

The Conversion of the Philippian Jailer

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[0:00] Acts chapter 16, and we'll be reading verses 16 through 40 today. 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. 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 they are throwing our city into an uproar by advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice.

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 to 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 shaking. 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 all the others in his house.

[2:37] 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 they threw us into prison and now 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 the brothers and encouraged them.

Then they left. Well, the apostle Paul was once a sinner. He killed Christians. He imprisoned them. He hated Christ and his church and he came just as he was to Jesus and was saved. He believed this gospel that Charlie's been telling us of. And then he went over the then known world, preaching that gospel. All throughout Europe is where Paul went. And you know that there were hundreds of people who believed the gospel and were saved. And that's recorded for us in the book of Acts. But the book of Acts does not record for us many conversions in great detail. It will just say that a great number were saved and maybe mentioning the names of one or two. But only a few of these conversions are recorded for us in any detail.

And this account of the jailer at Philippi is one of those conversions that is recorded with great detail for us. That says to me there is something here that God wants us to sit up and take notice of.

There are lessons in this conversion that we need to know and need to profit from. Now here is a man who woke up in the middle of the night as lost in sin as any man ever was.

[5 : 25] Ignorant of the way to be saved from God's eternal wrath. Just a breath away from eternity in hell. But before the morning sun arose, this same man became a different man.

Forgiven. Right with God. Saved. And so just a breath away from heaven. And we'll see in this chapter how it was that this happened so quickly on this eventful night.

Well we don't even know the man's name, do we? But what we do know is the question that he asked. And we know the answer he was given and I think it's for that reason that God has recorded this conversion with such great detail.

God wants us to know this question and its answer and to act upon it. Well, I wonder if you've ever seriously asked this question.

There's no more question more important than this one. What must I do to be saved? Now I'm sure you've noticed that not a whole lot of people are asking this question today.

[6 : 45] They're taken up and occupied with many other questions. What must I do to look better? Be liked by more guys, more girls.

What must I do to make more money? To have the money I need to buy what I want? To get ahead in life. Or what must I do to have a happy marriage?

To raise good kids? To have a self-fulfilled life? What must I do to have better health? To live longer?

These are the kinds of questions that preoccupy people and preoccupy them so much that they never get around to asking the real important question, which is, what must I do to be saved?

I doubt that this jailer ever asked that question before this one night. God literally had to shake the earth beneath him.

[7 : 48] He had to turn his world upside down. He had to shake him to the core to draw this question from his trembling lips. And he didn't ask this question out of the blue.

It wasn't that he woke up one day and just as he was sipping coffee thought, wonder what I'd have to do to be saved? It didn't happen that way. As Charlie's been saying to us, just like a farmer works the soil, preparing it for the seed.

So God had some working to do, first of all, in the jailer's own heart to get him ready, to get him to the point where he would ask this question with full earnestness.

And then God also had some preparing to do in that he had two guys from over a thousand miles away to get to this man's prison so that they could answer his question that he would ask.

And so we're noting, first of all, God's preparing circumstances. God is preparing the ground. Now this jailer lives in Philippi.

[8 : 57] There was no Christian church there. The one true God was not known there. The gods of the Roman and Greek mythologies were worshipped there, Zeus and Hermes, and even the emperor was worshipped.

And so it was a place of superstition and witchcraft, of evil spirits and fortune tellers, a place where Satan had his seat.

There was even a slave girl, we're told, who was possessed by an evil spirit. And through that evil spirit, she was able to give people's fortunes and she made a whole lot of money for her owners.

Spiritual darkness reigned in Philippi. This was the city of this jailer. He and everyone living there lived out their days in sin and darkness on their way to hell, not knowing the way to heaven.

And so into town comes two men sent there by the risen Christ. And they come with the light, the knowledge of the Lord Jesus.

[10 : 08] Their names, Paul and Silas. And this demon possessed girl followed them around town, shouting over and over, these men are servants of the Most High God who are telling you the way to be saved.

And she did this day after day. Now she was right. That's who they were, servants of the Most High God. She was right.

