

- **What did Paul have against Mark?** When Paul and Barnabas went on their first missionary journey, Barnabas wanted to take Mark along as a helper. A couple of months into the journey, Mark became so homesick that he deserted them and went back home to Jerusalem.
- **So, why did Paul choose Silas?** He chose Silas because he recognized that he was committed to bringing the gospel to all people without partiality—to Jews and non-Jews alike. Silas was committed to a gospel of grace.
- **Silas was a courageous missionary.** Acts 16:16–40

What do we learn from Silas?

1. **The way you handle severe trials reveals your true character.**
2. **Paul and Silas did not abandon their faith or believe that God abandoned them.**



sermon notes

Also Starring: Silas
 April 28, 2019
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What do we know about Silas?

- His name first appears in Acts 15:22, when the Jerusalem Council was convened to settle an issue that threatened to split the church.
- Silas is primarily known as Paul's traveling companion during his second missionary journey.
- At the end of Paul's second missionary journey, when he leaves the city of Corinth, it appears that he leaves Silas there. He is never mentioned again in the Book of Acts. Tradition says that Silas stayed behind to be the pastor of the Corinthian church.
- There is one fascinating reference to Silas in 1 Peter 5:12. It appears that 12 years after Paul leaves Silas in Corinth, he helps Peter write the book of 1 Peter. *With the help of Silas, whom I regard as a faithful brother, I have written to you briefly, encouraging you and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it.* 1 Peter 5:12 (NIV)
- His name: He is always referred to as Silas by Luke in the Book of Acts. Both Paul and Peter call him Silvanus in their writings. Silvanus is most likely his formal, Roman name, and Silas is most likely his diminutive name or nickname.
- Many Christians are under the impression that Paul and Silas were long-time friends and ministry companions, but they were only together for three or four years.
- Silas was a Roman citizen (like Paul), which accorded him (in principle) certain protections from unjust punishment.

What are the qualities that made Silas one of the unsung heroes of our faith?

1.

Then the apostles and elders, with the whole church, decided to choose some of their own men and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They chose Judas (called Barsabbas) and Silas, men who were leaders among the believers. Acts 15:22 (NIV)

- **Serious problem in the church at Antioch:** While Paul and Barnabas were in Antioch some teachers came from Jerusalem and began teaching the new Gentile believers that they needed to convert to Judaism if they wanted to be a follower of Jesus.

Certain people came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the believers: “Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved.” Acts 15:1 (NIV)

- Paul was furious and took the issue to the Jerusalem Council for a decision. At the Council, Peter spoke up saying:

God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. He did not discriminate between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith. Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of Gentiles a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors have been able to bear? No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are.” Acts 15:8–11 (NIV)

- The Council needed a couple of people to go to Antioch to deliver and testify to the verdict. Silas was one of the men chosen because he was a trusted, distinguished leader who exhibited faithfulness in ministry and a commitment to excellence.

What are the qualities that made Silas one of the unsung heroes of our faith? (cont.)

2.

So the men were sent off and went down to Antioch, where they gathered the church together and delivered the letter. The people read it and were glad for its encouraging message. Judas and Silas, who themselves were prophets, said much to encourage and strengthen the believers. Acts 15:30–32 (NIV)

- **What makes Silas stand out as a gracious prophet?** Silas was a Jewish believer in Jesus during a time when there was discomfort between Jewish believers and Gentile believers. Some Jewish believers were adamant that Jesus came to save Jews and only Jews. Silas, even as a Jewish believer, recognized that Christ came for all. He encouraged, strengthened and welcomed all people into a relationship with Christ.

3.

- **How did Silas end up in ministry with Paul?** Paul and Barnabas had been ministry partners and had completed a successful missionary journey. After the verdict from the Jerusalem Council, they decided to set out on another trip. Barnabas wanted to take his young cousin, John Mark, but Paul refused.

Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us go back and visit the believers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing.” Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, but Paul chose Silas and left. Acts 15:36–40 (NIV)