

God's Saving Power

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[0 : 00] We're going to begin our worship by singing to God's praise. We're singing in Psalm 90, in the Scottish Psalter, Psalm 90. We're singing from verse 13 down to the end of the Psalm, page 350 of the Psalm book, Psalm 90 at verse 13 down to the end. Turn, yet again to us, O Lord, how long thus shall it be? Let it repent thee now for those that servants are to thee. A Psalm crying out to God for his help. And the prayer at the end of the Psalm, verse 17, and let the beauty of the Lord, our God, be us upon our handiworks. Establish thou, establish them each one. We'll sing from verse 13 to 17 to God's praise, and we stand to sing.

Yet again to us, O Lord, how long thus shall it be? Let it repent thee now for those that that serve us the Lord, our God, be us upon our handiworks. Let it repent thee now for those that serve us the Lord, and let it repent thee now for those that serve us the Lord, our God, be us upon our handiworks.

O Lord, how long thin we are, and let it repent thee now for those that serve us the Lord, our God, be us upon our handiworks. O Lord, how long as shall it be? Let it repent thee now for those that serve us the Lord, our God, be us upon our handiworks. Let it repent thee now for those that serve us after thee.

O with thy tender mercy, Lord, as thou art thee satisfied, So we rejoice shall all our days, and still be glad in thee.

According as the days of thee, When we leave the past, And years when we ill have seen, So do thou make us glad.

[2 : 54] O let thy word and power appear, Thy servants face thee poor, And show us who their children dear, Thy glory evermore, And let the beauty of the Lord Our God be us upon, Our handy word established now,

Established there, ye strong. We come to God in prayer.

We bow our heads in a word of prayer. Our Father in heaven, We thank you for the beauty of this day, As we've enjoyed walking into the church here, As we've enjoyed just even looking out through our windows, On this bright sunny morning.

We thank you for the beauty it shows to us. But we thank you that behind it all is the wonder of you as the maker, The creator of it all. And we have sung of the beauty of the Lord, And we pray that the beauty of the Lord would be upon us today, As the psalm says, That we would know the joy of your presence, That we would know joy in our time of worship here, That in all that we do, We would know, Lord, that we are able to look to you, And to rejoice in you, That you are God, And there is no other.

So we pray, Lord, for everything that we do today. We pray for the time of worships we enjoy together, Both this morning and this evening. We thank you for the Sunday school, And the creche and the tweenies, And the time they enjoy together there.

[5 : 25] We thank you for times of fellowship around even just a cup of tea, And getting to know one another, And sharing with one another. We thank you for all that we have to enjoy from your hands. And we pray, Lord, that you will make us thankful, For every good gift that we have, All that you give us day by day.

We do pray, Lord, your blessing on us as a people, From young to old here. We thank you for all the homes and the families represented. Thank you for those who are tuning in online as well. And we pray that near and far, Lord, your word will go with power, That will speak to us and remind us of the greatness of God, The goodness that you have shown to us, And giving your son, Jesus Christ.

And we thank you that we come in his name asking all things. So we pray, Lord, that you will draw near to us and be with us in all that we do. That you will pardon our sins as we ask it all in that precious name of Jesus, For his sake and glory.

Amen. I'll just have a word to the young ones before you go through next door. You know, last week I was seeing how many of you were going out, Coming down through the church.

[6 : 37] And it's great to see so many of you coming week by week And going through to learn so much about Jesus and all that he has done for us. We're so thankful to be able to gather together and worship.

Now, there was something that was asked of maybe not so much the young folks, But maybe the parents, but parents might need help in order to do this. It was on the notice sheet today. And that is to register for the Sunday school. And to make it easy or make it more difficult, maybe for some, There's a QR code. And then you start thinking to yourself, What on earth is a QR code? So probably your parents or grandparents will need a little help in that being explained to them. And how it works. Because it's amazing what it can do. And you think to yourself, I've got a phone here in my pocket.

And this is all you need to register yourself at the Sunday school. But in order to do that, you need all kinds of codes. I was thinking, well, there's the QR code. But before you come to that, there's other codes you need to have as well.

[7 : 43] First, you need a passcode to get into the phone. So everyone will have their own passcode that they have to put into the phone to get entry into the phone.

And then once you're in the phone, to get to the QR code, you need the Wi-Fi code. You need access to get a connection online. And then you need to use this QR code to get to the form that you need to fill in.

