

- 2) The Gospel message is vital to salvation.
  - a) All men are guilt sinners before our holy God.
  - b) Every man's sin condemns his soul to an eternal hell separated from God.
  - c) When the Holy Spirit convict of sin, the sinner must repent (change his mind about his sin, his eternal destiny, his ability to save himself, and Christ's substitutionary payment for his entire sin debt).
  - d) (1 Corinthians 15:3-4) "*For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.*"
- 3) If you are not positive you have been saved, the wise thing to do is to ask a Christian for spiritual help.

#### 4. He **accepted** Christ's payment by faith

##### a. He **believed** on the Lord Jesus Christ

- 1) The words *believe* and *faith* come from the same root. Believe is a verb and faith is a noun. Faith is acting upon trusted information.
- 2) The faith action that saves a sinner is admitting his inability and placing his entire trust in Christ's ability to save him from hell. The jailor did not do any good deed to be saved. He simply admitted his guilt and placed his trust in Christ's atonement to save him from hell.

##### b. He **believed on** the Lord Jesus Christ

- 1) He believed ON the Lord Jesus Christ. The word *on* is the Greek word *eis* meaning upon or toward. He did not believe about Jesus, he believe upon Him. He rested his eternal soul upon the finished work of Christ to pay for his sins.
- 2) Faith in Jesus Christ alone is able to save your soul.

**Conclusion:** The jailor **admitted** his doom, **abandoned** his self-efforts, **asked** for spiritual help, and **accepted** Christ's payment by faith. The hardest part about being saved is climbing over our pride. Have you taken the four steps that the jailor did that day? If not, you need to. It is your only hope of being saved from hell.

**Song:** Just As I Am - 249

# Vital Question

4 November 2018 – Acts 16:30-31 – Salvation – Scott Childs

**Introduction:** On Paul's second missionary trip, he walked across Asia (modern Turkey) visiting the churches he had started on his first trip. When he reached Troas, the Holy Spirit urged him to go into Macedonia to preach the Gospel. At Philippi, Lydia and others trusted Christ. After Paul cast a demon out of a girl, he and Silas were beaten with rods and cast into prison. The jailor roughly through them into the inner prison and locked their feet in the stocks. That night God sent an earthquake that shook the jail and loosed all their bonds. Fearing that the prisoners had escaped, the jailor prepared to kill himself, but Paul called out and stopped him. At this, he rushed into the prison trembling and asked Paul a vital question, "*Sirs, what must I do to be saved?*"

**Transition:** When the jailor asked, "*Sirs, what must I do to be saved?*", his question reveals four requirements for entering heaven

## 1. He **admitted** that he was condemned to eternal hell

### a. His desire to be saved admits that he was in trouble.

- 1) The word "*saved*" means to rescue from danger.
- 2) The word, in and of itself, does not tell us what that danger is, it simply states a need to be rescued from a serious problem.
- 3) In the context, the jailor was obviously speaking of a spiritual danger.
  - a) He survived the earthquake. That was not the danger any longer.
  - b) He did not kill himself as he prepared to do. That was no longer the danger.
  - c) Why did he come in trembling and fall down before Paul and Silas? He did so because he feared the spiritual danger about which they had been preaching.

### b. He **understood the true state of his soul**

- 1) The jailor was admitting that he was a sinful man deserving God's just punishment in the Lake of Fire for all

eternity. He understood that his sins were not just mistakes, bad choices, flaws, or accidents. He saw his sins from God's perspective as wicked offenses before a holy righteous God.

- 2) He did not cry out, "Sirs, how can I go to heaven?" or "Sirs, how can I have a better life?" He cried, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" He longed to be saved from the damnation he deserved.
- 3) My friend, hell is a very real place where millions are suffering right now because they never admitted their need to be saved. This is what Jesus said about a rich man in hell. (Luke 16:24-26) "*And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.*"
- 4) I fear that many professing Christians have never truly seen themselves as guilty sinners deserving of God's judgment in the Lake of Fire.
  - a) No one can be saved until he sees himself in great danger of God's judgment.
  - b) Trusting Jesus is not just receiving a free ticket to heaven.

## 2. He **abandoned** his efforts to save himself

### a. Perhaps he had been trusting in his good deeds

- 1) The jailor lived in a godless land, but even godless people have within them a sense of right and wrong.
- 2) Before hearing Paul preach, he may not have known about heaven and hell, but once he heard, he must have still thought he was an okay person.
- 3) Many people have told me that they think they will go to heaven because they are good people. However, God says the opposite.

- a) (Ecclesiastes 7:20) "*For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.*"
- b) (Romans 3:23) "*For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;*"
- c) (Titus 3:5) "*Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;*"

### b. He realized that he could not save himself

- 1) That realization changed the course of his future. He knew that he was a sinner and he finally realized that he was absolutely helpless to change that fact.
- 2) No amount of good living can erase even one of your sins. God does not judge man's lives on scales to see if good outweighs bad. That would be pointless because God tells us that even our good is far from perfect. (Isaiah 64:6) "*But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.*"

## 3. He **asked** for spiritual help

### a. He knew that his need was spiritual

- 1) The Bible record does not give us all the details, but from the jailor's words, we know that he must have heard Paul and Silas preach the Gospel. It is evident that the Holy Spirit had been working in his heart.
- 2) He knew exactly which prisoners to ask for help.
- 3) He knew that they could answer his question.
- 4) Salvation is a mystery because the Holy Spirit must use the Word of God to convict a sinner of his doomed condition before God. Salvation is of the Lord, yet man must repent and agree with God and believe on Christ to be saved. God is not willing that any should perish, yet not all will come to repentance (2Pe 3:9).

### b. He asked Paul and Silas for help

- 1) That night, the jailor took Paul and Silas to his home and they spoke the word of the Lord to him (Ac 16:33). They more clearly explained the Gospel to him.