

Two Conversions

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Date: 03 July 2011

Preacher: Stuart Olyott

[0:00] Acts chapter 16, we're going to read from verse 9 through verse 34. During the night, Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia, standing and begging him, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us!'

After Paul had seen the vision, he got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them. From Troas, we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, and the next day to Neapolis.

From there, we traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony in the leading city of the district of Macedonia, and we stayed there several days. On the Sabbath, we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer.

We sat down and began to speak to the women who were gathered there. One of those listening was a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, who was a worshiper of God.

The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message. When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home.

[1:10] If you consider me a believer in the Lord, she said, come and stay at my house, and she persuaded us. 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 the servants of the Most High God who are telling you the way to be saved.'

She kept us 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.'

[2:12] 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, and at once all the prison doors flew open, and everybody's chains came loose. And the jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors opened, 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 whole household.'

Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house.

[3:26] And 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. Let's hear the preaching of God's word. Well, it always does me good to hear that passage read.

My wife and I live in Wales. Wales is part of the United Kingdom. And the United Kingdom, though we find this hard to believe, is part of Europe. The gospel came to Wales in the second century. Maybe earlier, but certainly the second century. But how did the gospel get to Europe before it came to Wales? And the gospel came from Europe, of course, to North America.

But how did the gospel get from Europe, or to Europe, to come to North America? That's what this passage tells us. So we're in Acts chapter 16, verse 9 through to verse 34.

[4 : 33] Now, separating what is now Asia from what is now southern Europe, is a thin stretch of water.

And in the year 50, Paul and his missionary team cross that small stretch of water and arrive in what we call northern Greece. They sail past the island of Samothrace, they land at Neapolis, and then they walk inland until they come to Philippi.

Philippi. Philippi is not like most other cities. If you're a citizen of most other cities, you're just a Roman citizen, or someone being conquered by Rome.

But if you live in Philippi, it's prestigious. Everyone who lives in Philippi, who's a citizen of Philippi, is considered to be a citizen of Rome itself.

You are a Roman of the Romans if you live in Philippi. So it's an exciting story. It's a piece of history. It took place there in the year 50.

[5 : 44] And this morning I have four things to bring to you from this passage, Acts 16, verse 9 through to verse 34.

Now here's the first thing. Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, there is such a thing as instant conversion.

There is such a thing. Now in this passage we have two conversions. The first is a lady, and you'll see her in verses 13 to 15.

And she's Lydia. Lydia comes from Asia. But she's in what we now call Europe. She's not a Jew, almost certainly, but she's looking for a synagogue.

Excuse me. But there is no synagogue. You have to have ten men to have a synagogue. Evidently there aren't ten Jewish men in Philippi. So Paul and his missionary team start looking for where a Jewish group might meet.

[6 : 47] They come to the conclusion that it's probably by the river. They set out on the Sabbath, and sure enough, down there by the riverside is a group of people only ladies who are gathered together to pray.

Here is a woman who prays. She doesn't know the Lord. She's not saved. Her heart's never been transformed. But nonetheless, she's praying.

Like many folk who go to church, but they're not converted, they're not saved, but nonetheless, there's some sympathy with the things of God.

That's the sort of woman she is. We read that she worships God. She's not an atheist. She's not a pagan. She doesn't bow down before idols. She has a sense of God in her life.

But she does not know personally the Lord Jesus Christ. She's a woman with a tender heart which beats warmly towards spiritual things.

[7 : 55] But she's not yet a Christian. But Paul preaches. And we know from all his letters and the Acts of the Apostles what sort of things Paul preached. And as Paul preaches, just like the sun shining on a flower without any noise and without any fuss, the flower just opens and the gospel goes right into her heart and she is converted.

And her household, she seems to have been a businesswoman who had staff and they are converted very quickly and she's baptized and joins the church and becomes the first Christian that we have any accurate information about in Europe.

And that's the first conversion. But there's also the jailer. You'll find him in verses 23 through to verse 34. How do you become a jailer in the Roman Empire?

What sort of people were jailers? Did you read in the newspaper an advertisement saying jailer wanted applications please be submitted with your CV by the 12th of July or whatever it is you didn't become a jailer like that.

You had to be quite special to be a jailer. And if you're going to be a jailer of Philippi's prison you've got to be extra special.