It all sounds maybe a little bit complicated. But it's actually quite straightforward. You look at the QR code there and you scan it and it will do everything for you almost.

But it was reminding me as I thought of all these different codes and how they work. And how complicated things can sound. That that's sometimes the way it is with the Bible and the Gospel. How we can maybe make things sound more complicated than they really are. But how we can just look at it and see that there's actually easy access to get to the Lord Jesus.

[8 : 47] You think about a passcode. It gives you entry. Well, as you read the Bible, it's like a code. It gives you entry to come and draw near to God.

You're coming to hear what God is saying to us. Then we think of the Wi-Fi connections. One of these things that so often bothers us. When we go somewhere new or when we're out and about, is there a Wi-Fi code?

Can I get a connection? Can I get online? Well, here we've got a connection as well. A connection to Jesus. Through His Word, we have this connection.

And then we come to the QR code. Does anybody know what QR stands for? You go into shops, you go into restaurants, you go into all kinds of different places, and it can say, scan the QR code. You can sit at your table in a restaurant and order your food and everything just by scanning a QR code. Does anybody know what QR stands for? It stands for quick response.

[9 : 53] That's what it stands for. QR stands for quick response. The QR code enables you to respond quickly to something.

So this QR code on the sheet today, it allows you to respond quickly to Ian and let him know all your details for registering at Sunday school. But the Bible calls for a quick response as well.

In many ways, that's what we're going to be looking at this morning as we look in the Book of Acts. We think of a man who was in charge of a prison. He was called a jailer. He had a question. What must I do to be saved? And the people that were with him in the prison, Peter and Silas, they gave him a response.

They said, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. This is like a QR code for them. It demanded a quick response. And he believed.

[10 : 58] He trusted in the Lord Jesus. And that's what the gospel is about. We can sometimes make it seem so complicated. But it's about having an entry, coming near to God, having access to Jesus and coming with a quick response.

Believing in the Lord Jesus. So Ian wants you to respond quickly to this QR code on the sheet. But more importantly for us all is to have a QR, a quick response to the gospel.

And to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. We're going to say the Lord's Prayer together now. Let's say the Lord's Prayer. Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever. Amen.

[12:07] We're going to sing again to God's praise. We're going to sing in Psalm 130. And this is in the Scottish Psalter, page 421 of the psalm book.

Psalm 130. We can sing the whole of this psalm together. Verse 1. Lord, from the depths to thee I cried, my voice, Lord, do thou hear.

And to my supplications voice, give an attentive ear. We'll sing the whole of this psalm to God's praise. Lord, from the depths to thee I cried, my voice, Lord, do thou hear.

Lord, from the depths to thee I cried, my voice, Lord, do thou hear. And to thee I cried, my voice, Lord, do thou hear. My voice, Lord, do thou hear.

And to my supplications voice, give an attentive ear. Lord, who shall stand if thou, O Lord, do thou hear. Lord, who shall stand if thou, O Lord, shouldst hearken in pity.

[13:21] But yet with thee forgive me. Lord, who shall stand if thou, O Lord, shouldst hearken in pity. Lord, who shall stand if thou, O Lord, shouldst hearken in pity.

But yet with thee forgive me. But yet with thee forgive me. Forgivenesses that fear thou hearest me. I wait for God, my soul doth wait.

My hope is in his word. More than may that our morning watch.

My soul doth watch my soul, which are the Lord. I say more than may that to watch.

[14:51] The morning light to see. Let Israel open the Lord.

For with him blesses be. And plentiful redemption is ever found within him.

And from all his iniquities he is death shall redeem.

Give him peace and heal. Thank you. I'll return to read in God's word. Reading in the Book of Acts. Reading in chapter 16. Acts chapter 16. Amen. We're taking up our reading at verse 16, although we're taking into consideration from verse 11 this morning as well.

[16:27] We will see the conversion of Lydia, who was a businesswoman, if you like, seller of purple. But she was gathered this day with many other women in a place of prayer.

And Paul and Silas went to see her. And it says there in verse 14, One who heard us was a woman named Lydia from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshipper of God.

The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul. So we're taking that into consideration as well as we take up our reading in verse 16.

As we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her own owners much gain by fortune-telling.

She followed Paul and us, crying out, These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation. And this she kept doing for many days.

[17:42] Paul, having become greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And it came out that very hour.

But when her owners saw that their hope of gain was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers. And when they had brought them to the magistrates, they said, These men are Jews, and they are disturbing our city.

