

## Reading Sunday 11 January 2026

### Acts 16: 16 - 34

#### Paul and Silas in prison

<sup>16</sup> Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a female slave who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling. <sup>17</sup> She followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, 'These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved.' <sup>18</sup> She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so annoyed that he turned round and said to the spirit, 'In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!' At that moment the spirit left her.

<sup>19</sup> When her owners realised that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the market-place to face the authorities. <sup>20</sup> They brought them before the magistrates and said, 'These men are Jews, and are throwing our city into an uproar <sup>21</sup> by advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practise.'

<sup>22</sup> The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten with rods. <sup>23</sup> After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. <sup>24</sup> When he received these orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

<sup>25</sup> About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. <sup>26</sup> 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. <sup>27</sup> 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. <sup>28</sup> But Paul shouted, 'Don't harm yourself! We are all here!'

<sup>29</sup> The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. <sup>30</sup> He then brought them out and asked, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?'

<sup>31</sup> They replied, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved – you and your household.' <sup>32</sup> Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. <sup>33</sup> At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his household were baptised. <sup>34</sup> The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God – he and his whole household.