[9:31] Nobody was a jailer who had not served in the army. They had to have the rank of at least sergeant. They had to be straightforward soldiers who knew what it was to go to battle and kill and wipe the blood off their swords.

That's what you had to do to be a jailer. And you were under a very strict law if you were a jailer. The rule was quite simple. If your prisoners escaped what was going to happen to those prisoners will happen to you.

So this is not a job for a sissy. I actually asked this morning do you have that word? I hear that you do. This is not a job for a pansy.

You have that word too. It's not a job for a wimp. Can the gospel win a man who is really a man who is used to leading men?

Can the gospel win a marine? Can the gospel win a man from the special services? Can the gospel win a tough cookie? I think that's what you say.

[10:55] That's the question. We can understand that the gospel can win a Lydia. After all she's religious already. She prays. She's warm towards the things of God.

But can the same message win someone who's really a tough nut to crack? Who swears and is godless and has killed?

And the answer to that is that the gospel can triumph just as quickly in the heart of a man like that as in the heart of Lydia. The reason of course is that in the word of the gospel there is no power at all.

but as the gospel is preached the spirit of God works directly upon the heart of a person here and a person there.

And as the scriptures are preached their ears are opened and they hear the voice of Christ. And as the scriptures are preached their eyes are opened and they see the truth of it all and they see their own need.

[12:04] And as the scriptures are preached a new nature is given to them and they love what they're hearing although they've never loved it before.

And as the word and the spirit and the spirit and the word work together anybody can be converted however hard and far away from God they are.

and yet these conversions are not identical. Have you ever gone out while it's completely dark?

Away from the street lights away from the town away from any civilization it's completely dark. Have you ever been in a place like that?

The moon isn't shining you can't see the stars you're out in the wilderness and you hold your hand up like that and you actually do not know whether you've gone blind or whether it's that dark.

[13:09] Have you ever been in a situation like that? And you're out in this terrible darkness and then as the night goes on you hold your hand up and you go and you can actually now see the outline of your fingers.

and then after a little while you can see there's a tree there and there's a bush there and there's an animal there and you shadows you begin to see and then a little bit later things become clear.

They're mostly black and white and grey but you can see what's happening and then you begin to spot a little bit of colour and then the sky up there in the east becomes quite bright and then there comes a moment when the sun comes over the horizon and it's daytime.

Lydia's a bit like that. She's been exposed to the things of God she's been where there's been prayer to the true God where the scriptures have probably been read and little by little little by little slowly things begin to dawn on her and then comes the glorious moment when Paul preaches and the sun comes over the horizon and it's daytime.

There has to be a moment by the way when the sun does come over the horizon. You can't be dead and alive lost and found all at the same time. There has to be a moment of conversion but with some of you who've been brought up in Christian families and have Christian parents and Christian friends, sometimes conversion for you is a bit like that.

[15:00] You came into the world and thanks to God was given for you. Every meal you had in your childhood there was thanks to God. The scriptures were opened in your home.

There was prayer in your home. You were brought to Sunday school and to church. And little by little you see a little there and you see a little there and you struggle and you doubt and you question and you wonder but little by little you're getting there.

You have a little faith and then a bit more faith and then you come to the point of assurance where you know for yourself that you really do trust Christ.

You trust him alone. the sun has come over the horizon. You've been converted. You're a bit like the snail. We read in Noah's Ark that all sorts of animals got in there.

How did the antelope get in? Boink! And how did the snail get in? It'll make this an awful long sermon if I do this.

[16 : 15] And there are people like that but there comes a moment when he's no longer on the gang plank and he's really in the ark.

There's such a thing as instant conversion. Now then let's change the picture. You go out into the wilderness it's completely dark. You don't know whether you're blind or not.

You can't see anything at all. you blink because you even do that at night time. And the moment you blink and open your eyes there it is the sun's right above your head. It's blue sky.

The sun is beating down. Everything's in bright technicolor and you can't see because you're so dazzled. And that's the jailer. We have no evidence at all that this jailer had ever heard the gospel or anything like it ever before this event.

All he knew was that there were two strange preachers who were Jewish. And he had been told that they were out of order and he had to treat them severely and he did.

[17 : 24] That's all he knew. Here's a man being reared in a pagan society. He's been out in the wars. He's been surrounded by ungodly men. He's seen and done terrible things.