They advocate customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to accept or practice. The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates tore the garments of them and gave orders to beat them with rods.

And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely. Having received this order, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

About midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake.

[18:54] So the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's bonds were unfastened. When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped.

But Paul cried with a loud voice, Do not harm yourself, for we are all here. And the jailer called for lights and rushed in.

And trembling with fear, he fell down before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them out and said, Sir, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.

And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds. And he was baptized at once, he and all his family.

Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And he rejoiced, along with his entire household, that he had believed in God. But when it was day, the magistrate sent the police, saying, Let those men go.

[20 : 14] And their jailer reported these words to Paul, saying, The magistrates have sent to let you go. Therefore, come out now and go in peace. But Paul said to them, They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men who are Roman citizens, and have thrown us into prison.

And do they now throw us out secretly? No. Let them come themselves and take us out. The police reported these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid when they heard that they were Roman citizens.

So they came and apologized to them. And they took them out and asked them to leave the city. So they went out of the prison and visited Lydia. And when they had seen the brothers, they encouraged them and departed.

Amen. And may God bless that reading from his word. Let's again just bow our heads in a word of prayer. Let us pray. O Lord, our God, we thank you that you are a gracious, a merciful God, a God who is patient with his people, a God who is long-suffering, as your word describes, and yet a God who is so quickly able to transform people's lives.

And we thank you that you are the God, the one who has all power, the power to salvation, the power to convert, the power to change from those who are darkness to those who are in the marvelous light of the gospel.

[21 : 49] And we thank you for your transforming power, that just as you spoke this world into creation, so your voice still has power to this day, power over all people and all situations.

And we thank you that in your word, as we have read it together here, we are reminded of your power, power and control in all circumstances, circumstances that seem outwith our natural control, but yet everything is in your hands.

We think of the people we have read of in this passage, Lydia, a seller of purple, and yet one who is so wealthy, but maybe still distant from you.

But we thank you for your power, that your word opened her heart. We thank you too of a young girl who was used by masters who were making money out of her, and yet you had power to set her free.

We thank you for the Philippian jailer in his household, the one who was in fear of his very life, and yet was brought to rejoice in God. We thank you for the way your word reminds us that you have power, not just in all these circumstances, but power to this day over all our lives, lives of people who, as we often do, find ourselves in so many differing situations, how changeable our situations often are, and yet you are the one who changes not.

[23 : 23] And so we thank you that today that we are able to commit ourselves and all our loved ones and all that goes on around us into your mighty hands, praying for one another, seeking to encourage one another and build one another up.

We do, Lord, ask your blessing on us as a people, on homes and families and all our different needs, knowing, Lord, that they are many and varied, and yet none hidden from you.

We thank you that whatever our situation today, whether we are rejoicing or whether we are sorrowful, whether we are afflicted or whatever else may be going on in our lives, that we know, Lord, that you are the one who is able to give us strength.

We ask your blessing then to be upon us and to be upon those who need you in particular ways.

Again, we so often pray for those who are mourning, and we know throughout our communities there are many who are mourning at this time, mourning in very different circumstances, and yet all mourning the loss of loved ones in different ways.

We do pray, Lord, for your comfort, for your presence, for your peace in the midst of difficult circumstances. We know that connected to ourselves as a congregation, that there are many who have lost loved ones, and we just pray, Lord, that you will draw near to them and their families, communities, that your word will be blessed in the midst of times of sorrow.

[24 : 51] We think, too, of our island community. We have seen tragedy in our midst this week with the passing of Mark Elston, who was known by many even in this congregation, someone who came through the doors of the hall on a number of occasions and attended churches in different parts of our community.

We pray, Lord, for his family as they grieve his passing, his friends, those who knew him in different ways. We commit them to you, O Lord, asking for your comfort, for your grace towards them.

We know, Lord, in our world that there are so many troubles. We see it day by day. We think of Libya and the tragedy there. We think of Morocco and the earthquake.

We think of so many other conflicts going on around the world and the Ukraine and further afield.

We know, Lord, day by day that there is sadness and sorrow around us.

But we pray, too, Lord, that you will not leave us just looking down in sorrowful ways, but that you will help us to lift our eyes, to lift our eyes to you as the one who is able to do abundantly more than all that we ask or imagine.