That's what they were doing, telling them the way to be saved. Finally, Paul was so bothered that he turned around and commanded the spirit to leave in the name of Jesus Christ and it did so at once.

Now why was he so upset? If what they said was true or what she said was true, was this not free advertising for the gospel? Well, you laugh.

It's considering who it's coming from, isn't it? It's coming from a demon possessed fortune teller. And everyone knew about her.

[11:18] It would be like O.J. Simpson advertising your product. Thanks, but no thanks. It's not the endorsement I was looking for. It would do more harm for our product than good. And that's the way Paul saw it.

He did not want in any way to besmirch the gospel of Jesus Christ with an evil spirit promoting it. And so he cast the spirit out of the girl and it left at once.

Well, when that happened, these owners of the slave girl saw that their profitable venture just had gone up in smoke. She's no good to them without an evil spirit. You just see the way sin causes people to use people.

That's what they were doing with her. And so they seized Paul and Silas, dragged them into the marketplace, falsely accused them before the authorities as enemies of Rome, teaching things that were unlawful.

They stirred up the whole crowd. Finally, the rulers had them stripped and their bare backs broken open with rods as they were beaten. And it's then that our jailer first got to meet Paul and Silas as they were thrown into his prison to be kept by him.

[12:34] Now, he probably had heard about them. They had been preaching for many days in Philippi. And indeed, the whole city was stirred up by their presence.

But now he seized them. And what a sight to behold, having been severely flogged. Their backs were a bloodied mess. So these are the servants of the Most High God, teaching us the way to be saved.

Are they? They rather look like men who themselves need to be saved. And so he throws them into the inner cell, the most secure place in all the prison.

He locks down the stocks on their feet, which would not only make them more secure, but which was a form of torture, holding them in an uncomfortable position. And having locked all his prisoners secure for the night, the jailer goes to bed.

In one sense, it was just another day at the jail. But he's about to see that something is different about these prisoners and indeed about this night.

[13:44] Now, understandably, Paul and Silas could not sleep. Their backs were beaten raw. And they're sitting in the stocks, their feet in the stocks.

The only way to sleep is on your back. We are not amazed that they're not sleeping. They're probably sitting up. And the Bible says they were doing something else that strikes us as strange. They were praising God and praying and singing hymns to God. What doesn't strike us is that the other prisoners weren't sleeping either, that they were listening.

This is not something common to see men beaten and praising and singing, praying to their God. You know, don't you, that the world is watching to see how Christians suffer?

They were watching. They were listening. What's that? What are these men doing? And they were not the only ones listening. Indeed, God in heaven was listening.

[14:48] And he answered with an earthquake that was so violent that it shook the foundations of the prison. And it jiggled loose, all the chains perhaps anchored into the walls, threw open every door.

And this wakes up the jailer. And he sees the prison doors open. And in his excited state, he just assumed if prison doors are open, the prisoners are gone.

And so he draws his sword and was about to kill himself. Because Roman law said that if anyone escaped at your watch care, you have to suffer the fate that that prisoner should have suffered.

If those men were in prison for life, you would need now to serve for life. If they were to be executed, you would be executed. And so this together with the shame of it all was too much for him to bear.

His whole life is suddenly turned upside down just in a moment. And in utter despair, he's ready to end his life. Now, suicide was common in Philippi, indeed the Roman world.

[16:04] Ten years earlier or so, Brutus and Cassius had committed suicide right there in Philippi. It was an acceptable way to end your life. Suicide is the third leading cause of death among young people today in our country, ages 15 through 24.

How do youth die in our country? Number one, accidents. Number two, homicides. They're killed by another intentionally. And third, suicide.

More than die of cancer. More than die of cancer. More than die of AIDS. More than die of any other diseases. Life simply gets so painful and so hopeless that death is viewed as an improvement, a way out of despair and the pain of it all.

Sadly, forgetful or ignorant of the hell to follow. They take their own lives. Folks, people need the Lord today as much as this jailer of old.

And so his sword's drawn. He's ready to run himself through just a second away from eternal torments. He almost jumped into hell, we would say. And he hears a shout from this latest prisoner, Paul.