And yet before this passage is over, in fact before morning comes, morning has come into his soul. And he's a child of God. He's converted.

He's a member of the family of the Lord. There is such a thing as instant conversion. There really is. But we need to ask the question, how did the jailer's conversion happen?

How did it come about? Well, I've no doubt in my own mind that he was very impressed with Paul and Silas. When you're told that you've got to treat a prisoner severely, what do you do?

Well, you drag him along the corridor and down and along the corridor and down and along the corridor and down until you've come to the inner prison and you throw him in, fix his feet in the stocks, slam the door and leave him in the dark, dehydrated and dirty.

[18 : 44] And as you drag these people down, what do they do? They curse and they swear and they struggle and they fight and they protest.

But we know enough about Paul and Silas to know that things would certainly have been different. They were wounded, they had been dragged through the streets, their clothes had been stripped off them, they had been beaten severely, they were within a few inches of death.

But they didn't curse, they didn't swear, they didn't protest and down into the prison they go. And this man knows what everybody needs to know.

That Christians really are different. He could not fail to have been impressed by that. And then there's the extraordinary events of the night.

There's this earthquake. But before the earthquake, what happened? happened. From the inner prison, there's been a strange sound.

[19 : 59] It's singing. He's lying in bed there with Mrs. Jailer. And she says, what is that? I don't know, he says, never heard that in the prison before.

What is it? It's not the train going over the tracks in the middle of Bremen. What is it? It's singing. Who could be singing in a prison?

And it's these different people who are singing the praises of God. Then there's the earthquake. And the foundations of the prison are shaken.

All the doors spring open. All the manacles and chains come off. disaster. I've lost everybody, including those who are in for life.

Out comes the sword. He's about to kill himself because what would have happened to the lost prisoners would happen to him. So he may as well finish himself off now.

[21 : 04] And then out of the darkness from someone who cannot see him and whom he cannot see, says, don't do it. We're all here. it's a miracle.

God has done something. But I've mistreated his messengers. God has intervened.

And I've lived all these years without thinking about him. so he calls for lights. He comes in.

He falls down before the prisoners. These two strange, different singing prisoners. Sirs, what must I do to be saved?

saved. And he's told the answer. One of the greatest verses in the Bible, verse 31. They replied, believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved.

[22 : 14] You and your household. Which means, of course, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. and what goes for you, goes for your whole household.

Well, you can't hear a sentence like that if you're terrified of God and know that you're condemned of him. So, quickly, Paul is preaching away to the jailer and Mrs.

Jailer and all the people who are in the house. I don't think there were any infants there. You don't normally get infants up in the middle of the night, even if it's an earthquake, and then expect them to listen to a sermon.

Well, not in our country. Maybe in yours. But he's preaching away and this man believes what he's hearing.

Now, do you believe the gospel when you hear it? I was driving through Wales late one night and Wales has got little hills and mountains and valleys and streams and you have to keep readjusting the radio if you want to hear anything because the wavelength keeps changing.

[23 : 26] I couldn't find the program I wanted. I wanted something serious to keep me awake and all I could find was a pop station. I don't listen to pop stations.

I value my hearing too much. Then the music stopped and an American voice which I won't imitate, well, I might, said, you won't understand this next song unless you understand this.

I thought, oh, I wonder who that is. I don't know who he was, some invited guest. The gospel does not start with God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life.

Oh, that sounds promising, but what's this doing on a pop station? The gospel starts, the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.

That's what he said. So I kept listening and this man said, that's the gospel. God is against us because of our sin. God is furious at us because we live in his world but we don't live to please him.

[24 : 28] We're going to be judged by God as all our consciences bear witness and we'd better listen to what the gospel says otherwise God might give us up. But none of us have any righteousness to get right with God.

But thank God, God provides a righteousness which is available to every believer and we can be right with God because the life we never lived Jesus lived and the death we deserve to die Jesus died and Jesus is alive forevermore to bring us back to God.

Jesus who is God and man said the pop station. I can't remember the record or the song but I remember that.

And that is the gospel right there in the middle of the night. The gospel on the pop station. That's what Paul preached and that's what he would have preached here.

You've got to entrust yourself to the Lord Jesus Christ. Stop relying on religion or good works or good resolutions or good hopes. You've got to entrust yourself to the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.