[26 : 03] And we thank you that no matter the difficulties in this world, that with you there is hope, that the gospel is a gospel of change, of transformation.

and we know, Lord, that ultimately you will transform this world, you will transform your people. But we pray, Lord, to know your power even in these days, that we would see the power of your word going out to convict and to convert, the power of your word bringing people from darkness to light, the power of your word transforming lives and households and communities as a whole, that we would see your saving power in our midst.

We pray, O Lord, for there to be much rejoicing, the rejoicing of days of salvation, people knowing the joy of salvation. We ask, O Lord, that your power will go through our lands, throughout our world, to all ends of the earth, that your word will go out with power.

We thank you, Lord, for every way that it does go out, through every individual, through every congregation, denomination, through all your people around the world. We thank you that you have servants who bring your gospel and your people, Lord, who are salt and light in different parts.

And we pray, Lord, that you will encourage us, that you will help us to be strong in the Lord and to be encouraged that you are at work. Lord, continue to hear our prayers, bless us as we turn to your word, remember us as a people, do us good, we pray, build us up in our faith, help us to encourage and pray for one another all the more.

[27 : 45] And we ask all these things, acknowledging our shortcomings, our sinfulness in our heart, and yet thankful as we have sung that with you there is plenteous redemption.

So, Lord, forgive our sins and go with us now, continue with us throughout this day and with Adam as he's with us this evening, Lord. May you encourage him in his ministry, in his life, and in his soul. And may he be an encouragement to us too. Lord, hear us, we pray, and pardon us as we ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen. Let us again sing to God's praise.

We're going to sing in Psalm 80a. It's in the Sing Psalms version, Psalm 80a, page 106. We'll sing from verse 1 to verse 7.

Hear, O Israel, shepherd, hear us. Joseph, like a flock you lead, you who are enthroned in glory, shine upon us in our need.

[28 : 45] We'll sing from verse 1 to 7 to God's praise. Amen. Hear, O Israel, shepherd, hear us.

Joseph, Joseph, like a flock you lead, you who are enthroned in glory, shine upon us in our need.

Shine on, angel, when man has day, and forever as your might.

Turn us once again towards you. Come and save us, give us light.

O Lord God, the Lord Almighty, how long will your anchor's hope, making void your people's prayers, so that all your enemies talk.

[30 : 17] You have fed the spread of sorrow, tears in plenty we must shed.

We are now before our neighbors, humbled and discredited.

Luke on us, O God Almighty, let us see your glory bright.

Turn us once again towards you. Come and save us, give us light.

Amen. So we can turn back to our reading in the book of Acts chapter 16.

[31 : 23] And then we can read at verse 30. Acts 16 at verse 30. Then he brought them out and said, Sir, what must I do to be saved?

And they said, believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, you and your household. We're very familiar with hearing bad news.

We hear it probably every day of our lives. Some sort of bad news comes our way, whether it's very personal or local or whether it's national or international.

We hear bad news so often. And the psalm that we were singing there, Psalm 80, reminds us that that is often the case. In Psalm 80 verse 5 it says, You have fed us bread of sorrow, tears in plenty we must shed.

There are so much times of sorrow in our lives. But the psalmist then says, Look on us, O God Almighty. Let us see your glory bright.

[32 : 30] Turn us once again towards you. Come and save us. Give us light. So we often hear bad news.

But what's the best news you've heard this week? Or even in the last number of weeks, what's the best news that you've heard? What's the best news you could hear in the week ahead?

There may be many things that come to our mind when we think of good news, great things that we've heard, things that make us rejoice and are glad. But is it that we've heard of someone converted?

Is it that we've heard that God has opened the heart of someone and they've come to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? When was the last time you rejoiced in that good news?

A sinner saved. The Bible tells us that there is rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents. And that would be great news for us to hear.

[33 : 39] Maybe we have heard it in the last week or the last number of weeks. We hear of people being converted locally or in many different parts of the world. Do we go into the week ahead?

Do we come into the day-to-day with a sense of expectancy, a wonder, who the Lord will save today? Do we expect conversions to happen?

Are we praying for conversions to take place? When you look at the book of Acts, it's a wonderful book of encouragement. If you're feeling discouraged in the work of the gospel, if you're feeling discouraged in evangelism and mission, turn to the book of Acts and read through it and it reminds you that God is a God of saving power.

From the small numbers you see in the opening chapter, by the end of chapter 2 it says, the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Salvation is of God. And so the book of Acts is a wonderful reminder to us of the power of God to salvation and power of God in the midst of all kinds of different situations.