[17 : 26] Don't harm yourself. We're all here. Some say that was the bigger miracle of the night. The fact that the prisoners didn't leave when the doors were open. And perhaps just awestruck with what they'd just heard, seen, felt.

There's something here going on. Well, a jailer calls for lights. He rushed in, fell trembling before his prisoners. And he brought them out. Paul and Silas brought them out and at once put the question to them.

And all the preparation, you see, is now complete. It was quick working up of the soil. And now the question tumbles out of his heart and lips. He's at the end of his rope.

He's ready to ask the most important question in life. And standing before him are two men who've traveled over a thousand miles who are able to answer his question.

Can you see the kindness of God's providence? Well, the question asked is the second point this morning. Sirs, what must I do to be saved? What must I do to be saved?

[18 : 40] This isn't a theoretical question. This man knows he's lost and needs to be saved. Saved from what? He's not talking about the punishment of Rome.

The prisoners are all here. He's just been told that. No, it's from the punishment he knows he deserves from the Most High God. You know, Romans 1 says, even the pagans who've never had a Bible preached to them or read to them, they know that there is a judgment.

There is a judge and that they have sinned against him. They know, Romans 2, the accusings of a guilty conscience for the way that they live. But this man knows he's lost, knows he needs to be saved.

It seems he might have heard something about Paul and Silas, that they were servants of the Most High God who have come to tell you the way to be saved. Perhaps they even heard of that testimony coming from the lips of that girl possessed by the evil spirit.

But he's convinced. I'm lost. I'm not ready to die. I need to be saved.

[19 : 55] You know, when everything's going right in life, you are interested in this question. God had to shake this man and he is now shaken.

Do you see the kindness of God in shaking people? The kindness of God in getting them off of their preoccupations to become occupied with the one important thing.

That's what God has done here. The unconverted friend, I wonder if you know that Satan works overtime to keep you from considering this question.

He keeps you preoccupied with the other questions of life. To divert you from the most important question. What must I do to be saved?

The reality is that apart from Christ, you're not prepared to live or to die. The word has gone out from the courtroom of heaven. The soul that sins, it shall die. The wages of sin is death.

[20 : 57] I will by no means clear the guilty. Be sure your sin will find you out. Because of these things, the wrath of God is coming. And you know that death would take you to hell.

Where you would suffer forever under God's wrath. Some of you are just a breath away this morning. Right now as you sit in your seat, you are one breath away from that forever and ever. And yet you are not bothered by it. You're not even asking this question. You're not thinking about your need. You get in your car and you go out on that highway.

The number one cause of death to young people. And you drive without thinking. Just one breath away from eternal torments. What a mercy when God shakes a man or woman and says, No, your greatest need is to be right with me.

To answer this question. What must I do to be saved? You know it's God who directs the situations in our life.

[22 : 02] It's God who is the preparer of the soil. It's God who brings people and circumstances in our lives that lifts our head up to this one most important question.

Has he been arranging things in your life to bring you to an end of yourself? Has he been making you feel your need for God?

Your guilt and condemnation? Oh, then don't harm yourself by ignoring your need. By walking away in your sin. To ignore him now is to ignore the one who comes with salvation to give you freely.

Finally. So the question asked, What must I do to be saved? The answer given, Believe in the Lord Jesus and you shall be saved.

You and your household. Now there's a command and a promise in the answer, isn't there? Believe in the Lord Jesus is the command. And I'm struck with how different this answer from Paul and Silas is from what would be given from many a pulpit today.

[23 : 14] Take this same question and go into a church. What must I do to be saved? And the preacher would say, Well, you need to clean up your life, Mr. Jailer. You need to stop swearing.

You need to quit being so gruff and treat others with kindness. You need to live by the golden rule. Live by the Ten Commandments. And start going to church. Try your best.

Trust. God will understand. Had he got that answer, he'd still be lost. Or another pulpit answers, What do you mean, be saved?

Don't you know God loves us all? God wouldn't send anyone to hell. Stop this talk about being lost, needing to be saved. Yes, that's the answer given for many a pulpit.

