

A Jailor's Conversion

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[0:00] We'll be reading Acts 16, beginning in verse 16, and reading through to the end of the chapter. Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit by which she predicted the future.

She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune telling. This girl 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.

She kept this up for many days. Finally, Paul became so troubled that he turned around and said to the spirit, In the name of Jesus Christ, I command you to come out of her.

And at that moment, the spirit left her. When the owners of the slave girl realized that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities.

They brought them before the magistrates and said, These men are Jews and are throwing our city into an uproar by advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice.

[1:04] The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten. After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully.

Upon receiving such orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

About midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them.

Suddenly, there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once, all the prison doors flew open, and everybody's chains came loose. 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.

But Paul shouted, Don't harm yourself. We are all here. The jailer called for lights, rushed in, and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. He then brought them out and asked, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?

They replied, Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved. You and your household. Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house.

[2:17] At that hour of the night, the jailer took them and washed their wounds. Then immediately, he and all his family were baptized. 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 family. When it was daylight, the magistrates sent their officers to the jailer with the order, Release those men.

The jailer told Paul, The magistrates have ordered that you and Silas be released. Now you can leave. Go in peace. But Paul said to the officers, They beat us publicly without a trial, Even though we are Roman citizens, And threw us into prison.

And now do they want to get rid of us quietly? No. Let them come themselves and escort us out.

The officers reported this to the magistrates, And when they heard that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens, They were alarmed.

They came to appease them and escorted them from the prison, Requesting them to leave the city. After Paul and Silas came out of the prison, They went to Lydia's house where they met with brothers and encouraged them.

[3:23] Then they left. The apostle Paul had the glorious task of taking the gospel to lost people.

People who were on their way to hell, And seeing them trust in his Savior, And their eternal destiny changing from hell to heaven.

What a task. What a job. And you know, Hundreds of people and thousands of people, During his missionary journeys, Were saved.

But only a few of those conversions are recorded for us, With any kind of detail in the book of Acts. And this account of the jailer at Philippi, Is one that is told with great detail in our Bibles.

In other words, There's something about this conversion that God wants us to know about. He put it in His Word. There are lessons that we need to learn from it, About salvation.

[4:28] Here is a man who woke up in the middle of the night, A breath away from hell. If he'd died, He'd be in hell today. He'd be in hell forever. He was ignorant of the way to be saved from God's wrath.

But before the sun rose, He was a different man. He was saved. And now He's just a breath away from heaven. For now to die, Is to reign with Christ forever.

And we see just how this happened so quickly, On that eventful night. We don't even know this jailer's name. But we do know the question that he asked, And the answer that he was given, No one ever asked a more important question.

It's a question of eternal importance, And I wonder if you've ever asked it, About yourself. What must I do to be saved? Have you noticed, Not a whole lot of people, Are asking this question today. People are asking other questions, Like, What must I do to be popular? To have the girls like me, The guys like me, To be liked by people.

[5:45] What must I do to make more money? To get the things that I want. What must I do to have a happy marriage? To raise good kids, To feel self-fulfilled in life, What must I do to live longer?

And to have good health? Questions like these, Preoccupy the minds and lives of people, Such that most never ever get around, To the most important question of all, What must I do to be saved?

People live out their lives, They're born, They live, They die without even asking the question.

Without even knowing the question exists. Without even knowing perhaps that they are lost.

I doubt that this man himself ever asked it before this night. God had to literally shake the earth, And turn this man's world upside down, And shake him to the core, Until he, From the heart, Would ask this burning question, What must I do to be saved?

Well, The question wasn't asked out of the blue, Was it? He didn't just wake up one day, And say, I wonder what a guy has to do to be saved. No, There was much that went before.

[7:03] There was, There were background circumstances. That's our first point out of the four. Background circumstances. God is like a farmer, Who works the soil, And prepares the soil, To receive the seed.

This man was not yet asking the question. God would need to do a lot of work with this man, To bring him to the place, Where he would even ask the question.

And then there were those two men, From over a thousand miles away, God's own servants, That he would have to bring, Right near to this jailer, In order to answer his question.

And so God has a lot of preparation work, To do, In bringing the gospel, To the Philippian jailer. So we look at the background. Where does this man live?