[34 : 55] It's not always easy and plain sailing for God's people as you read through the book of Acts. Even as we've read here in Acts chapter 16, Paul and Silas they're in prison.

They're bound in chains and yet God is able to use that circumstance for his glory. And it reminds us that we have to keep in mind the greater picture of God, the bigger picture of God, that in all the things that discourage us and leave us despondent and despairing, all the sad news that comes our way so often, that we can look to God and remind ourselves that God is at work.

As you go through the book of Acts, it's almost a bit like watching a child grow. If you're a parent of a child and you're with that child all the time, you're watching a child grow and maybe you don't see much change.

But if you only see that child from time to time, if you're in a relation, maybe you only sees them once a year, you'll notice a huge change, a big difference. That's the way it is with the gospel sometimes.

In the midst of the church and the work of the church, perhaps you think there's not much happening, nothing's really changing. Sometimes you have to take a step back and see that, yes, God is at work in this place.

[36 : 26] God is at work in our lives. God is a God of growth and a God of change. That's what the gospel does. As you look through the book of Acts, that's the way you see God working in his power.

Perhaps the people then, they couldn't see what God was doing until they took a step back.

Actually, when you look at chapter 1, all you see is a small group who are named.

There were so few of them. But by the time you get into chapter 2 and 3, there are thousands being added to the number being saved. It is about God's power.

That's the same God that is at work here today in our church, in our community, in our islands, in our nation, in the world. God is our God who is working in power.

And we can take encouragement from God's word that he will work, that he will do, that as we look to him and trust in him, he is able to do far more than we can even imagine.

[37 : 34] And so let us keep praying. Let us keep praising God, just like Paul and Silas here in prison, that God would work in us and through us for his glory.

Remembering God's saving power. So what we see in this section of Acts in chapter 16 is a powerful passage about conversion and the number of people that God was at work in, in very different circumstances.

You have Lydia, you have this young slave girl, you have the Philippian jailer, very different circumstances and yet God's transforming power seen in all their lives.

It's always great to hear someone's testimony, someone's story about the way God worked in their life, brought them to see and have their eyes opened to the wonder of Jesus.

And there are many conversions you see and they're maybe not surprised to us, but there are others that are complete surprised to us. We didn't see it coming, but that's how God works.

[38 : 50] He works in everyone's lives in different ways. And the Bible is full of maybe surprising conversions in our eyes. You think of Paul himself, his conversion story is told in the book on Acts on three occasions.

In chapter nine you can read about it. Saul who persecuted Christians, people were afraid of him and yet God powerfully transformed his life.

Another one is Cornelius who we read of just previous to this in the book of Acts. Again, God worked powerfully in his life. Lydia, here we are told that the Lord opened her heart.

The slave girl, she was in bondage through spirits of divination, a fortune teller, yet God set her free. And the Philippian jailer, as we will see, someone who was a hard man in so many ways and yet brought to that point of bowing before God.

What must I do to be saved? Conversions are wonderful things. You just have to read through Hebrews 11, and there you see a list of people who God worked powerfully in their lives.

[40 : 15] People of all kinds of different backgrounds, all kinds of different issues in their lives, and yet God worked powerfully in them and then through them.

The gospel is powerful, and the gospel calls for a response. And what this chapter, chapter 16, reminds us of is the wonder of God's grace.

The wonder of God's grace towards all people, men and women, boys and girls. God calls on us all to come to him.

It's this grace that is at work in all of these lives. The grace of Lydia, a business woman of great means. She would have been rich, a seller of purple, of good standing in her town, in her city.

And we see that she was one who met for prayer. In verse 13 of this chapter, it says, on the Sabbath day, we went outside the gate to the riverside. We supposed there was a place of prayer.

[41 : 29] So they went, and one who heard us was a woman named Lydia. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention.

Again, it's just this powerful way that God works. Just there and then in that moment, the Lord opened her heart. And maybe you've come in here today and your heart has been hard.

You have come in here today. You're not really listening to what God is saying to you. But in a moment, the Lord can open your heart. That is the power that he has.

That's the power that encourages us as preachers, as Christians, that we don't lose hope because God's word is powerful to open hearts. Open hearts of maybe those we've prayed for over many years.

Maybe we're losing hope of that sense of will they ever be converted. And yet this reminds us that it's the Lord who can just open a heart in a moment.

[42 : 35] In the same way as the slave girl too. She was caught up in this world where she was at the hands of her master. She was a slave girl who had a spirit of divination.