Or you're religious, aren't you? I mean, you have your gods there. Didn't I see idols in your home? All religions lead to heaven. Just be sincere.

[24 : 16] You'll be all right. Oh, how good it was that this jailer had none other than Paul and Silas, men who had themselves heard and believed the true saving gospel about Jesus, to give it to them straight up.

Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. That's what you need to do to be saved. Well, don't overlook the simplicity of their message.

Notice, number one, salvation is in a living person, the Lord Jesus himself. Salvation is not in agreeing to a creed, a statement of faith, that if I can answer, what does the Bible teach that I am thereby saved?

Not at all. Salvation is not in going to church, joining a church, going through some religious ritual like baptism. Salvation is believing in a living person who is the Lord, Lord of everything, even Jesus.

He's the second person of the Godhead, the one who was from everlasting, who never had a beginning. Two thousand years ago, that eternal second person of the Godhead became man, took our flesh, became a human being, grew up, kept every command of God perfectly, and then went to the cross to die there under God's wrath, suffering the punishment that all God's people deserved.

[25 : 48] Who are all God's people? They are those who believe in Jesus. And he suffered the punishment they deserved. He took their hell at Calvary.

And then God raised him from the dead, showing he had accepted his son's sacrifice. And the debt had been paid. And now he sits at God's right hand.

And from there, he is sending his Holy Spirit to convict men and women of their sin, opening their hearts to believe the gospel.

The living Lord, able to save completely those who come unto God through him, because he always lives to make intercession for them. He himself is the answer to man's greatest problem, man's greatest need.

Salvation is found in no one else. There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. Salvation is in the Lord Jesus.

[26 : 53] Just as salvation from the flood in Noah's day was in the ark. You had to get into the ark to be saved from the flood. You have to get into Christ to be saved from God's eternal wrath.

It's the one place that God is satisfied with sinners. It's in Christ. Believe in the Lord Jesus.

Now you say, how did the jailer know all this about Jesus? Well, this is just the summary. Believe in the Lord Jesus. The Bible says in verse 32 that that they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house.

They said a whole lot more than just believe in the Lord Jesus. They had to explain to him who the Lord Jesus was. And what he had done for sinners. And this they did to him and his whole household.

The word of the Lord was preached to them. The word about Jesus, who he is, and what he has done to save sinners. So that's the first thing. Salvation is in a person.

[27:58] Jesus Christ. The second thing is that a personal response to the gospel is required. If you are to be saved, you must believe.

Believe on the Lord Jesus is the command. Now what does the Bible mean by believing on the Lord Jesus or believing in the Lord Jesus in order to be saved?

Well, it's more than just believing in some facts about Jesus, isn't it? You can say, I believe that Jesus is eternal God.

I believe that he came to save sinners from their sin. I believe Jesus suffered on the cross as the substitute instead of sinners. I believe that whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. You can believe all that and a whole lot more and still be lost. Because it's not just believing facts about Jesus.

[28:56] Yes, that's included, but you must do more than just believe truths about Jesus. It doesn't say believe truths about Jesus. It says believe in the Lord Jesus himself, doesn't it?

The demons have this kind of faith, this kind of belief. They believe all that about Jesus too. Remember, they're the ones that told this girl, these are servants of the Most High God who are telling you the way to be saved.

The demons know that and tremble, but they are not saved. No, believing on Christ is more than just believing some truths about him. Believing means trusting in Christ alone to save you.

Believing means putting all your weight on him. Just putting your weight on him to save you. It means taking him at his word.

It means committing yourself into Jesus' hands to save you. Calling on him to save you. We could illustrate it this way.

[30:03] Indeed, Charles Spurgeon illustrated it this way. He said, consider yourself upstairs in a house that's on fire. And the fire is raging within. It's got you trapped in your upstairs bedroom, shutting off all other ways of escape.

And you go to the window and you stand there on the window ledge. And you're hanging on to the window frame. And there you are, perched. And down below you is a fireman.

A big, strong man. And he says, jump, and I'll catch you. Jump, and I'll catch you.