Well, He lives in Philippi, That Roman colony, A leading prosperous city of that area. Now we've just spent the last 22 weeks, Together as a congregation, Studying Paul's letter to the Philippians, To the church, That was in this place, At Philippi.

[8:11] But, What we're reading now, Happened ten years earlier. There was no church. This is when Paul first came to Philippi. There was no Christian church, There was precious little knowledge, Of the one true God.

Just a few Jewish women, Who gathered together to pray, But who were ignorant of Jesus, The Messiah. Spiritual darkness reigned in Philippi.

We've been raised in America, Where the gospel has been since its inception. We don't know what kind of darkness reigned in Philippi. Think about growing up, And living every day of your life, Without any knowledge at all of Jesus Christ.

The gods of the Roman and Greek mythology, They were worshipped. It was a place of superstition, A place of evil spirits, Fortune telling.

There was this slave girl there, And she was possessed by a demon, An evil spirit, A fallen angel, Dwelt inside of her body, And by that spirit's help, She predicted the future, And made lots of money for her owners.

[9:25] This was the jailer city. Spiritual darkness. Everyone living out their lives in sin. On their way to hell, Not even knowing it. No light of the gospel in Philippi.

And into town one day, Walked two men with the light. The saving gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul and Silas. They were men themselves, Who were once in the dark.

And had been made to see. Were once blind, And now they see. Were once lost, Now they're saved. And they've come to tell others, Of what they have, Come to find in Jesus Christ.

And so they come, And they begin to preach. And here's this demon possessed slave girl, And she's following them. And she's not at all quiet.

You rather read that, She's shouting over and over, These men are servants of the Most High God, Who are telling you the way to be saved.

[10:30] These men are servants of the Most High God, Who are telling you the way to be saved. She was right, wasn't she? They were servants of the Most High God.

And the reason they were in Philippi, Was to tell them the way to be saved. And this went on, For many days. These men are servants of the Most High God, Telling you the way to be saved.

And finally Paul was so bothered, That he turned around, And commanded the Spirit to leave, In the name of Jesus. And it did so at once. Why did he do that?

After all, This is free advertising for the gospel. To have someone broadcasting, Whose servants you are. The Most High God.

And what you're about. Tell them the way to be saved. But consider who it was coming from. A demon possessed fortune teller, That everybody knew.

[11:36] It would be like O.J. Simpson, Advertising your product. No thank you. It's not the kind of endorsement that you seek. It rather hurts your product, Rather than helps it forward.

Paul would not have the gospel, The saving gospel of Jesus Christ, Aligned in any way with this evil spirit. Even though what was coming out of the girl's mouth, Was the truth.

Well the owners of the slave girl, Saw that their profitable venture, Was gone. It went right up in smoke. This girl without the demon in her, Was worthless to them. And so they seized Paul and Silas, And dragged them into the marketplace, To face the authorities.

They falsely accused them, As enemies of Rome, And teaching things that, Were contrary to Roman law. And the crowd was stirred up, To the point that the rulers, Had them stripped, And then their bare backs, Beaten with rods, Flogged.

And it's here that the jailer, First comes into contact, With Paul and Silas. Do you remember, Paul and Silas were preaching, Elsewhere, Trying to go here, And the spirit shut the door.

[12:53] Then tried to go here, And the spirit of Jesus forbid them. And they were being led, Directed. And then Paul had a dream, About a Macedonian man, Crying, Come over and help us.

And they concluded in the morning, That that was God's directive, For them to go to Macedonia, And preach the gospel there. Which they did at once, And they came to the first principal city, Of Macedonia, Which was Philippi.

And they're looking for that Macedonian man, Who said, Come over and help us. In the dream.

Well, it doesn't look like, These people want any help at all, Does it?

They're beaten. They're thrown into prison. Well, unbeknownst to Paul and Silas, Here's that man.

The jailer. The Philippian jailer. He's not asking for help yet.

God's preparing the soil. But this is the man. He's the one that needs saving help. And he'll have it. So here's this first meeting.

[13:54] For they were thrown into his prison. And they were charged, And he was charged, To secure them, And carefully guard them, As if they were some dangerous criminals.