And yet in a word, her life is transformed. Her life is changed. The God of grace can set anybody free. From any bondage, any slavery that we're caught up in, God can set us free.

Why is that? Because with God it is possible. In Matthew 19 verse 26, Jesus looked at his disciples and said to them, with man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.

And what was the context? Salvation. The question was asked, how can the rich be saved? And Jesus said to them, it seems impossible to you, but with God all things are possible.

And that's a reminder to us of the power of God's word. That he is able to save, he is able to convert. And we don't lose hope because he is able to do that.

[43 : 56] And that's what we see when we come to the Philippian jailer. In this section from verse 25, where we see Paul and Silas in prison, we want to see just two things from this section.

First, we see the question that the jailer has. And then we see the response of Paul and Silas.

The jailer was given orders to guard these men. In verse 24, having received this order, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

They were put in the most secure part of the prison. And this man was put in charge of looking after them. But something remarkable was about to happen.

Paul and Silas could have been sitting there thinking, what's next for us? What's going to happen? They could have lost heart in it all.

[45 : 04] But look at what it says in verse 25. About midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God. and the prisoners were listening to them.

Here they were, they weren't losing hope, they weren't losing heart in the midst of all the badness that was around them and all the bad things that were happening to them.

They were confident in God. They were rejoicing in him, they were praying and singing hymns to God. and they were those who were beside them listening to them, listening to them as they praised God and as they sang to him.

And in the midst of this there's an earthquake. The foundation of the prison is shaken and everything just seems to change in a moment. They're free to go and yet they don't.

And the Philippian jailer in all his fear, in all his terror, here, he's in danger of losing his life. If these prisoners get away, his life would be taken.

[46 : 16] That's the way it worked with the Roman soldiers in those days. But what happens? Well we have this dramatic conversion of the Philippian jailer.

He fell down before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them out and said, Serge, what must I do to be saved?

Isn't that a wonderful question? Is that a question that you have today? Sir, what must I do to be saved?

What provokes this question in the Philippian jailer? Is it fear? Maybe a little, but fear of what? Is it a fear of retribution at the hand of his masters?

Or is it more a fear of God? You know when Paul and Silas were praying and singing, the prisoners heard it.

[47 : 23] And you wonder if the Philippian jailer heard it too. His life was about to be transformed. A life that perhaps had no thought for God until this very moment on this night.

And this was a man who would have seen so much. A Roman soldier, a jailer, he would have seen so many things in life, so many hard things, so many wicked things.

Perhaps he was involved in things himself that is now weighing heavy on his heart. He knows he has done wrong as so many of us do. He knows there are things missing in his life as so many of us do.

But it leads him to this question. What must I do to be saved? Is that the question that is eating away at you?

And you're thinking of your own life, your own situation, the way you've responded to God in the past, the way you've treated God's people in the past, the way you've lived your life in general up to this point, and yet God is speaking to you.

[48 : 43] And maybe this is the burning question that you have in your heart. What must I do to be saved? Don't just push that question away.

God is going to take you to be busy at times and you've just got a list of things that you need to get through.

but maybe God is just bringing you to a shuddering halt like this jailer. You hadn't expected any of this to happen.

An earthquake, the prisoners getting free, his own life in danger. It had happened so quickly as our lives can often be. But it leads to this question, what must I do to be saved?

Stop and ask that question. Am I saved? If not, what must I do to be saved?

[50 : 03] Well, the other thing we see in this passage, we see the question, but then we see the response. The response of Paul and Silas in verse 31, they said, believe, in the Lord Jesus and you

will be saved, you and your household.

And they spoke the word of the Lord to him. The word of the Lord was spoken to him. The word of the Lord is powerful and mighty to save.

And this is the gospel. You have the question, what must I do to be saved? And we can overcomplicate it so much.

But the simple answer is here before us. Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved.

Now, the response of Paul and Silas could have been so different here. They had been beaten by this man. They had been put into the innermost part of the prison and put their feet in stocks to this man.

[51 : 16] They could have easily turned and say, you deserve nothing. And grace, no chance. But what they do is they point him to the gospel.

And thanks be to God that he doesn't treat us as we deserve. That he doesn't turn to us and say, you don't deserve, mercy. You don't deserve grace.

He could, but he doesn't. Instead, he gave his own son for us. He showed his love by sending his son into this world to die on a cross for his people.

