

“What Must I Do to be Saved”  
Acts 16:23-34  
(Preached at Trinity, February 28, 2007)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. After arriving at Philippi Paul and Silas with Timothy and Luke began preaching the Word. After several days they went to a certain river where women met for prayer and Lydia came to faith in Christ. Paul and his companions stayed at her house for several days.
2. During this time Paul and his companions went daily for prayer and a certain slave girl followed them. She was demon possessed and had a reputation for being able to tell the future. As she followed them she cried:  
**Acts 16:17** – “These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.”
3. As I pointed out last time, this is another example of Satan appearing as an angel of light. By speaking words of truth the slave girl was disguising herself as being a part of them. She could then later do them immeasurable harm.  
Satan is never ashamed to cloak himself in religion if it suits his purposes. He is not ashamed to speak the truth if it can help him cloak his deception.
4. Paul soon tired of Satan's trickery and cast the demon out of her ending once and for all the fortune telling of this slave girl. This also ended the lucrative source of income for her masters.
5. The masters quickly seized Paul and Silas and brought them before the magistrates.  
**Acts 16:19-20** – “And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew *them* into the marketplace unto the rulers, <sup>20</sup> And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city,”
6. Paul and Silas were stripped and beat with rods and then thrown into prison. Apparently the beating was very severe, enough to break the flesh leaving them bruised and bleeding. Not allowing their earthly circumstance to rob them of their joy, at midnight they were praying and singing praises to God. Suddenly an earthquake shook the prison.  
**Acts 16:26** – “And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed.”
7. The jailer is the focus of this next section. Thinking that the prisoners had escaped he drew his sword and was prepared to kill himself. He was a Roman soldier. The penalty for a Roman soldier who lost a prisoner was execution. In such a case it was more honorable for the soldier to take his own life.
8. Seeing what was about to take place Paul shouts:  
**Acts 16:28** – “Do thyself no harm: for we are all here.”

9. The jailer then responds with the most important question a person can ask:  
**Acts 16:30** – “what must I do to be saved?”  
 Your answer to this question will determine where you spend eternity – in heaven or hell.
10. Biblical expositors have debated as to what he meant by the question.
- A. Many, looking at the context, conclude that the soldier was seeking to save his life and not die. Surely this is possible, but it certainly doesn't fit Paul's answer. It also doesn't fit the circumstance. Paul has already stated that all of the prisoners are there. The jailer was a Roman soldier skilled in the use of a sword. I don't think he came running in seeking to negotiate their cooperation.
- B. The other possibility is he was seeking salvation for his soul.
1. It is certainly possible that he had heard the words of the slave girl:  
**Acts 16:17** – “These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.”
2. It is also probable that the jailer looking death in the face was considering eternity.
11. This second explanation is the most likely, especially in light of Paul's answer. Philippi was not a large town. Paul was in prison because of what he did to the slave girl. It is likely the jailer was familiar with the situation and knew about the words of the slave girl.
12. Regardless of how the jailer meant the question, however, the meaning of Paul's answer cannot be disputed.  
**Acts 16:31** – “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.”
13. What can we conclude about salvation as we look at the Philippian jailer?
- I. Salvation demands that a man understand his need
- A. The Philippian jailer saw the urgency of his situation
1. **Verse 29** tells us he rushed in and fell before them
2. This demonstrates an attitude of great urgency
- B. Salvation demands that a person see his desperate need
1. The Bible describes it as an unquenchable thirst  
**Isaiah 55:1** – “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.”
2. The Gospel demands that a man develop a thirst that cannot be quenched – a thirst that can only be satisfied by Christ
- a. The lost man is satisfied with the world – its enjoyments, its provisions
- b. You can never entice a full man to eat drink – he doesn't have a need
3. The Gospel demands that a man begin to see his spiritual poverty
- a. He begins to thirst after righteousness  
**Matthew 5:6** – “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.”
- b. He begins to thirst after God's divine favor  
**Psalms 42:1-2** – “As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?”