Now he'd probably heard about them. They'd been preaching in Philippi, For many days, The scriptures say. And there was quite a stir in the city about him.

A lot of talk about Paul and his companion. But now he gets to see them. And what a sight to behold. Remember, they've just been flogged.

Their backs are laid open and bloodied. They're thrown into his prison. And he must have thought, So these are the servants of the Most High God, Are they?

Who have come to teach us the way to be saved. They rather look like, They're the ones needing to be saved. Not us. Look at them. And so he threw them into his inner cell.

[14:52] The most secure place he had in the prison. And he fastened their feet in the stocks. That was a form of torture. To cause their legs to be locked in an extended position.

Stretched position. That would add it to their discomfort. And later, with all of his prisoners secured for the night, The jailer went to bed. And understandably, Paul and Silas, Locked in the stocks with bloodied backs, Were not able to sleep.

And so at midnight, we find them. Not sitting around and complaining and grumbling, But praying and singing praises to God. Remember now, folks, This is the Paul who wrote later to the church in this place, Saying, Rejoice in the Lord always.

And I'll say it again. Rejoice. And that's what he's doing. Beaten. Imprisoned. Thinking perhaps, Did I miss the cue from God? I thought we were to come to Macedonia.

I thought there was the need for help here. But, No second guessing. At least not visible in the text. Instead, praising God. Talking to God.

[16:01] Singing His praises. And the scriptures say that the prisoners were listening to them. You bet they were. They never seen the likes. They never heard of this. They had other prisoners drug in, beaten.

And they had heard them curse and swear. And these guys are singing. And talking to their God. And they're listening. And the prisoners weren't the only ones listening.

Heaven was listening. God was listening. And in answer to their prayers and singing, God shook the earth. A violent earthquake suddenly shakes that prison.

The foundations were broken up. The doors of every cell were thrown open.

And everyone's chains, I suppose they were locked into the prison walls on shackles. And everyone's chains were broken loose. And they were all set free in the earthquake.

[17:05] And that was more than what the jailer could sleep through. He wakes up. And he saw the prison doors open. And in his excited state, he assumed that all of the prisoners that he had been charged to keep had escaped.

So he drew his sword and prepared to kill himself. You see, under Roman law, if you were put in charge of guarding a prisoner, and that prisoner escaped, then you served whatever that prisoner had coming.

If he's serving five years, then you serve five years. If he's serving life, then you serve life. And he thinks the whole prison's been emptied. He realizes what it will mean for him.

And the shame of it all is such that it's too much for him to bear. And in utter despair, he's ready to end his life. Suicide was common and accepted among the Romans.

Years earlier, years earlier, Brutus and Cassius had committed suicide right there in Philippi. Did you know suicide is the third leading cause of death among youth 15 to 24 years of age?

[18:19] How do young people, 15 to 24, die in our country? Well, there's accidents.

And then there's homicides. And then there's homicides. Murders. And then there's suicides. People taking their own lives.

More than die of cancer. More than die of AIDS. More than die of any other diseases. Life has become so hopeless and painful that death is viewed as an improvement, as a way out of their despair and pain.

People need the Lord. Young people need the Lord. This poor man in Philippi needs the Lord.

So his sword is drawn. He's ready to run himself through. He is a breath away from hell. And he almost jumped in himself. And a voice comes out of the darkness from his latest prisoner, Paul.

[19:28] Don't harm yourselves. We're all here. And I'm here to tell you that's the sound of the gospel. Do not harm yourself. The gospel comes to save you from harm.

It comes to do you good. Don't harm yourself. I've got good news for you. Here's a word that would save you from self-destruction.

So the jailer calls for lights. He rushes in. He falls trembling before his prisoners, Paul and Silas. He brought them out at once.

He put the question to them. You see, all the preparation work is now complete. God's been plowing up his heart, you see. Everything's in place.

The jailer at the end of his rope, ready to ask the most important question of his life and now standing before him are two men who can give him the right answer to his question.

[20:31] What a kind providence of God this night that seemed awful bothersome and troublesome to this jailer. Well, that's the background.

We come next to the question asked. The question was a simple one. It cuts straight to the quick. Sirs, what must I do to be saved? Here's a man who knows he's lost because he wants to be saved.

