

## **When You're Shut Up, Don't Shut Up!**

Contributed by Steve Pearman on Mar 27, 2020

**Scripture:** Acts 16:16-33

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**Summary:** What do we do when shut away during coronavirus Covid-19?

When you're shut up, don't shut up!

Acts 16:16-33

Into

Being shut up, is never nice on a long term.

We can do it for a while.

But we like freedom.

We like to walk out. Do things for ourselves.

It's one reason why being in prison is a punishment:

Freedom is taken away.

Now we understand that last weekend the government said cafes, bars etc must close and people should not go see their mother, and don't visit people or be close to others. Many are starting to isolate themselves.

But there are those that have pretty much ignored guidelines.

They want to get out all they can – not only that, but stay close to people physically.

Then on Monday we were told only to go out for ESSENTIAL reasons.

To stop this virus from taking hold of our society, we are told to be shut up.

Much of the world is now being locked away, so to speak.

Freedom has been taken from us. We have been shut up.

Of course, many have suggested things to do when shut up:

Exercise – keep active (last weekend the UK pretty much sold out of dumbbells!)

Call people on the phone

Have different things to do – variety!

But here's a question: What do we do when we are shut up?

I have been thinking about this during the week.

I was reading several stories in the bible.

I share with you this morning some thoughts

They are based around Paul (and Silas) being shut up in prison.

How Paul got into prison – was it fair?? No.

He was casting out a spirit from a woman who was fortune telling.

All good!

BUT her owners – yes she had owners – were making money out of her fortune telling, so they got mad, and took Paul and Silas to court over loss of earnings.

They ended up in prison for doing the kind and Christian thing.

He was isolated

So Paul was isolated from society – that's a big thing for Paul....

He was in a room – nowhere to go, although probably not 2 meters away from others there.

But he couldn't get out! He was shut up

What did he do? Verse 25 -

Praying

They were shut up in prison, but these two guys were definitely not going to shut up talking with the Lord.

Singing hymns – they would not shut up worshipping/honouring.

Sharing their faith – there they were in a prison cell. Not the easiest place to talk about God, maybe.

But they just wouldn't shut up!

All the other inmates knew the faith that they had.

In doing that, God showed up – big time.

After praying, singing, and sharing faith – God will turn up

A miracle happened!!

An earthquake – doors opened. Chains were loosed.

But none of the prisoners took off for the hills.

That night they had seen what real freedom was, and they wanted it for themselves.

They had learned that true freedom did not come from anything outside the prison doors.

And when the jailer woke up thinking that all his prisoners had escaped, he was about to commit suicide until Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!"

This was like nothing the jailer had ever seen or dreamed of.

"Why hadn't they escaped?"

And why do they care about me, the man in charge of keeping them locked up?

Surely, there is a great power at work in this place.

Certainly they possess something I lack!"

So, the jailer actually brought them out of the jail and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

In other words, "Sirs, what must I do to be free like you are free?"

You know where I'm going with this, right?

When we are shut up, don't shut up

In Italy – on balcony . . . . trying to raise peoples hope

You know, We have a greater HOPE.

And while we are shut up – please: don't shut up!

- We can pray
- Sing to the Lord
- Share our faith

People are feeling anxious, stressed, lost, cut off

Let's share with others.

Think about it, what causes other persons to have a desire to be converted?

Is it how we dress, or the cars we drive?

Is it the size of our church, or the colour of our carpet?

Or is it about the way we live...

Is it that we are filled with Joy and praise for God.

Is it that, when we are shut up, we can't shut up.

You know, When people see Christians living like Christ followers---they too want to be a Christian, and ask, "What must I do to be like you?"

So. This week, please remember the title of this message, because I hope it will help each of us to be good ambassadors of Christ.

We may be shut up, but we don't have to shut up

Everyone is only a phone call away.

Connect and share with people

Show love

Stay positive

Share the hope you have in Christ

We are being physically shut up maybe for a few weeks.

Life WILL go on.

During this time let us show that we have something (someone) who sustains us through all difficulties.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father.

The world is hurting, and feeling cut off.

That is true physically and often spiritually too.

May we look to your word this week to encourage us.

And I we – your people – not stay quiet in declaring the greatness of our God.

In the darkest moments – you bring light.

In the times of confusion, you bring purpose

In the times of hurt and sadness – you bring comfort to our souls.

We praise you today, and every day until we meet you face to face in all your glory!