[25 : 37] And what goes to you goes to your household. And he believes it. And before morning comes he's converted because there is such a thing as instant conversion.

Now for those of you who are unconverted it's great being a visiting preacher by the way because you could say things that well you can just say things. But for those of you who are unconverted you can be converted instantly.

That's good news. You don't have to follow a ten week course or a fifty week course or earn a diploma or succeed in some exams.

You can be converted instantly. That's good news isn't it? And for those of you who speak to your friends they can be converted instantly even if the friend you have in mind is the hardest person you've ever met.

So that was the first point and there are four but you'll be pleased to know that each point is briefer than the one before. Now number two there is such a thing as instant baptism.

[26 : 55] Now I'm going to be quite blunt here because I speak English and you try. So I did not say there is such a thing as infant baptism.

I said there is such a thing as instant baptism. You'll find it there in verse 33. At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds.

Then immediately he and all his family the Greek is he and all his household were baptized. That's immediate isn't it?

Sometimes in a church someone makes a profession of faith and say I've become a Christian and then we make them have a long period of trial. Sometimes that may be the right thing to do but not here.

It was clear as crystal that this man was converted. Paul knew it and Silas agreed. His profession of faith is what we call credible.

[28:08] It's believable. And therefore in the middle of the night the man is baptized as are all the members of his household. As I explained before they were not infants they were capable of staying up in the night and listening to preaching in the middle of the night.

that's God's way of telling the world you've become a Christian. That's God's way.

And I hope you noticed that they didn't put a big poster outside the jail saying baptizing service 3.30 a.m.

Baptism does not have to be public to be valid. Sometimes it's a good thing that it is public but it does not have to be. Baptism is going under the water because somebody died and this is a symbolic death and you are identifying with the somebody who died.

Baptism is coming out of the water in a symbolic resurrection because somebody rose from the dead and you are identifying yourself with the somebody the only somebody who rose from the dead.

[29:29] Yes baptism is going under the water in a symbolic death because a previous life is now dead and has been for a little while and baptism is coming out of the water in newness of life because you are now joined to that person who himself rose from the dead in the power of an endless life.

That's what baptism is. It is abnormal to delay baptism. I call them spiritual weirdos.

They're weird. People who say I've become a Christian but I'll get round to being baptized sometime. Now sometimes it might be right to wait a little while.

Here's Fred. If your name's Fred, it's not you. He's 15. He's recently been converted but his mum and his dad say, no Fred, we don't agree that you should be baptized yet.

Fine. He's got to wait, hasn't he? He's not sinning. The time will come when they'll either say yes or he'll be old enough to do it anyway.

[30:44] And he's honoring his parents so he's going to wait. Here's I better think of some names you don't know. Here's Mavanwy. That's a Welsh girl's name.

I don't think there's any Mavanwys here. Are there? No. Here's Mavanwy. she is ill. But there's strong possibility that shortly she'll get better.

So she's going to wait until she's better to be publicly baptized. Here is Pedder. That's Welsh for Peter.

He's been converted later in life. His daughter lives hundreds of miles away and he wants her to be present when he's baptized.

So he's waiting until she can be in the church to see that event. He feels to be a great witness to her. So there are occasions when it would be okay to delay but it was still abnormal by the New Testament pattern.

[31:53] Some people for physical reasons or all sorts of other reasons cannot immediately be baptized. But the jailer had none of those reasons. The jailer could have said what?

Get baptized in the middle of the night? I mean the water isn't even warm. Couldn't he? Or the jailer could have said baptized in the middle of the night?

I went to bed as a pagan. And if I turn up in the guard room tomorrow as a baptized Christian, what are people going to say? Let me give them a little time to soften them up.

He could have said that, but he didn't. He could have said, just think of the jokes and the teasing and the opposition I'm going to face from the guard room.

Or he could have said, what will the magistrates think when they learned that the people I was told to treat severely have baptized me in the middle of the night? He could have said that too.

[32:54] He could have said, I'll lose my job. But he didn't. Because as Paul preached to him, Paul, as he always did, explained that the first duty of the Christian life is to be baptized.

It's the first duty. Now somebody says, isn't it important to go to the Lord's table? Of course it's important, not first. Isn't it important to give money to missionaries?