Well, saved from what? What's in this man's mind? Some say, well, he wanted to be saved from the authorities. Well, I don't believe it because, and saved from the punishment of the authorities for losing his prisoners.

He already sees that they're still there. Evidently, the fear of God has come upon them. Their whole prison's been shaped and they've seen these men singing and praying.

They didn't go anywhere. These are prisoners, hardened criminals. And he sees they're there. No, it's not the punishment for having lost his prisoners.

[21 : 33] It's rather, how can I be saved from the punishment that I know I deserve from the Most High God? Seems he'd heard something about Paul and Silas, that they were servants of the Most High God and they'd come to teach them the way to be saved.

Sirs, you know the way to be saved. What must I do to be saved? Paul says in Romans 1 that the very conscience of pagan sinners who've never had the Scriptures knows that they're guilty before the Most High God.

They know they're going to judgment. They know they're guilty. There is a conscience that condemns them. And he sees himself as a condemned sinner before the Most High God and wants to know what to do to be saved.

Now, when everything's going well, men are not concerned about this question. As I said, I doubt that this jailer ever asked that question before.

Another day at the office, another day with rounding up the prisoners and feeding them and bringing in new ones, releasing old ones. Activities in town, places to take the wife and children.

[22 : 47] Never asked, what must I do to be saved? But now his life has been shaken and the things that used to concern him are meaningless to him anymore.

He doesn't care about anything but one thing. What must I do to be saved? He's desperate. He's desperate. I wonder, unconverted friend, what will it take to bring you to ask this question with real interest in its answer?

To where nothing else matters in your life. Not a new house, not a new job, not a new boyfriend, new girlfriend. These things that consume you, your music, your entertainment, your sports, all the things that consume you, suddenly just are forgotten for the one thing needful.

I need to be right with God. I need to be saved. There's a judgment to come. I'm wrong with God. I'm a sinner. How can I be saved?

Do you realize, if you're unconverted this morning, that your pride is desperate? And if you saw your condition, you would be as desperate this morning as this Philippian jailer was that night.

[24 : 09] How is it between you and God? If you're outside of Christ, God has gone on record as saying, the soul that sins, it must die. The wages of sin is death.

He will not leave the guilty unpunished. Be sure your sin will find you out. Because of these things, the wrath of God is coming.

Whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. Whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him. But the cowardly and unbelieving and all liars will have their place in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death. Unless God's word is lying, some of you here this morning are a breath away from eternal destruction.

You ought to be asking the question, what must I do to be saved? It's a mercy.

[25 : 17] It's a mercy to be shaken. It's a mercy to have an earthquake shake you up and turn your life upside down and to bring you to the bottom to where you are wanting the answer.

What a mercy for this man. And we come to you this morning and say, don't harm yourself by rejecting the answer. Don't harm yourself by going on in your sin and ignoring your need.

Jesus comes to do you good in his gospel. God's the great director of events in your life. I wonder if he's been preparing you to bring you to an end of yourself.

Has he been making you see you need God? Has he shown you your sin and guilt and condemnation that you need a Savior? Don't kick against the pricks, against the goads of conscience.

Don't push away the Holy Spirit. He comes to bless you. The question, what must I do to be saved? Ask it. The answer given, thirdly, believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, you and your household.

[26 : 28] There's a command and a promise, isn't there? Very simply, a command and a promise. Command, believe in the Lord Jesus.

Oh, how different this is from so many answers that would be given today. Consider what the jailer would hear in many places today. Mr. Minister, what must I do to be saved? Oh, you need to clean up your life a bit.

You need to quit your swearing. You need to quit talking those dirty stories with the prisoners. You need to be faithful to your wife. You need to start going to church.

Mr. Minister, what must I do to be saved? What do you mean be saved? Don't you know God loves us all? Takes us all to heaven when we die. You're religious, aren't you?

All religions lead ultimately to heaven. Just be sincere. You're alright. You're not the bad ones. The real bad guys are the guys you got in prison there, Mr. Jailer.

[27 : 36] They need to be saved, but you haven't done anything really bad. How good it was for the jailer that he had Paul and Silas in front of him that day, rather than some of the preachers that would give him their answers today to his greatest question, the most important question, what must I do to be saved?