- c. He begins to see this world as a vast desert, a vast wasteland that is incapable of satisfying his thirst  
**Psalm 63:1** – “O God, thou *art* my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;”
      - d. Only Jesus can satisfy the thirst of a sinner  
**John 4:14** – “But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”
    - B. This thirst is the result of the realization of our sin
      - a. The sinner who cries out, “What must I do to be saved” has a clear understanding that he needs to be saved from his sin
      - b. The Philippian jailer would have had some understanding of what he needed to be saved from.
- II. Salvation demands understanding the promises of the Gospel
- A. Salvation demands knowledge
    - 1. A person has to understand something about God  
That He is the Creator, our Ruler. He has the right to rule
    - 2. A person has to understand his sinfulness – that he has broken God’s law
    - 3. Most important, a person must understand about the historical Christ
      - a. A person cannot believe in Christ unless he has heard of Christ.  
**Romans 10:13-14** – “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. <sup>14</sup> How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?”
      - b. He needs to know the essentials of His life, death, and resurrection.
      - c. A person has to understand that Jesus is God’s only solution for our sin. His death upon the cross is the only satisfaction for our sin
      - d. This knowledge of Christ is the essence of the Gospel  
He may not have a detailed theology but he will not object to the Gospel when he hears it.
  - B. This knowledge is imparted through the Word of God
    - 1. Notice that Paul taught him from God’s Word  
**Acts 16:32** – “And they spake unto him the word of the Lord”
      - a. Paul did not use clever argumentation. He didn’t try to reason with him to convince him to believe.
      - b. People are not argued into the Kingdom
      - c. This doesn’t mean the Gospel is unreasonable – it is very reasonable. Faith is not independent of evidence and reason.  
B.B. Warfield: “Faith is the gift of God: but it does not in the least follow that the faith God gives is an irrational faith, that is, a faith without grounds in right reason....The Holy Spirit does not work a blind, an ungrounded faith in the heart....nor yet new grounds of belief in the object presented; but just a new ability of the heart to respond to the grounds of faith, sufficient in themselves, already present to the understanding.”

- d. Unbelief is most unreasonable and we need to tell this to sinners. But it isn't our reasoning that convinces a sinner to believe.
2. It is through His Word that God imparts faith  
**Romans 10:17** – “So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”
  - a. The Holy Spirit uses His Word to convince the lost sinner
  - b. He opens the mind of the lost sinner to see the clear evidence of the Gospel.
3. Apart from the teaching of the Gospel through the Word of God a man cannot be saved.

### III. Salvation demands that a person believe

- A. The Jailer believed the Word of the Gospel
  1. He was convinced of his sin and was convinced of his great need
  2. The Holy Spirit opened his heart enabling him to believe the Gospel
    - a. This change of heart is what it means to be born again - regeneration
    - b. This is what happened to Lydia  
**Acts 16:14** – “And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard *us*: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.”
  3. The Jailer was absolutely convinced that the Gospel was true. He embraced Christ and gave his life to following Him.
- B. Notice the fruit of his changed heart.
  1. Just hours before he saw Paul and Silas as disturbers of the peace
    - a. He placed them in the inner dungeon – a place of filth and darkness
    - b. He also placed their feet in stocks which caused great discomfort
  2. Now he sees Paul and Silas as brothers - He brings them to his house and cares for them  
**Acts 16:33-34** – “And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed *their* stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.  
<sup>34</sup> And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.”
  3. Genuine faith is never separate from the evidence of a changed heart
    - a. Every believer will be stirred to love
    - b. Every believer will seek to serve Christ and His people
- C. Notice also that the Word was preached to the jailer's household and they believed
  1. This is another case of what is known as household baptism  
The other is the case of Lydia  
**Acts 16:15** – “And when she was baptized, and her household”
  2. Obviously the same standard was applied to the jailer's household  
They heard the Word, they believed, and then they were baptized.
  3. There is no indication here that unbelieving children were baptized.

- IV. Salvation is open to all who believe
- A. The Jews were proud of their heritage
1. It is said that a Jewish man prayed daily, “Lord, I thank thee that I’m not a Gentile, a woman, or a slave.”
  2. In this chapter we find the salvation of all three.
    - a. Lydia from Thyatira – a woman and Gentile
    - b. The slave girl – a slave and a woman
    - c. The Philippian jailer – a Roman Gentile
  3. Paul later confirms the universal nature of the Gospel  
**Galatians 3:28** – “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.”
- B. The one requirement is to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ – whosoever does this will be saved.
- Romans 9:33** – “As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.”
- Romans 10:11** – “For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.”
- Romans 10:13** – “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”
- Revelation 22:17** – “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”

#### Conclusion:

1. If someone asked you the question, “What must I do to be saved” what would you answer?
2. There is such muddled confusion about the simple presentation of the Gospel. You must always be ready to give an answer to such an enquiry. Although Paul was tired and hurting he gave a quick answer.  
**Acts 16:31** – “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved”
3. That is the clear message of the Gospel. Believe and you will be saved. If you are here tonight and have not trusted in Christ, if you trust Him he will save you.