shark attack and inspired millions with her story.”

“Bethany's surfing story could have ended at 13 years old on the island of Kauai, and nobody would have blamed her. She faced an incredibly difficult challenge. In order for Bethany to continue surfing, she would need to relearn how to surf without one of her arms to help her paddle to the waves or keep her balance. Bethany embraced this hardship with resilience to make the best of a terrible situation!

“Too many times in my life I stopped because of a hardship, and my hardship doesn't compare to a shark attack! If I scraped my knee while running, I would hobble back inside and refuse to move! When the book I was reading included some big words, I'd swap it for something easier to read. If the guys playing pickup basketball looked too big, I would opt not to play! Maybe you're like this sometimes, too. When you confront something difficult or you're unsure what to do next, you just opt to walk away.

“But is there a different way? We all know that we’ll encounter hard things in life. But how can we make the best of a bad situation? How can we consciously make the decision to turn something terrible into something good? These are not easy-to-answer questions! Thankfully, when we face difficult questions, we can open the Bible to discover some answers that can help. Let’s head there now with the help of this week’s Episode.”

CG: Lesson Video (Runtime: 12:00)

“This story is full of difficult situations with ample opportunity for Paul and Silas to let bitterness be sown in their hearts. Both were beaten and arrested even though they didn’t commit a crime. If I was thrown into prison and I didn’t commit any crime, I would be angry. And sad. Possibly mad at God! Paul and Silas did none of that! Rather, they praised God despite their hard circumstances. When the earthquake caused the jail cells to open, Paul and Silas did not escape. Instead, they used it as an opportunity to lead the jailer and his entire family to Christ! This story a powerful example of what can happen when we chose joy as we keep on going.

“Hard stuff will happen. All of us will experience it at some point. Some will lose cherished family pets suddenly. We can lose friendships. We may lose the championship by a close score. Nobody in this room can prevent hard times from happening, but we can control how we respond to those hard situations.

“Here’s a question for you. When life gets hard, how do you react? When you’re grounded from using your cellphone or you must clean up the yard after the dog, do you get angry? Sad? Do you pout? I doubt any of us will be stuck in a first-century Roman prison, but Paul and Silas were! The prisoners and the jailer never noticed the two men throwing a temper tantrum! Not even close. You know what they did witness? Paul and Silas focused on what was good by choosing to praise God instead of what was bad. They chose joy, and that’s exactly what we should do!”

“For many of us, choosing joy in all situations won’t be easy. But it is possible, especially when choose to ask God for help. After all, we can trust God no matter what! Today, as you head to small groups, think about this:

SLIDE: Key Question

“**What helps you keep going?** When life seems to be falling apart and nothing is going your way, how can you stay focused on the good? If you’re not sure how to answer that, have no fear. You’ll get a chance to chat all about this and more with your Small Group. Before you head out, let’s pray and ask God to help us find joy when life feels difficult. Let’s pray.”

Lead group in a prayer related to what they just heard. After prayer, lead offering.

OFFERING:

Here in Parkview Kids, we bring our offering each week to help support (your Campus Child) learn more about Jesus just like we do here in Parkview Kids. Here’s a picture of (your Campus Child)! If you brought your offering you can bring it up now. Have fun in Small Groups!

Orland Park: Michael and Valeri, New Lenox: Daniel, Homer Glen: Victor