We're blessed too to have the answer right in front of us. It's simple. Believe in the Lord Jesus. Notice salvation is in a living person. The Lord Jesus.

The Master Jesus. Jesus is King. He's Lord and salvation is in Him. It's not in a creed. It's not in signing on to certain beliefs. It's not in joining a church.

It's not going through some ritual of baptism or of communion. It's by believing on a living person, the Lord Jesus Christ. The second person in the Godhead, the one who has been from eternity without beginning or end, who 2,000 years ago took on himself a human nature, was born of the Virgin Mary, lived a perfect life under the law of God, never stepped over the boundary of God's law, never came short of what God's law required, and with a perfect obedience laid down His life on a hillside outside Jerusalem.

He went to that cross and died as a substitute in the place of all His people. Everyone who would ever believe in Him from all time, their sins were punished in Him.

[29 : 15] Father, punish me for her, punish, give me what His sins have coming. And He took it Himself. He died. He rose again.

He ascended into heaven. And now He is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God through Him because He always lives to intercede for them.

Salvation's found in no one else. There's no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. Salvation's in the person. The Lord Jesus Christ. Believe in Him.

Just as salvation from God's flood in the time of Noah was in one place, the ark, so salvation in your time is found in one place.

Salvation from God's wrath, from hell, from sin, is found in one place. The ark of Christ. The person, Jesus Christ. Now, you say, how would the jailer know all of this?

[30 : 17] Whatever he heard of Paul's preaching beforehand, verse 32 tells us that Paul and Silas spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in the house.

They spoke to them more and more about Jesus, who He is and what He's done. He has salvation in a person. The Lord Jesus.

Secondly, a personal response to the message is required. In other words, if you are to be saved, then you must believe.

Believe on the Lord Jesus. That's a personal response. That's something you must do. Now, what does the Bible mean about believing on Jesus? What is this believing in order to be saved?

Well, it's more than believing some Bible facts in your head about Jesus. That's involved. You must certainly believe that He is who He claimed to be and what He did.

[31 : 19] But this alone is not saving faith in the Lord Jesus. You know, the demons have that kind of belief and they tremble. They know who He is. They know He's the Son of the Most High God.

They know salvation is found only in His name. They know all those facts, but it's not saving faith. They're not saved by that. No belief means trusting in Christ to save you.

It means putting your faith in Him. It means committing yourself to Him. Putting yourself into Jesus' hands. Letting go of your life and entrusting your life to Jesus to save you.

Calling on Him to save you. Let me seek to illustrate it this way. You're upstairs in a house that's on fire. fire. And fires raging on the inside such that there's no exit.

No way for you to go down and get out of the burning inferno. No. You go to the window and there's a strong man down below who's telling you to fall into his arms.

[32 : 22] Come on, just fall. I'll catch you. I'll catch you. And you're standing out on the window ledge and you're holding on to the window frame.

And you're looking down and you're seeing. You're looking back. There's no way that way. This is the only way. There's a man saying, I'll catch you. And you look at him and you see he's strong enough.

Yes. Big enough arms to catch me if I jump. And he looks kind. Sure, it's my father. He would not trick me. He would not walk away.

He would catch me if he says so. You can know all of that, but you will not be saved until you let go of the ledge and fall into his arms.

That's saving faith. That's believing on the Lord Jesus. You may know all about Jesus, all the facts about his virgin birth, his life, his death, his resurrection.

[33 : 23] You know all of that. You know that he would save you if you trusted him. But you're standing on the ledge. You will not be saved until you fall into his arms.

Until you believe on the Lord Jesus. Until you let go of anything that you can do. You've got to let go of your own self-righteousness.

You've got to let go of that high view of yourself that says, I'm not that bad of a person. So you've got to let go of that and come with nothing good to say for yourself and just fall into the arms of mercy.

I don't deserve to be saved, but save me for your mercy's sake. You've got to let go of all you've ever done for God, all you've ever done for neighbor, everything that you're trusting in to put you in good standing with God.

You've got to let go of it and fall on mercy alone. That's saving faith. You see, believing on the Lord Jesus is not some meritorious deed that you do.

[34 : 24] It's not that your faith is so, so amazing that God says, we must reward that with salvation. Faith is just the empty hand that receives the free gift of salvation.

