

Title: The Jailed Jailor
Scripture: Acts 16: 23-34
Date: September 12, 2010
Place: SGBC, New Jersey

Our question: What must I do to be saved? If you really ask that question, it will be because God has worked a work of grace within you. Then when you hear what Christ has done for you, you will bow when you receive the answer to: what must I do to be saved?

Proposition: We are about to see the miracle of God's grace through the gospel of Christ working irresistibly in the Philippians jailor and on many in his household.

Acts 16: 25: And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. 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.

THE KING OF KINGS SENT THIS EARTHQUAKE TO SHOW US WHAT HE WAS DOING IN THE HEART OF THE JAILOR AND OTHERS IN HIS FAMILY

Paul and Silas are believers. They are in prison physically. But in reality they are free indeed, in Christ. The one who is really in prison is the jailor. Unbelievers are locked up in prison. The natural heart is depraved, dead and blind. A secular songwriter, probably unknowingly, described the sin-dead, natural heart in a lyric when he wrote:

Inside me there's a prison
Surrounding me alone
Stronger than any dungeon
With its walls of stone

The Lord Jesus, the Son of God was anointed by God the Father for the purpose of setting his chosen prisoners free.

Isaiah 42: 7: To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, *and* them that sit in darkness out of the prison house. 8: I *am* the LORD: that *is* my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.

When God bears witness in the heart of a sinner the Holy Spirit turns everything upside down, just like in an earthquake: the foundation of the prison is shaken, immediately the doors are opened and the chains are loosed by the Lord.

Divisions: I. The Effect Grace Works Within A Sinner; II. The Good News of the Gospel; III. The Obedience of Faith

I. The Effects the Grace of God Has Upon A Sinner

A. First, grace awakens the dead sinner--

Acts 16: 27: And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep...

Ephesians 2: 1: And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

B. Secondly, once we are made alive, God reveals our works are vain and to despair even to death.

Acts 16: 27: And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled.

The jailor's life depended upon keeping the prisoners in prison.

Acts 16: 23: And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast *them* into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely: 24: Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.

Sadly, in order to do so he had to remain in prison himself. But when he saw the door opened he thought he had failed in all his work. He knew that he would be executed by his superiors.

Application: Like this jailor, those who are spiritually dead think their *eternal* life depends upon their works. Sinners think God is pleased by a job well done, just as this jailor tried to please his superiors. We had to live in the prison of vain works, chaining and imprisoning ourselves and others in our dead religion. But when grace makes us spiritually alive, God makes all our works to appear as they are--vanity. When we behold that God is just to pour out his wrath upon us, this brings us into great despair as it did the jailor.

C. Thirdly, God calls us in the heart...

Acts 16: 28: But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here.

My gospel is comfort to sinners who God has brought to see their need of mercy. I am telling you how God saves sinners. Through his messenger, through this gospel, God says to those he wakes, "Do thyself no harm. We are all here." The God of your salvation is here. He speaks comfortably to those he has first broken.

D. Fourthly, this work of God the Spirit makes the sinner call on God.

Acts 16: 29: Then he called for a light...

Man by nature will not call for the light.

John 3: 20: For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. 21: But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

But when Christ commands the sinner then they come out of darkness into his light.

Isaiah 49: 9: That thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Shew yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places. 10: They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them. 11: And I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall be exalted.

We see an illustration of it in this jailor: **Acts 16: 29: Then he called for a light and sprang in and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas...**

Ps 110:3: Thy people *shall be* willing in the day of thy power

Grace gives a new spirit, we did not have before.

- Before he was proud--now he came trembling
- Before he exercised his authority--now he falls down before Paul
- Before he thrust them in--now he brings them out
- Before he was telling Paul what to do--now he asks
- **HERE IS OUR QUESTION] Acts 16: 30: And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?**

So we see that grace works this in the heart:

1. Grace quickens the dead sinner.
2. Grace removes all hope of gain by our own doing
3. Then grace says "show yourselves and makes a sinner to call for the light, to come trembling, bowing down, asking God for mercy."
Proverbs 9: 10: The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy *is* understanding.
4. This jailor has been made to fear the LORD, now he asks and Paul gives him the knowledge of the Holy One. When God has sought the sinner then sinner begins to seek the Way of the Lord.