Of course it's important, but it's not first. Isn't it important to get your doctrine sorted out? It's vitally important, but it's not first. Isn't it important to get to know everyone in the fellowship?

Yes, everybody, but it's not first. Isn't it important to go to the prayer meeting? Of course it's important to go to the prayer meeting. We preachers in particular are need praying for more than you might think.

But it's not first. Isn't it important to witness to others? That is part of your witness. And it's first. [34 : 05] And how inconsistent, how strangely inconsistent it is to ask God to help you in all the other duties and to neglect what God puts first.

In fact, the New Testament, although it makes it quite plain, you can be saved and are saved without being baptized, otherwise the dying thief would never have gone to heaven, it links conversion and baptism so intimately that the New Testament actually says, he who believes and is baptized shall be saved, repent and be baptized, every one of you, for the remission of your sins. It's the New Testament way of owning up and acknowledging, I've become a Christian. It's God's way of saying that.

So if you're on God's side, say so in God's way. Now, we had storms this week. That's made our visit to Bremen extra pleasurable.

I like to see a good storm, don't you? See a good storm and read Psalm 29. Okay. You see a storm coming, but then you look out on the yard and you see that the children have left their toys outside.

[35 : 30] There's a storm coming. Ah. There's a storm coming. You better get the toys in quickly. All right, Mom. All right. Then you look out 20 minutes later and not one toy has moved.

Ever happen to you? Hmm. Don't think we're alone. I ask you to get the toys in. I know, I know. I'll get them in sometime.

What would you say to that child? Five minutes later, the toys are still out there. Won't you get the toys in? The storm's nearly here. I don't like the idea, says somebody.

What would you say to that child? Get the toys in. Later. Later. And what would you say if the child says, all right, I can hear what you're saying, but the Lord hasn't yet led me to do it.

And then the Lord says to his children, be baptized. And some people say, I hear what you're saying. Sometime.

[36 : 35] Later. I don't like the idea. You haven't yet led me to do it. What would you do to the child who, when the storm came, still hadn't got the toys in?

What would you do? Well, we'll have that for discussion sometime. I know what I would do. Give him a bit of encouragement. But I read here, in verse 33.

Did you read it too? At that hour of the night, the jailer took them and washed their wounds. Then immediately, he and all his family were baptized. Now then, that was part two.

There's such a thing as instant conversion. There's such a thing as instant baptism. Number three. There's such a thing as instant usefulness. Usefulness. You can be useful to the Lord immediately.

And you'll see that in verse 33. At that hour of the night, the jailer took them and washed their wounds.

[37 : 44] What do you think of that? He's the man who, with his great military hands, grabbed these bleeding men and took them and threw them into the inner prison and left them in all their dirt and shame and slammed the door and walked away.

Think of those hands. which now have a sponge and water and whatever they use for disinfectant and wiping all the mud and all the congealed blood out of their backs.

How do you think Paul and Silas felt? What an act of kindness. There's some act of kindness you can do from the moment you're converted.

If you're truly converted, said C.H. Spurgeon, the great preacher, if you're truly converted, even your cat will notice the difference. There's some kindness you can do.

Just being kind in this world is sometimes radical. Isn't it? And then look at verse 34.

[38 : 59] The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them. Think of that. They've been falsely accused, they've been dragged through the streets, they've been beaten up, they've been put in prison, they've had nothing to eat, nothing to drink, they're ill, they're dangerously ill, they could die and now they're clean and sitting at table and eating a meal.

Now here's my question. What more could the jailer have done that night? He did everything he could and what he could do was be kind and hospitable.

Which all of us can do. all of us have different gifts but we don't discover our gifts straight away. Sometimes we discover them in strange ways.

For years and years we ran a daily vacation Bible school in our church. Young people would come along, Christian young people and say, what can I do? And we'd say, well, you can help the children who are drawing and coloring, you can sharpen the pencils.

That's all they did. What can I do? Well, you know how to play rounders. Rounders is the original game which later became perverted and called baseball. You can organize a game of rounders in the park.

[40:30] That's all they did. But what happened is that these sharpened pencils and these organized games, they realized that nonetheless they had some gifting. And over the years some of these have become our best children's speakers, best children's counselors, and actually some of them are very best preachers.

But they started small. You don't discover your gifts at once. But there are some things you can do straight away. Now, I'm a young person, I don't have a house of my own, and I can't invite people for a meal.