Faith is just declaring bankruptcy and receiving all of His riches in Christ Jesus. You see, you're saved by His works, not your own.

And so saving faith is taking God at His word. What does He say? He says, I'm a sinner. I'm headed for eternal destruction because of my sin.

I believe that. He says that there is nothing that I can do to save myself from my predicament. I believe that. I cannot do anything to turn His wrath into love, to atone for my sin.

He says that Jesus will save me if I will trust Him. And I believe that, and I let go, and I fall into His arms.

[35 : 32] Saving faith. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Just take Him at His word. It's looking away from self. That's what Jesus said.

Like the serpent that was lifted up in the wilderness that everyone who had been bitten by the poisonous snakes might look and live. They had to look away from themselves, anything in them. And they looked to the Lord Jesus and were saved.

They looked to the serpent on the brazen pool. Jesus says, even so, the Son of Man has come that whosoever believes on Him might not perish, but have everlasting life.

Whoever believes, whoever looks to Him, whoever falls into His merciful arms. That's saving faith. And there's a promise attached to the answer.

Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, you and your household, upon believing all of Christ's goodness is put to your account and God looks and says, He's accepted in my Son.

[36 : 35] He's as clean as my Son. I accept Him. No more an enemy. Now a child loved by me. The promise, you will be saved. Salvation is promised for all who believe on Jesus.

Saved at once. You mean just like that? Do you mean I came in here a sinner and I can go out a saved person? That's right. At once. Pass from death unto life in a moment.

From guilty to forgiven. From condemned to accepted. From God's wrath to His favor. It's not like many churches would teach. Oh, this is a long, drawn out process, you see.

If you do enough religious deeds, well then you might be saved in the end. You're never really quite sure if you've done enough. No, here's the promise of a certain immediate salvation.

We can just hear this jailer say perhaps, but I've never been to church. Yesterday I was a cursing jailer. Believe on the Lord Jesus and you will be saved. Oh, but I've not changed my ways first. [37 : 44] I have nothing to bring but a wasted life. Believe on the Lord Jesus and you will be saved. Oh, but you don't know what I've done. The things that I've done.

The vilest offender who truly believes that moment from Jesus forgiveness receives. That moment of faith, of falling into His hands. He saves us forever and ever.

And He saves you and your household, He says. Believe on the Lord Jesus and you will be saved. This goes for you and your household. This is not just a special deal cut for you, Mr. Jailer.

It goes as well for your wife. It goes for your children. It goes for anywhere in your house. Whoever believes will be saved. Any children in His home who believed would be saved.

Young people, if you believe, you will be saved. Satan says, you're too young to believe and be saved. God says, whoever believes will be saved.

[38 : 46] What a promise for guilty, condemned sinners under God's wrath and curse for sinners of any age. Well, that's the answer. Believe on the Lord Jesus and you will be saved.

Well, what was His response? He's asked the question. He's heard the answer. It's both a command and a promise. What's His response? He obeyed the Gospel. He believed.

He and His whole family believed, verse 34 says. They all listened. They all believed. And they were all saved right there, right then, that night, that early morning. Not in a church building.

They didn't have to walk an aisle. They didn't have to go into some special prayer room. They just believed on the spot and were saved immediately. Now, how do we know other than the fact that the Scripture tells us this?

Were there any evidences? Was there any proof that this had really happened and He was really saved? Because, you know, the Bible says when a man believes on the Lord Jesus Christ and is saved, he becomes a new creation.

[39 : 53] The old has passed away. Behold, all things have become new. He's a different man. Was that true with this man? Yes. There were three marks of new life in Him.

First, His active compassion for Paul and Silas. What compassion He has for them now before He threw them into the stocks, treated them as scum. At that late hour, now early morning, He washed their wounds.

He brought them out of the stinking prison and into His own home. And He set a meal before them. What compassion. That's a mark that new life has come to this jailer.

Secondly, His baptism. Verse 33 says, He and His family were baptized. You see, when someone is saved, they want to obey Christ's command to be baptized. They want to identify with Jesus, their Savior, whatever that costs, whatever that might mean.

Yes. Here is another mark. The sign showing this is a new man. He's ready to identify Himself as a follower of Jesus Christ in a pagan city like Philippi.