II. The Good News of the Gospel is the Lord Jesus Christ. Here is the answer to our question:...

Acts 16: 31: And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. 32: And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.

Paul declares that only Way--the only thing he must do to be saved--the only thing any in his house must do to be saved is--believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Faith in Christ is the work God demands of all his children.

John 6:28: Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? 29: Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

The jailor must believe and all in his house must believe. Christ said, "I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE, NO MAN COMETH TO THE FATHER BUT BY ME." Christ is the One Way for all because "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."

Hebrews 11:6: But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Faith does all the works of God without moving a muscle by simply believing on Christ.

- You must perfectly fulfill all righteousness--in precept and in penalty
- You must be perfectly holy--it must be perfect to be accepted of God
- But you did not even have this wisdom and you were unable to free yourselves from the bondage of your nature.

But by God gifting you with a heart which for the first time believes that Christ has done all this for you--through that faith--the believer is counted righteous, he has established the law and he is holy in Christ--the believer have done all that God requires and is accepted in Christ.

Example: The thief on the cross worked all the works God requires by simply believing on Christ Jesus--being God's workmanship, he was given faith by grace, and he walked in all the works God before ordained and he was perfect without moving a muscle.

All other good works by the believer are the fruit of appreciation for Christ having finished the work on the believer's behalf--to praise and glory of God our Savior.

Phillipians 1:11: Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

The work is finished--this IS the word of the Lord, the very good news of the gospel.

God did all the work himself in the person of Son. God poured out his wrath on Christ Jesus instead of me. Christ is risen because he satisfied God and God will have every one for whom he died to be satisfied with Christ. When the Spirit of God entered into this dead sinner he made me to believe I am perfectly righteous and holy in Christ with Christ in me. Christ has opened the prison and if the "Son shall set you free, ye shall be free indeed." The good news of the gospel is that everything you could never do and shall never be able to do, God has done in Christ on your behalf, so that all that remains for you is to trust him to bring you home to God, and he will see to it that you do that.

III. THE OBEDIENCE OF ONE WHO BELIEVES ON CHRIST--THE FRUIT.

First, the Believer Repents and Believes on Christ.

Acts 16: 33: And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed *their* stripes;

Repentance and faith is to be radically turned from our former self to trust Christ. The jailor turned from *inflicting stripes* to *washing them*, from rejecting Christ to faith in Christ

Secondly, the Believer Submits and Obeys Christ

Acts 16: 33...and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.

The jailor, and many in his house who heard the gospel that night, were granted repentance and faith in Christ, therefore they submitted to the ordinance of baptism in obedience to Christ.

Baptism is immersion. Look away from your tradition, look away from man-made precepts and look Christ in the face. He said, "I have a baptism to be baptized with and how I am straightened till it be accomplished."

- He was not sprinkled with my sin he was immersed in it. He bore my sin--the word means impregnated with--my sin in his own body on the tree.
- He was not sprinkled with the wrath of God he was immersed in God's wrath--wholly forsaken.
- He was not sprinkled with pain and suffering he was immersed in it.
- He was not sprinkled with death he was immersed in it.
- He was not sprinkled with dirt he was immersed in the grave.

We go in the watery grave to signify that when Christ was immersed I was immersed with him. We come up out of the watery grave signifying that when Christ arose to newness of life we arose to newness of life--shown by coming up out of the water. See **Romans 6: 3-14**

C. Thirdly, the Believer Becomes a Willing Servant of Christ

Acts 16: 34: And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them,

The love of Christ came into the jailor's heart Paul and Silas were the closest the jailor could get to Christ Jesus, his love for his brethren was his love for Christ. Evidence of true faith is love for God and the brethren.

1 John 5:1: Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.

Believers love and serve one another because they love and serve Christ.

Matthew 25:40: Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me.

D. Fourthly, the Believer rejoices and continues believing on God

Acts 16: 34:...and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.

Colossians 1: 21: And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled 22: In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight: [proof he did it for you is] 23: If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard,

So what must you do to be saved? Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.

Romans 15:13: Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

AMEN!