No, but I've been down to Burger King, and I know that you can get something for a dollar. It's quite good value actually, but I'm not going to advertise that here. Save up at two or three dollars and take a friend down there or wherever mom and dad might approve, and talk with somebody about the things of God.

You could do that. You could be kind, you could be hospitable, and somebody says, well, we're not very good at entertaining. All right, do what Jesus says. Spot somebody who could never invite you back.

They never ever could invite you back. Ever. Great. Invite them. and have them in your house. And not just to sit at a table, but to talk about the things of God.

[41:51] Some of us, when we think back to our early Christian life, we would say, what helped us most was the friendship of older Christians who opened their homes to us where we could go at any time without a reason, and have a cup of tea, or just sit down with a soft drink, and talk sensible and often spiritual things.

Those were the great formative influences on our early Christian life. And it's something that virtually everybody can do. There is such a thing as instant usefulness.

Now then, the last point is brief. They get briefer. Did you notice? There's such a thing as instant conversion. There's such a thing as instant baptism. There's such a thing as instant usefulness.

Now then, look at verse 34. There is such a thing as instant joy.

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.

[43:06] he and his whole family. Do you know what it's like to have a terrible sense of guilt and then to know it's all forgiven?

you can't be unemotional about that. The sheer relief of being forgiven is an emotion and we call it joy.

The Puritans used to say peace is joy resting. joy is peace dancing.

That's what it is. That's what it is. Do you know what it's like to know that you're on the wrong side of the law of God and it condemns you?

But now you have a righteousness put to your account so that God considers you to be as righteous as he is. because the righteousness of the Son of God is made over to your account.

[44:23] You can't feel neutral about that. There's an emotion which comes in because you're thinking about what God has done for you. Do you know what it's like to be a member of the family of Satan and under his power and then to come out of that family and to be a member of the family of God and to know whether you're a man or a woman that you are his son by adoption.

Do you know what it is to be far from God and then to know that God himself lives in your body and in your soul by his Holy Spirit? Do you know what it is to think of the grave and the tomb which waits for us all and to know that when you come there Christ will whisper!

It's alright! Just go to sleep and you'll wake up with me! Do you know this? Do you know what it's like to think about the terrible day of judgment where even angels will tremble?

And to know that although all your crimes will be remembered it will also be remembered that they are on Christ's account and therefore you are acquitted!

and do you know what it is to think that throughout endless ages you will be in God's home where there's no sin no failure no suffering no death no change no curse because the old things have

passed away and all things have become new there is such a thing as instant joy but I'm sure part of his joy was he looked around the table and there was the preacher and there was the preacher and there was his wife and there is his older children and there were his household and he looked around the whole table and everybody was in Christ everybody was converted everybody was enjoying the same spiritual privileges that he enjoyed and he could look them all in the eyes and his heart just welled up with thankfulness to God that it was a complete

[46:52] Christian family sadly many of our families are not like that which is why we must pray for those yet who are still unconverted but don't forget the enormous joy which is ours that we are converted and those close to us are and let's pray for those who are not so we learned four things this morning there's such a thing as instant conversion maybe this morning you need to say Lord I just don't know whether I'm converted or not just tell him what's on your heart but I'd like to be and if you don't know what to pray just say convert me he will maybe you're one of those Christians who isn't yet baptized the word of God's clear why not bring joy to your pastor and joy to the church and a testimony to your friends and family and neighbors what about usefulness don't look for the big thing find something ordinary to do and do it for

Jesus sake and experience the joy of which this passage speaks I invite you to join with me in prayer let us pray heavenly father we thank you for the great miracle of conversion we thank you that you turn us right round we who are accelerating towards lostness and the judgment and eternal punishment and then you turn us right round and we run into the arms of Christ to salvation to eternal life to forgiveness to adoption to all the blessings of the gospel and we run safely along that road to heaven which although narrow is safe we thank you for the great gift of baptism so simple and so extraordinary in its power both as a picture of what you do for us but also to speak into the hearts of others we thank you Lord for the usefulness you give to every child of God and we pray you'll help us even today to be kind and to look for some act of mercy that we can do and fill your people we pray with joy that the watching world may notice the difference as we pray in the name of our Lord Jesus

Christ amen