[41 : 04] And thirdly, we see His joy. Verse 34, He was filled with joy because He had come to believe in God. Just minutes before, He was so full of despair, He's ready to end His life.

What an emotional swing is this. He's as low as He's ever been. And now He's as high as He's ever been. He had come to believe in God. He's at peace with God.

The Most High God looks on Him with favor now. And He can live out His life and He can anticipate eternity under the favor of God. You see, His greatest life, His greatest problem in life has been settled.

His great question answered. He now has His sins forgiven. Guilt gone. God, His friend. So He's ready for anything.

He's ready to live now. He's ready to be a jailer for the first time in His life. He's ready to live. He's ready to die. Are you? You ready to live? Ready to die?

[42 : 12] He does it with great joy because He'd come to believe in God. That's a note we see throughout the book of Acts. Philip proclaims Christ in the Samaritan city and it says there was great joy in that city.

Why? Because the gospel comes and says do not harm thyself. The gospel comes with good news and wherever the gospel goes it leaves people behind with great joy. All who taste and see that the Lord is good leave with great joy.

The Ethiopian eunuch believed on Christ and was baptized in Acts 8 and he went on his way rejoicing. Went on his way rejoicing. And there was added joy here for this Philippian jailer because

his whole family had come to believe.

What an added joy is that? Not just him right with God but the circle of his family at home is complete and they all believed in the Lord Jesus.

He was a breath away from hell. He and his family and now they all are saved and will be forever in heaven together with Christ.

[43:21] What a difference one hour made in the life of this man and his family. So that was his response. He believed and was saved and he did it the first time he ever heard the gospel.

Isn't that something? God had prepared the ground that well that as soon as the seed fell in it sprung up with the response of faith. This is God's doing.

But I wonder about you. Have you been saved? Were you saved the first time you heard the gospel? Some of you must hang your head in shame and say I'm not saved yet and I've heard it preached every week.

My parents have talked about Christ all my life and I'm still not saved. Still not a baptized member of the church identifying myself openly as a follower of Jesus.

You're like that person on the window ledge. You know you're a sinner. You know you can't save yourself. You know only Jesus can. But you won't fall into his arms.

[44:28] You won't make that step of trusting him, of committing your life into his hands. Why not? Why do you hold on to the ledge? Because I'm too young you might say.

Oh did you not see here? Whoever believes will be saved. You say I'm too bad. The blood of Jesus God's Son cleanses us from all sins.

Do you know his blood has more merit in it than your sins have demerit? He's a greater Savior than you are a sinner. He has more grace than you do sin.

He suffered enough, paid enough, obeyed enough to save you. Where your sin abounds, his grace much more abounds. Do you know that his blood has saved adulterers, murderers, perjurers, persecutors, liars, child molesters, self-righteous, hardened Pharisees.

He saved all that fell into his arms. Every single one that came and trusted in him. He saved them all. And if you fall into his arms, he'll save you.

[45:38] He'll save you. And all the while you do not believe you are adding to your sin the greatest sin of all, that of not believing on the name of God's one and only Son.

This is the record that we have. That God has placed eternal life in His Son. He who has the Son has life, and he who has not the Son has not life.

And you have not yet believed the record. You have not yet believed on the Son. You're adding to your sin as you cling to the ledge.

You say, oh, it's too hard. It's too hard to trust in Jesus. It's too hard to let go of my high view of myself. Yes, that's right. With man, this is impossible, but with God, all things are possible.

Salvation itself, impossible to you, but with God, all things are possible. Or you might say, oh, it's too easy. Surely there's something I must do.

[46:44] It can't be this easy of just falling into Jesus' arms. Surely I've got to do something. Well, that's your problem. That's why you linger.

You need to see it is as free as the Gospel says it is. You come without money and buy. What kind of store is this where everything's free?

Grace, forgiveness, eternal life. I ask you, when you say, surely I must clean up my life, do you say that about your shower?

Do you say, before I will go into the shower, I must clean up myself a little bit before I shower? Or is it not rather why you go into the shower to be cleansed by the shower? Do you treat your physician that way?

