

A TREMBLING MAN WITH A GREAT QUESTION (Acts 16:25-34)

I. The situation.

A. Paul and Silas had come into Philippi after Paul had received a vision of a man from the Greek region of Macedonia asking him for spiritual help.

1. Paul rightly realized that vision had come from God (Acts 16:10).
2. Because of this Paul immediately made preparation to go to Macedonia.

B. These two great missionaries made a bee line for Macedonia and in just a few days reached the city of Philippi, which was the chief city of the area (Acts 16:11).

1. Philippi is called a colony.
 - a. This area, over 100 years before Paul and Silas came to it, was the site of the battle that decided the course of the Roman Empire.
 - b. Anthony and Octavian, later known as Caesar Augustus, defeated Brutus and Cassius, the two men who murdered Julius Caesar.
2. When Augustus had complete power, he commemorated the victory there by letting some of his retired soldiers settle there.
3. Thus, it became a Roman colony and anyone born there was born a Roman citizen, like Paul had been in Tarsus.

C. We know that Paul and Silas, as well as Luke, went to the Gangites River, and there met Lydia and other Jewish women and converted Lydia.

D. Following this, Paul and Silas went into the city itself and began to wander the streets of it.

1. While doing so, a young lady possessed by a demon began following them and crying out about them being servants of God.
2. This went on for many days we are told until Paul had had enough and he cast the demon out of the woman.

E. This angered her owners because they could no longer make any money off of her.

F. The owners grabbed both of the missionaries and took them before the judge of the city and accused them of teaching things that Romans could not obey.

G. The judge had them beaten with rods and then cast into jail.

H. The keeper of the jail was commanded to keep them securely.

1. It was not enough for these two men to simply be in a jail cell together.
2. They were also put in stocks.

I. That night, around midnight, Paul and Silas were comforting themselves by singing songs of praise to God and praying.

1. We know that through singing, we are teaching one another.
2. Acts 16:25 says that the other prisoners were listening, thus, even while imprisoned, these two men were teaching.

J. All of the sudden there was a great earthquake which caused all the doors to open and all of the prisoners chains to come unloosened from them.

1. The jailer had been asleep and was awakened, as we might imagine, by the earthquake.
2. Seeing all the doors opened, he believed the prisoners had escaped.
3. He knew that he would be put to death for allowing the prisoners to

escape, just as the 12 guards had been when Peter was led out of prison by an angel, recorded in Acts 12.

4. Because of this knowledge, he decided to end his own life with his sword.

5. Paul cried out to him to let him know all the prisoners were still there.

II. The investigation.

A. Upon finding out that all were there, the man brought a light and quickly came to Paul and Silas.

B. He then asked the greatest, most important question he could ask: what must I do to be saved?

1. From what was he asking to be saved?

2. He had just been saved from death by Paul's cry.

3. He had not died in the earthquake.

4. It has to be a spiritual question he was asking.

C. Notice the parts of the question.

D. What do:

1. This man realized there was something to be done to be saved.

2. He understood that he was not saved and needed to do something to become saved.

3. We know there is nothing in the absolute sense one can do to earn salvation (Ephesians 2:8-9).

4. However, Jesus said that we must "do" the will of God (Matthew 7:21).

5. Only those that obey Jesus will be saved (Hebrews 5:9).

6. There is no way to earn salvation (Romans 4:4), but, we are active in being saved (Acts 2:40).

E. Must:

1. This word is an imperative.

2. He realized he needed saving and there had to be something that must be done in order to be saved.

3. He knew there was no option but to do whatever he would be told.

4. He didn't want recommendations of thoughts, he wanted to know exactly what he had to do to obtain salvation.

5. He wanted specifics, not generalities.

F. I:

1. He realized no one could do this for him.

2. He wasn't asking what anyone else had to do, only what he had to do.

3. He realized his salvation did not depend on anyone else's goodness or level of spirituality.

4. For him, salvation was very personal.

G. To be saved:

1. We don't know how this man came to know he was lost but he did.

2. People need to know they are lost before they can know they need to be saved.

3. He also realized he couldn't save himself and that anything he had done before this time had not allowed him to be saved.

4. He was coming to these men in humility with a desire to be obedient.

H. This man came to the right source for an answer.

1. There were a bunch of prisoners there but he went to these men.

2. We must always go to the best source possible for the answer to our questions.

I. Paul and Silas were the correct and best source for the answer to the question asked by this man.

III. The explanation.

A. As soon as he asked, they told him to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and he would be saved.

B. This verse has been used by an innumerable amount of false teachers to say that the New Testament teaches salvation by faith only.

C. Why did Paul and Silas tell the jailer that he would be saved if he believed in Jesus?

1. The truth is, this man was a pagan if anything religiously.

2. He knew nothing about Jesus.

3. Paul and Silas started with this man where he was.

D. Those on the Day of Pentecost were not told to believe.

1. They had sat there and listened to a sermon pointing out the deity of Jesus and their involvement in putting Jesus to death.

2. Some of them, based on what they already knew and then had heard from the apostles, came to a belief in Jesus as God's Son.

3. They had already believed, so, when they asked what they needed to do, Peter didn't have to tell them to believe.

4. We must start with people where they are and lead them to the next step they must take to accept the grace of God.

E. It is obvious that to believe, in this passage, is a part put for the whole of what this man needed to do.

1. No doubt this man would have wondered, "Who in the world is Jesus Christ and why is He called Lord"?

2. We know that Paul and Silas began to preach the word of the Lord to him and those in his house.

3. In this sermon, they were more fully able to elaborate on what this man, and all men, needed to do to be saved.

F. The New Testament plainly teaches that faith only does not save.

1. Would anyone say that the Jewish priests who believed in Jesus but would not confess Him were saved (John 12:42-43)?

2. Would anyone say the demons who believed on Jesus as God's Son were saved (James 2:19)?

3. Faith only cannot save anyone (James 2:24, 26).

G. It is evident that Paul and Silas taught the need for repentance and the need for baptism in order to be saved.

IV. The implementation.

A. Notice Acts 16:33.

1. He first washed their stripes - this is his repentance.

2. He then was immersed, the meaning of the word translated baptized.

B. He implemented in his life exactly what Paul and Silas had said to do as an answer to his question.

C. The fact is, their answer, "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ", leaves nothing out that one must do to be saved.

1. Salvation is achieved only through Jesus (John 14:6).

2. If one believes in Jesus, that person will do what Jesus says to do to be saved.

D. Jesus has told us what to do in order to be saved.

1. One must believe in Him, just as the two missionaries pointed out (John 8:24).

2. One must repent of sins, just as the two missionaries must have pointed out (Luke 13:3, 5).

3. No doubt that we must confess Christ with our mouths (Matthew 10:32-33).

4. There is no doubt that God wants us to be baptized (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38).

E. Faith only can't give eternal life or else the demons would have it.

F. Faith only can't save us because faith, by itself, is dead.