

We learned last week that after Paul delivered a certain slave girl from demon-possession, her former masters dragged him (and his companions) into the marketplace to the authorities (v19). This led them to be accused (vv20-21), beaten (v22), and imprisoned (vv23-24). This brings us to the disciples in prison, and especially the Philippain Jailer. This man takes his name from the fact that he guarded a jail in Philippi. Thus, if he was like the rest in Philippi, he was a Gentile, who worshipped the Roman gods.

- I. He was Convicted (vv25-30)
- II. He was Called (vv31-32)
- III. He was Converted (vv33-34)

I. He was Convicted (vv25-30)

1. V25—"But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them."
2. Verse 25 contrasts with v24—having been beaten, imprisoned, and shackled, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns.
3. They were "praying" and "singing hymns to God"—it's likely the hymns they were singing were Psalms.
4. And the fact that the other prisoners "were listening to them" implies, they prayed and sang out loud.
5. Now, keep in mind brethren, at this point they had every reason to believe they would be executed in the morning.
6. And yet, they inwardly had peace and joy even though they were outwardly in pain, chains, and fearing death.
7. Let me simply say in passing, regardless of outward circumstances, Christians can have inner peace and joy.
8. Notice briefly three reasons—(a) Saints ultimate have extra-worldly desires and loves—they love someone more than this world.
9. It's for this reason they can rejoice when separated from all the comforts and lawful blessings of this life.
10. At present, Paul and Silas were void of health and comfort—they were beaten, bloody, and shackled.
11. (b) Saints believe God is in sovereign control—that is, they understand this world is not ultimately controlled by evil men or Satan.
12. Yes, the angry mob and foolish magistrates meant this for evil, but God, ultimately meant it for good.
13. (c) Saints rejoice in suffering for Christ—they consider it a privilege to suffer for Christ and to suffer as Christ.
14. Kordon Keddie—"The gospel may be locked *up*, but it cannot be locked *out*. To the outward view, their situation was grim—flogged and imprisoned, they perhaps faced even death on the morrow. But God was in all their thoughts and as they poured out their deepest petitions before the Lord, their sense of being in His everlasting arms evoked lively singing of His praises. They had been beaten up, but they were not beaten down!"

15. V26—"Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's chains were loosed."
16. It seems that all the doors of the entire prison were opened, and that the chains were loosed on all the prisoners.
17. And yet, as we shall see from vv27-28, it appears that none of the other prisoners attempted an escape.
18. Now, let me simply say, I understood this earthquake as a literal earthquake with some unique particulars.
19. While the earthquake was powerful enough to cause the very foundations of the prison to be shaken, it doesn't appear the walls crumbled.
20. Furthermore, it seems likely that this was a highly local earthquake that specifically came upon the prison.
21. The purpose of the earthquake is evident, as it served as a tangible witness to the power of Almighty God.
22. He could have simply opened the doors, but instead He used an earthquake to shake the foundations of the prison, to open the doors.
23. V27—"And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself."
24. It appears the commotion woke the prison guard from sleep, and because the penalty of an escaped prisoner was death, he intended to kill himself.
25. V28—"But Pual called with a loud voice, saying, 'Do yourself no harm, for we are all here'—that is all the prisoners.
26. V29—"Then he called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas"—trembling because he recognized the power of God.
27. He literally felt that power in his bones—he realized the God of Paul and Silas was the God of creation and salvation.
28. V30—"And he brought them out (of the cell) and said, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?'"—he realized he needed salvation.
29. In other words, the jailor reasoned from the power of God as evidenced in the earthquake, to his need of salvation.
30. Darrell Bock—"The earthquake has presented him with irrefutable evidence that God is at work with Paul's group. He wants to know whatever more Paul can offer. Is there a way to escape God's reaction to the injustice in which the jailer has played a role? In the face of this evidence, the jailer does not want to be found on the opposing side."
31. This necessarily implies two things—he knew something about God, and he knew something about himself.
32. (1) He knew something about God—that is, he knew he needed to be saved from sin as an offense against God.
33. This means, he came to see something of the power, justice, and mercy of God (and thus he trembled).
34. This is why the character of God, and the nature of the law must be preached or proclaimed to sinners.
35. Sinners must come face to face with God—they must know something of His just and holy character.

