

## *The Commemoration of Silas, Fellow Worker of St. Peter and St. Paul (February 10)*

**S**ilas, fellow worker to St. Paul and St. Peter, was a leader in the early church. He was a Roman citizen and a prophet of the Lord.

Along with Judas Barsabbas, Silas was sent by the Jerusalem church to deliver a letter to the gentile converts in Antioch and at their direction he encouraged the gentile believers in the faith (Acts 15:22-32). It is here in Acts 15 that we first hear of Silas in the Holy Bible and learn of his activities for the Lord.

It seems that Silas remained awhile at Antioch. Later he will accompany St. Paul on his second missionary journey. Barnabas told Paul that he wanted John Mark to accompany them on this journey, but Paul disagreed. He remembered how John Mark had abandoned them on the first missionary journey and returned home. Barnabas, however, sees the potential in John Mark. So, he and Paul agree to separate and it results in two mission teams going out into the gentile world with the Gospel of Christ. Barnabas went with John Mark, while Paul went with Silas. Isn't it amazing how God works good in all circumstances: He gets two mission teams instead of one!

On the Second Missionary Journey, Silas journeyed into Asia Minor and Macedonian with Paul. He suffered many hardships for the Lord along with the apostle Paul in these journeys. Silas remained behind with Timothy in Berea to oversee the work that was begun there when Paul was escorted out of the city, and later he and Timothy joined up with Paul in Corinth. There, the three missionaries – Paul, Silas and Timothy – founded the church at Corinth and remained for 18 fruitful months.

In Philippi, Silas is imprisoned with Paul. They are beaten for their faith in Jesus Christ and put in stocks in the jailhouse. After the earthquake freed them from their prison chains, they won the jailor and his family for the Lord. The evangelist Luke records this powerful event, noting: "About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's bonds were unfastened. When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were

open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul cried with a loud voice, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here." And the jailer called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family. Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God" (Acts 16:25-34, ESV).

Later in his ministry, Silas served with St. Peter in

Pontus and Cappadocia. Peter looked upon Silas as a "faithful brother" in the

Lord (1 Peter 5:12). Silas might have even served as secretary or scribe to both Peter and Paul, faithfully recording their words (cf. the similarities of 1 Peter, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, and even the apostolic decree in Acts 15).

The Lutherans, the Roman Catholics, the Episcopalians, and the Eastern Orthodox all recognize Silas on their calendars. Although the date to commemorate

Silas differs according to the various calendars, these various denominations in Christendom agree that Silas is an important leader in the early church. In The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, we commemorate Silas on February 10<sup>th</sup>, where Silas is recognized by us as a fellow worker of St. Peter and St. Paul.

In my ministry, I have known many fellow workers both lay and professional who assisted me in the work of the Lord. I am thankful for all of them and remember them with thanksgiving to God in my prayers.

Many of you who are reading these words are such individuals – you are a Silas to your pastor. Although you may not be commemorated by name on our calendar, please know I thank God for you and appreciate your labors for the Lord and for the wonderful assistance and encouragement you offer to me.

– Pastor Cliff Adair

