

ACTS: THE JAILER'S CONVERSION

Lesson 112



Acts 16:30,31

“What must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved”

Explanation of Memory Verse

The jailer asked Paul and Silas what he had to do to be saved. The simple answer (2Cor.11:3) was to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. This promise was also extended to his family.

Theme of Lesson

The simple plan of salvation goes out to all different kinds of people, through all different kinds of situations. God uses a wide variety of circumstances to prepare hearts for His glory. In this story, God used Paul and Silas as He was preparing the jailer.

Practical Application

We must always remember that God is at work. What if Paul and Silas complained instead of praying and praising? What if they got mad and held a grudge toward the jailer? What if they ran out of the prison as soon as the doors were opened, never to talk to the jailer again? Every situation we have, whether good or bad, can be used to lead someone to the Lord.

Background of Lesson

Paul was on his second missionary journey. He received in a vision, a man of Macedonia, praying for Paul to come over and help them. This is what led them to Philippi (Acts 16:9). While in Philippi, Paul commanded an evil spirit to come out of a woman, who practiced divination. She would no longer make her masters money. This upset the masters, and they had Paul and Silas beaten and thrown in prison. Perhaps the Macedonian man was the jailer.

I. The Preparation for Salvation (Acts 16:25-28)

- A. Paul and Silas had just been beaten with rods, imprisoned, and their feet put in stocks. Their backs were lacerated, bloody, and swollen. We can just imagine the excruciating pain. But sitting there in the dark, smelly, rat and roach infested dungeon, they gave a testimony to the wonderful grace of God.
1. They began to make PRAYER (Ps.42:8). They probably prayed for God to strengthen them, help them, forgive their persecutors, and use their suffering to reach others for Christ. How would you pray in their situation?
 2. They began to PRAISE (Phil.4:4) God. They probably praised God for His great salvation, the privilege to suffer for the name of Christ Jesus, and His presence and strength through suffering.
- B. In all this, God was preparing for a great event to take place (Rom.8:28).
1. He was using Paul and Silas as a witness to the glory and power of God.
 2. This great moving of God was then seen through an earthquake. God moves events to prepare hearts.
 3. In other instances, He may move in other ways...
A tragedy / Sensing a lack or need / A blessing / An event / Reading of Scripture / Preaching
- C. The earthquake sprung open the jail doors, allowing the prisoners to escape.
1. The jailor had fallen asleep while on duty. The penalty for allowing prisoners to escape was death.
 2. The jailer, feeling helpless and hopeless, drew his sword to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had fled. Paul cried out from the inner prison with a loud voice for the jailer not to harm himself.
 3. Paul knew there was hope for this jailer and that he needed salvation.

II. The Cry for Salvation (Acts 16:29-32)

- A. The jailer was standing out in the hallway or corridor as he came in to where Paul and Silas were. There was the immediate and reverent search for answers and salvation. He had obviously been affected by their great witness. Surely he had heard them preach and praise.
1. He knew salvation was needed.
 2. He knew that their God was the right God because of the circumstances.
 3. It is important to remember that trials are the best platform to be a witness for Jesus. When our faith is tried, others will see that it is real and want to try it for themselves.
- B. The jailer fearfully and humbly took them out and asked how to be saved.
1. "The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit" (Ps.34:18).
 2. Quite often people have to come to the end of themselves before they desire Christ.
- C. Notice how simple it is to be saved. It is by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ.
1. This was also offered to his family if they believed too.
 2. Salvation is offered to all, in spite of how bad they have been!
 3. How is it that Paul could preach forgiveness to someone who had just beaten him? Remember, Paul used to have believers beaten and imprisoned. Paul knew all about God's grace! When Paul had Stephen stoned (Acts 7:54-60), he saw how believers in Christ suffer. Certainly this had a big impact on Paul coming to Christ.

III. The Fruit of Salvation (Acts 16:33,34)

- A. Receiving Jesus as your Saviour will produce fruit. Here are five fruitful things the jailor did...
1. He washed their stripes (1Cor.5:18).
 2. He got baptized (Mt.28:19).
 3. He fed them (Rom.12:13).
 4. He rejoiced (1Pet.1:8).
 5. He was a witness to his family (Prov.22:6) They also believed and were baptized. Notice again that baptism was only for believers.
- B. Forgiveness is the essence of salvation (Col.3:13).
1. In this lesson we see how forgiveness spreads and is contagious.
 2. We forgive others as Christ first forgave us. This may be the leading factor in them coming to Christ.
 3. Not forgiving others will also lead to the prison of bitterness and bondage.