36. (2) He knew something about himself—he knew he needed to be saved because he was guilty before God.
37. He came to see/know something of his sin as committed against a holy, powerful, just, and merciful God.
38. And so, it's the combination of these two facts (we've come to know something about God and ourselves) that results in conviction.
39. (a) This conviction is necessary—this means, nobody every comes to Christ without knowing their need.
40. Nobody ever came to the water of life without a sense of thirst; nobody ever came to the bread of life without a sense of hunger.
41. Lk.5:31—"Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."
42. Nobody need a physician but those who are sick, and nobody needs a Savior but those who are sinners.
43. (b) This conviction is various—by this I mean, it varies in degree and duration; while every true penitent is convicted, they are not all convicted alike.
44. In the case of the jailor his conviction was very strong—he literally trembled under a sense of God's power and his sin.
45. But this isn't always the case—if you remember a few weeks ago in considering Lydia, Luke simply says—"the Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul."
46. It says nothing of her falling under great and prolonged conviction—her heart was simply opened to believe.
47. And so, the question becomes—how much conviction is necessary to come to Christ? Well, the answer is rather simple—just enough to know you need Christ.
48. We must remember, conviction is never an end in itself, but merely a means to an end (and that end is Christ).
49. (c) This conviction is spiritual—by this I mean, it's the result of the Holy Spirit of God applying the truth.
50. This isn't something that man creates in himself, but it's the fruit of the Spirit working in man's heart.
51. 1Thess.1:5—"For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction."
52. Thus, we mustn't think this conversion somehow earns or merits salvation—it's the gracious work of God.
53. Josphe Hart (393)—"Let not conscience make you linger, nor of fitness fondly dream; all the fitness He requireth is to feel your need of Him; this He gives you, this He gives you, this He gives you; Tis the Spirit's rising beam."

II. He was Called (vv31-32)

1. Verses 31-32—"So they said, 'believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household. Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house.'"
2. It was common for prison guards to have houses nearby the prison, and in some cases, connected to it.
3. And so, it was no difficulty for the jailor to bring Paul and Silas to his family, or initially bring his family to them.

4. I say this because, it seems from v34, that they entered their house later, and if that's true, the conversation of v32, took place somewhere other than the house (perhaps somewhere in or near the prison).
5. (1) He is called to believe on Christ—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ"—believe on Him as your Savior.
6. The jailor asked what he must "do" to be saved and he was told to "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ."
7. There was nothing he could do to be saved—there was no work or feeling sufficient to save him from his sin.
8. To "believe" is "to have confidence in"—"to place your trust or confidence in something or someone."
9. Notice, he's told to believe "on the Lord Jesus Christ"—notice his faith was to have a specific object.
10. By "the Lord" is meant His divinity, by "Jesus" is meant His humanity, and by "Christ" is meant His offices.
11. In other words, he was to place his trust or confidence in the Godman who's a prophet, priest, and king.
12. But you might ask—how did this man understand all of this truth about the person and work of Christ?
13. V32—"Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house"—they taught him about all these things,
14. John Calvin—"Here we must not two things: first, that Christ is the mark whereat faith must aim; and, therefore, men's minds do nothing else but wander when they turn aside from him. Secondly, we must note, that after we have embraced Christ by faith, that alone is sufficient to salvation."
15. (2) He is promised salvation—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved"—not "may" or "might" but "will" be saved.
16. Put another way—along with the message of the good news, comes the promise of salvation if believed.
17. But this brings me to an important question—is salvation promised to every person who hears the gospel?
18. Does the gospel come to every person and say—"If you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, you will be saved?"
19. Yes! God promises in the gospel of His Son, that whosoever believes will of certainty be saved—period!
20. This promise isn't for some people, but all people—this is the promise of the gospel—believe and be saved.
21. Jn.7:37-38—"If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."
22. (3) This was true for him and his house—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household."
23. That is, if you believe you will be saved, and if your household believes, they too will be saved (v32).
24. V32—"Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house"—who this included, we are not told.

25. But we do know from v34 that they all believed—"and he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household."
26. It's likely this included a wife, perhaps children, servants, and extended family—this was a common household.
27. And so, Paul and Silas spoke the word of God to them, and they too believed, and they too were saved.