Now you may believe he's strong enough to catch you. You may believe he's kind enough that he would not miss and drop you. But you'll not be saved, will you?

Until you abandon all other ways of escape. And until you let go of everything. And just fall into his arms.

[31:09] That's believing. That's trusting. That's falling into Jesus' arms. To have him save you. So you must let go of all your own self-righteousness.

All your own doings. Things that you thought, if I do this and this, God might accept me. You've got to let go of that. That's proud self-righteousness. You've got to let go of trusting in your own religion. Your own obedience. Your own pride. Your own high view of yourself. You've got to come with nothing good to say about yourself. But Jesus, here comes a sinner. Save me. Have mercy on me, the sinner.

And you fall into his arms. You see, believing is not some strong, meritorious work. It's not that believing is something so great that God looks at and says, wow, she's believed on me.

I'm going to save her. Believing is falling into the arms of another. Believing is the empty hands that we hold out to receive Christ, who is salvation.

[32:17] Believing is recognizing there's nothing that I can do to save myself. And I come to Jesus to have him save me. I leave the entire business of my salvation in his hands.

Have you believed? Faith looks away from anything in ourselves and looks away to Christ. Do you remember that story in the Old Testament about the Israelites who grumbled and complained and God sent the poisonous snakes into the camp and they bit the Israelites and they died.

Some of them died. Others were dying. And God told Moses, put up a bronze snake on a pole where all can see it. And if anyone is bitten, have them look at the snake on the pole and they will live.

Looking is believing. And that's why Jesus said, just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness and whoever looked lived, even so the Son of Man must be lifted up so that whosoever believes in him, whoever looks and believes on him, will not perish but have everlasting life.

John 3.15. You see, looking is believing. Now, what is there to brag about looking? What is there to think that that's such a glorious thing that I deserve to be saved?

[33 : 50] I looked. No, looking is to declare there's nothing here for me to hope in salvation. I'm looking there. I'm looking all at Christ and expecting life from him.

So that's the command of the gospel. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. And then the promise follows.

The promise, and you will be saved, you and your household. Salvation is promised for all who believe on Christ. Saved at once.

You mean just like that? Immediately upon believing, you're saved. That's what he says. Exactly. Pass from death to life, from guilty to forgiven, from condemned to accepted, from God's wrath to his eternal favor.

It's not a long, drawn-out process whereby you have to prove to God that you're serious. No, no. You believe on him, you're saved. That's the promise.

[34 : 59] Immediate salvation. But I've never been to church. Yesterday I was a cursing jailer. Believe on the Lord Jesus and you will be saved. But I've not changed my ways yet.

I have nothing to bring to Christ but a wasted life. Believe on the Lord Jesus and you will be saved. But you don't know what I've done.

The vilest offender who truly believes that moment from Jesus forgiveness receives. Just believe and you will be saved.

You and your household. You know what that tells me? This salvation was not just a deal struck for this jailer. This salvation promise is for anyone who believes. It's for you, jailer.

It's for your family, jailer. It's for your neighbors. It's for these prisoners. It's for anyone who will believe. You will be saved. Whoever believes shall not perish but have everlasting life.

[36 : 04] Any children in your home, if they believe, they will be saved. Any young people? If you believe, young people, you will be saved.

Satan says, you're too young to be saved. God says, believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved. What a promise for guilty, condemned sinners under God's wrath and curse to have such a gospel set before us.

Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved. You know, it's not enough to ask the most important question and to have the right answer to it.

It's not enough. Everybody in this room knows the most important question, knows the answer. that doesn't mean that everyone is saved.

A response is needed, isn't it? How did this man respond? How did this jailer respond? Well, we're not left to guess, are we? He obeyed the gospel.

[37 : 16] He asked the question. He heard the answer. And he believed. He and his whole family believed. They all listened. They all believed. And they were all baptized.

They were all saved. Right there, right then, in the middle of the night. They weren't in a church building. They didn't have to walk an aisle. They just believed on the spot.