He bore our sins. He bore the punishment that we deserved. He showed grace when we didn't deserve it. And that's what Paul and Silas remind us of here.

If someone comes to us who's mistreated us, our natural response is to want harm for them, not good. But our ultimate desire should be their salvation, that God would have mercy on their soul, that they too would come and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

[52 : 35] In the midst of tribulation, in the midst of hardship, here, Paul and Silas find an opportunity to be used by God to lead someone to salvation.

Isn't that wonderful? And how often do we hear Paul reminding us that it's rejoicing in tribulation? salvation. You see it so often in Paul's life and others life in the Scripture, it's through their hardships, through their suffering, that they see the greatest glory being given to God.

And we have to understand that too, that sometimes it's in our greatest tribulation that God is working most powerfully, whether it's in us or through us for someone else, that we are reminded of the power of God to save.

Faith in God makes us great optimists, somebody once said. And that's what we are guided to here, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.

The missionary Adoniram Judson, he was a missionary in Burma in the 1800s, and it was a very difficult place.

[53 : 56] And yet over a number of years, he saw a few converted. But he was always optimistic. He knew that's where God wanted him.

Even though things seemed so dark and difficult, even at a time when he ended up in prison, he still held on to the hope and the power of the gospel. He spent over 20 months in prison at one stage. And during his time in prison, as he was chained beside other prisoners, one prisoner turned to him, smirking and sneering at him. And he said, Dr.

Judson, what about the prospect of conversion of the heathen now? Dr. Judson replied instantly.

He said, the prospects are just as bright as the promises of God. And that is our hope in the gospel.

[54 : 57] We don't lose hope because the prospects today are just as bright as the promises of God. That is what the power of the gospel reminds us of.

There is salvation in no one else, but in the Lord Jesus Christ. And that is what we are guided to here. We have the question, what must I do to be saved?

The answer is clear and simple. Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved.

And the word saved here is full of God's promise. It means to be rescued from all harm and danger and to be kept safe and sound.

To be rescued from all harm and danger and kept safe and sound. And that is what the Philippian jailer came to know.

[56 : 07] That is what the young slave girl came to know. That is what Lydia came to know. by the grace of God. What must I do to be saved today?

Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved. You will be rescued from all harm and danger and you will be kept safe and sound.

God God said to God God says to us for this is the will of my father that everyone who looks on the son and believes in him should have eternal life and I will raise him up on the last day.

That is the security of Christ. The salvation that we have in Christ as we believe in him. Do you have that question today?

What must I do to be saved? Is it burning in your heart? Is it troubling you? Is it keeping you awake at night?

[57 : 23] What must I do to be saved? Here is the answer. believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved.

God can open our hearts in an instant and give us his peace of that salvation and that security. If you have that question don't let it go. Don't push it away but plead with the Lord Jesus for mercy. come to him. Believe in him and know this great assurance of security and salvation with him. What must I do? Believe in the Lord Jesus. Let us pray. Lord our God our Father in heaven we thank you that your word is powerful that your word is sharper than any two edged sword that is a power to cut us right to the heart and we pray today Lord that you will bring that word of power to us that we will know it not in a way that just rebukes us and makes us feel cast down but in a way that lifts us up a way that reminds us that we can come to you a way that we can approach with all our questions and find in you all the answers that we need and if we have that lack of assurance we have the doubt that we are deserving of your mercy and grace we thank you that your word reminds us that though we are not yet you give it freely and that we are commanded that we are might know his great salvation help us to find that peace as we seek for it as we ask it in

[59 : 28] Jesus name Amen we're going to conclude by singing again in Psalm 80 Psalm 80 page 107 of the psalm book verse 17 down to the end of the psalm let your hand be placed in blessing on the man at your right hand on the son of man you've chosen whom alone you caused to stand then we will not wander from you turning from you to our shame strengthen us revive and heal us then we'll call upon your name look on us Lord God almighty let us see your glory bright turn us once again towards you come and save us give us light we stand to sing these words to God's praise let let your hand be placed in blessing on the man at your right hand on the son of man you've chosen

Then we'll call upon your name. Look on us, Lord God Almighty, Let us see your glory bright.

Turn us once again towards you. Come and save us, give us light.

After the benediction, I'll go to the door to my left. We'll close the benediction. Now may grace, mercy, and peace from God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, that rest upon and abide with us all now and forevermore.

Amen. Amen.

[62 : 48] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Jenkins■