III. He was Converted (vv33-34)

1. Verses 33-34—"And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized. Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household."
2. After he was instructed out from the word, he took Paula and Silas to a certain place to wash their wounds.
3. This is in contrast to v24, where we learned he put them in the inner prison and fastened their feet in chains.
4. John Dick—"Remark the great change which has taken place in the temper and manners of this man. The day before, he had treated Paul and Silas with cruelty, aggravating the unjust sentence of the magistrates, by the unfeeling harshness with which he executed it. But now he soothes and comforts them, not only from gratitude to the men, who had been the instruments of bringing salvation to his house, but from that humanity, which the grace of God never fails to inspire."
5. Luke then tells us three things happened—he and his house believed, they were baptized, and they rejoiced.
6. (1) He and his house believed, v34—"having believed in God with all his household"—he believed along with his entire household.
7. This verse doesn't say, the jailor believed for his household—nobody can ever believe for another person.
8. Brethren, regardless of your views on infant baptism, if you believe parents believe for their children, there's a much larger problem.
9. Read the best of paedobaptists commentators, and while they use this verse as proof for infant baptism, none of them believe the jailor believed for his family.
10. John Dick (Scottish Presbyterian)—"*Thou shalt be saved, and all thy house*. These words cannot signify, that through his faith, all the persons, old and young, belonging to his family, should be entitled to salvation; but that such of them as believed in Jesus Christ should be saved, as well as himself."
11. (2) He and his house were baptized, v33—"And immediately he and all his family were baptized"—where were they baptized? We don't know.
12. It seems likely, the same place they were taken to be washed, was the same place they were baptized.
13. It's possible it was the same river that Lydia was baptized in over a week earlier (as the river may have been close to the prison).
14. But either way, the jailor and those within his home were baptized as an outward expression of an inward reality.
15. Darrell Bock—"The jailor may have washed the prisoners' wounds, but he himself received a better washing. 'He washed and was washed; he washed them from their stripes and was himself washed from his sins' (Chrysostom)."

16. (3) He and his house rejoiced, v34—"And he rejoiced"—that is, he rejoiced with his beloved household.
17. It's true most translations imply that only the jailor rejoiced, but surely brethren, his entire household rejoiced in their salvation.
18. In fact, the 1901 (ASV) renders the phrase—"and rejoiced greatly, with all his house, having believed in God."
19. That is, the Philippian jailor rejoiced greatly, with all of his house, because they all "believed in God."
20. Summary Lesson 1—We learn a lesson about God's providence—that is, in bringing Paul and Silas to prison.
21. Remember what we learned last week—prior to being imprisoned, they were beaten with rods (v22).
22. Think of it like this—Paul and Silas were overcome by the multitudes, striped naked, and beaten publicly.
23. They were then taken into the inner prison, had their feet fastened in the stocks (v24), and feared for their death.
24. It would be an understatement to suggest—from an outward perspective, they were not having a good day.
25. They were far from living their "best life now"—they were far from being healthy and wealthy—they were suffering.
26. But my question is, why? Why were they in prison? Well, for two reasons—wicked men and a wise God.
27. While wicked men meant this for evil, our wise God meant it for good, for He had elect people to save.
28. Summary Lesson 2—We learn a lesson about God's provision—by this I refer to the power of the gospel.
29. While it's true God exercised great power in shaking the prison, He exercised greater power in shaking this man's soul.
30. And then, if this were not enough, He shook his entire household; only the gospel can make such changes.
31. Summary Lesson 3—We learn a lesson about God's purpose—by this I refer to God's purpose of making one man (comprised of different kinds of people).
32. Here we have Jew and Gentile, prisoner and jailor, brought together in Christ and sharing a meal together.
33. Just think how different these men were—Paul and Silas were imprisoned, and the jailor was guarding them.
34. Perhaps we can say—these men were opposites—and yet, the passage ends with them in Christian fellowship.
35. John Stott—"It would be hard to imagine a more different group than Lydia, the slave girl, and the jailor. Racially, socially and psychologically they were worlds apart. Yet all three were changed by the same gospel and were welcomed into the same church."
36. This is in many ways the lesson of purpose of this passage—Christ was about His work of building His church.
37. And this church would be comprised of all types of people—Jew and Gentile, rich and poor, slave and free.