They were saved on the spot. Their eternal destiny changed from hell to heaven. Slave to free, guilty to righteous, lost to saved. And then the evidence of their salvation followed.

The proof that they were saved came afterwards. Don't mix up the two. Don't think, I have to give proof of my salvation in order to get saved. That's backwards.

They came as sinners. Jesus saved them. And when Jesus saves someone, it changes the person. It makes them different. This jailer was changed. He was changed. Spurgeon says, when God saves a man, his family and those around him can tell it because of how it changes their hearts and lives.

[38 : 32] He said that he figured that after two weeks, even your cat will know it. This isn't the same master I have. He's a different man. Well, what were some of the proofs?

What were some of the marks that this jailer truly was a new man in Christ now with the new life within? Well, first, his active compassion for Paul and Silas.

His active compassion. It says, at that hour, this is in the middle of the night, middle of the early morning, he washed their wounds. He brought them out of their stinking dungeon and put them into his own home.

He set a meal before them. Active love for the followers of Jesus is a sign of being saved. You read that all through 1 John. Love of the brethren.

And this man who didn't give two hoots for Paul and Silas when he went to bed, now is sharing everything in his house with them. That's a sign of new life. The second thing that was a sign of new life was his baptism.

[39 : 37] He and his family were baptized. They all believed. They all were baptized. When someone is saved, they want to obey Christ's command to be baptized. They want to confess him as their Lord.

I have believed on Jesus as Lord. He's mine. I'm his. And I don't care what the consequences are of people knowing that.

I don't care how these prisoners are going to giggle at me for being baptized, says the jailer. I don't care what my ruffian soldier friends are going to think of me. Jesus has saved me.

I want to identify with him. That's a sign that new life has come to this man. Have you come to believe in Jesus and have not yet been baptized?

Whoever is ashamed of me and my words, I will be ashamed of him, Jesus says. But whoever is not ashamed of me and my words, I will not be ashamed of him when we come before the judge of the universe.

[40 : 41] The third mark of his conversion is his joy. How do we know this man was truly saved? Well, his love for the saints, his baptism, his joy.

He was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God. Think of the joy of this man. Just moments earlier, he was in such despair, he was ready to end his life.

And now he knows the burden is gone. Gone, gone, gone. Yes, my sins are gone. All the guilt, the condemnation, it's gone. And this living God is my God.

I have these dead idols, they're worthless, but I've come to believe in the living God and in his son, Jesus Christ. He was filled with joy.

When a man is saved, he has a new joy. His greatest problem has been solved. His greatest problem has been settled. His sin is taken away. He's made right with God.

[41 : 43] He's ready to live now. He's ready for whatever faces him in life now. He's got the living God with him.

He's ready to die now. He's ready to go to the judgment now. Because he goes there not alone, but with Jesus to present his cause before the Father's throne. And that's what gives him joy.

It's interesting to read through the book of Acts and you see these preachers going into a city and over and over it says that someone believes and then there was great joy in that city.

You know that's always the effect of the gospel. It brings joy. You see what Jesus comes to bring this morning is not sadness and sorrow. He comes to bring joy.

This man had his cup full. The added joy was that his whole family had come to believe and was saved. What a mercy to see God transform not just a dad but a wife and children and slaves and servants.

[42 : 48] Whoever was in that household, all of them believed. What a difference one hour made him this man's life in his family. So this was the response of the jailer.

He believed and was saved. What's your response? How do you respond to such a message?

A command to believe in the Lord Jesus. A promise you will be saved. Have you savingly believed or are you still on the window ledge?

And you've heard the answer, you know the answer and you're still there. You're lingering on the ledge. You know there's no hope anywhere else to save you but you're still holding on.

Can I ask you what's in your hand? What is worth holding on to? To not fall into the arms of Jesus and have him save you lock, stock and barrel the whole thing his work.

[43 : 52] What is it? What is so valuable that you would treasure it as more important than being right with God having Christ as your friend and brother his spirit living in you for the rest of time and eternity to know the Lord to be forgiven of sin?