When you're sick and you need to see a doctor, do you wait and say, I can't go to the doctor yet, I need to get better a little bit, and then I can go to the doctor? Or do you not call him and say, I need an appointment, I need to come in, I'm sick.

[47:46] And you come because you need the physician's healing. Even so, it's not the healthy who need a physician, but the sick.

And I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance, Jesus says. You don't wait until you're better to come to Christ. We sang it in that hymn this morning, if you tarry until you're better, you will never come at all.

And some have been tarrying on the ledge for years, and you're just waiting. I don't know what for. But you're in as much bondage as that slave girl who was held by an evil spirit.

As long as you were holding on to something and not trusting in the Son of God, you are in bondage. You need to be set free this morning.

You need to come to Christ right now. Forsake your excuses. See them all as wicked excuses.

Procrastination, lingering, tearing till you're better. You will never come at all.

[48:47] The shower does the cleansing. The doctor does the healing. The Savior does the saving. So you come just as you are and you say, Save me. Here I am. You know exactly what I am.

Take me and save me for your mercy's sake. Magnify your love and grace in this poor sinner. Right now, I come and trust in you. Naaman was the captain of a Syrian army.

And he had leprosy. And in one of their raiding trips into Israel, he captured and kidnapped a young girl from Israel.

And she's now the servant of Mrs. Naaman. And Mrs. Naaman is very sad because her husband has cancer. And the little girl knows there's a God in Israel.

And she knows there are prophets of God in Israel who have done miraculous things by the power of God. And she says to Mrs. Naaman, If only my master would go to Israel.

[49:57] There is one there that could heal him. And so she tells Mr. Naaman and he talks to the king and the king writes a letter to the king of Israel and says, I'm sending my captain down to be healed.

And the king sees the letter and thinks, oh no, they're trying to pick a fight. I can't heal this man of leprosy. Then someone tells him, well, there's a prophet of God, Elisha, who does that sort of thing. And so they send him to the prophet's house. And he rolls up with all his entourage of chariots and gifts in front of the prophet's little house.

And he expects the prophet to come out and do a special incantation and pronounce him healed.

And nothing of the sort happens. He just sends his little servant out to say, go wash seven times in the Jordan and you'll be healed.

And he's put out. He's offended. We've got rivers at home cleaner than the Jordan. And what do you think you're telling me to wash in this river and be healed? And he heads right back for Syria.

[51:04] And I should think he would have been in Syria and died of leprosy had it not been for his servants. He said, do yourself no harm. Think about it, Naaman.

Think about it. If the prophet's servant had said to do something difficult, crawl on your knees all the way back to Syria, you'd have done it. But because he said something so easy as just going into a dirty river and dunking down seven times, you won't do it.

Are you not being foolish? Are you not counting it offensive to you because it's so easy? Oh, humble yourself and come on, let's go back and have a dip.

And they persuaded him. And the chariots are turned around and back to the dirty Jordan he goes and down once, down twice, up still leprosy, three, four, five, six times still leprosy, but on the seventh time he came out clean.

Some of you have been told you need to come to Christ and let go of all other trust and just fall upon him and say, Jesus saved me, I don't deserve it. And you're saying, that's too easy.

[52:18] That's too easy. If he had told you you need to attend church three times a day on the Lord's Day for five years and give a tenth of your money and keep the Ten Commandments and the golden rule, you'd still be trying.

You'd still be lost. Once you come to Christ, the terms are His. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.

Let's pray. And know that you can call upon the Lord from your own seat right there and be saved this morning, even as that Philippian family called on Him that night in the privacy of their own home.

Let's pray silently, have dealings with our God. Give us help, Lord. We are so weak.

We have children. We have friends. We have friends. If we could, we'd push them off the ledge and push them into Jesus' arms. But that's not saving faith. They must believe. Oh, would you be so merciful as to bring the lost to see their need of Christ and to see how Christ perfectly meets their need as a sinner.

[53:33] Bring them this day, right now, to believe on the Lord Jesus. Send people home that came lost.

Send them home rejoicing in your great salvation. And Lord Jesus, we who have known you some for months, some for years, decades, thank you for what you have done to save us.

We rest our whole weight for time and eternity upon you and your work. And thank you for such a gracious salvation, such a gracious Savior that you are.

[illegible]