Oh, don't linger on the ledge. Some linger because they say I'm too young. When I grow up I'll be saved. When I get to such and such an age then I intend to be saved. Would you see from my text this morning children that even children in this home believed and were baptized?

It's been a wonderful thing at Grace Fellowship Church to hear children come and say Pastor John I've called upon the Lord to save me and I believe he has.

I want to be baptized. Children taking God at his word falling into the arms of Jesus to have him save them wanting to be baptized.

Christ. Why do you linger on the ledge? No, you're not too young to be saved. Not if you will believe on Jesus Christ. Well, I'm too bad.

[45 : 12] Though your sins be like scarlet they shall be as white as snow. The blood of Jesus God's own Son cleanses from every sin. Your sin.

There's more merit in Christ's blood than there is sin in you. He is more full of grace than you are of sin. Where sin abounds grace super abounds. He suffered enough.

He paid enough. He obeyed enough to save you. He saved murderers. He saved drunkards. He saved prostitutes.

He saved child molesters and liars and self-righteous religious people and hardened sinners. He saved everyone who's come to Him believing.

He saved everyone who has fallen into His arms. Many of them are here this morning and they'd say Jesus is my only plea my only hope and He saved me when I called on Him for mercy.

[46 : 13] He's willing and ready to save you if you will just fall in His arms and expect all salvation to come from Him. Do you know that all the while you hang on you are committing the biggest sin?

You are spending another moment rejecting the Savior and there is no greater sin than rejecting God's Son given to save sinners.

Do you know the hottest places in hell are not for the pornographers the homosexuals the adulterers the hottest places in hell are for people who heard the answer to their greatest need and reject it.

You can reject it with your fist in the air or you can just reject it saying I'm just not interested but it's rejection. Why do you stay?

Why do you linger? I'm too young I'm too bad it's too hard falling into the arms of Jesus is too hard it's too easy it's too easy the only thing it's too easy for is man's pride that thinks I've got to earn my I've got to do something to make God show me mercy.

[47 : 41] Surely I must get a little cleaner before I come to Christ. I don't know how many people struggle with that obstacle in the way I must get a little cleaner I've got to fix this part of my life before I come to Christ.

I want to show you how foolish that is. Do you get a little cleaner before you come to the shower? Or is that not why you come to the shower? To clean you.

Is that not why showers exist? He is a fountain open for sin and uncleanness plunge yourself in and be cleansed. Do you know anybody that waits till they're better before they go to the doctor?

I've got to get a little better before I go see doc. No. Don't doctors exist to go and to be diagnosed and receive the remedy and to be made better? And this is the great physician who's come not to save the righteous but the unrighteous.

And isn't he called the Savior? Do you have to save yourself before you come to the Savior? Do you have to do something to where you fix your problems so that when you come to Christ you don't need him anymore?

[49 : 08] He exists for sinners. dirty sinners. Sick sin sinners. Dead sinners. He's the Savior.

Come and let him do the saving. Come this morning. Believe on him and you will be saved. Let's pray. Father, it was your great love that sent the Lord Jesus to be the Savior's sinners and we acknowledge what love that was that gave your best for earth's worst.

Lord Jesus, you voluntarily came to suffer the damnation, the wrath of God that we deserved. And we are humbled at such love.

And then you further wrote down this conversion that we might not miss the simplicity and yet the utter importance of the gospel that we need to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ in order to be saved.

Oh, forgive us for the ways that we have confused the gospel and the ways that we have rejected you and the ways we've stayed away, the ways we've looked to ourselves and thought we'd clean ourselves up or make ourselves better.

[50 : 36] If you tarry till you're better, you will never come at all. Thank you for breaking into our lives and bringing us to an end of ourselves, even like this jailer. And so many of us have come with nothing to offer but our sin sick lives and you took us and you saved us.

Thank you for that. Do the same for others here this morning. Break through all their obstacles and give them to let go and to fall into the arms of Jesus this morning.

We ask for their eternal salvation, their joy in life and for your eternal praise as you show again the freeness of your grace, the wonder of your salvation, you the holy one would accept us for Jesus sake.

We pray in his name. Amen.