

Baptized by Water and the Spirit.

January 7, 2018 – Acts 16:25; 31-34 PRISON MINISTRY

“About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God and the other prisoners were listening to them..... They replied, Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved – you and your household. Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed -- their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized.

The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God – he and his whole family.”

When Lazarus – The brother of Mary and Martha (John ch. 11) was raised from the dead. He did not raise himself from the dead, nor did he assist in raising himself in any way, shape or form. It was all Jesus, Who raised Lazarus, because Jesus is God.

When we were born, we did not have any say in where or when we would be born. We did not have any say in who our parents would be or not be, or what religion we would be born into. We did not assist in our birth in any way, shape or form.

When we were brought to faith in Jesus, it was not because we are so powerful or smart or wealthy or that we made a decision for Jesus.

Rather Jesus tells us plainly in **John 15:16** – *You did not choose ME, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit – fruit that will last.*

In Baptism we see God’s power at work as the Lord God creates saving, living faith in our once cold stone dead hearts (Eze 11:19; Ez. 36:26). God brings us from spiritual death to spiritual life. (Eph. 2:1-10)

We cannot choose to believe in God nor are we able to assist or make a decision for Jesus.

As the Jailer in Philippi asks the question, he is totally lost, he is on the brink of despair and taking his own life. The jailer in Philippi is on the verge of taking his own life because he thought that the prisoners – whom he was in charge of guarding – had escaped.

As a Roman soldier, when prisoners escape, it meant that the soldier in charge of guarding them was to be put to death. But before the jailer could take his own life, the Apostle Paul, called out.

Vs. 28 – Do not harm yourself! We are all here!

Let us back up a little bit.

How is it that Paul and Silas ended up in prison?

How did they end up in prison?

Answer: Doing The Work of the Lord God.

The Lord God had Called them to Philippi through a dream of the man from Macedonia, Calling them to come to Macedonia.

So now that Paul and Silas were in Philippi –as they were going to the place of Prayer to proclaim Christ, a slave girl possessed by an evil spirit and able to predict the future for her owner, began to shout, **“These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved.”** (Acts 16:17)

This slave girl continued to do this until The Apostle Paul became so troubled that he commanded the spirit to leave her by saying, **“In the Name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!”**

By doing this, it angered the owners, since now they had lost their means of income. Thus the owners dragged Paul and Silas into the market place, and told the authorities that Paul and Silas were causing an up roar. This turned into a riot and the crowds also joined in and we soon see that Paul and Silas were beaten, flogged and put into prison.

While Paul and Silas are in prison, what do they do? What would you do if you were put in prison for telling someone about their Savior Jesus?

While in prison we learn that Paul and Silas ***“Were praying and singing hymns to God”*** Acts 16:25.

While Paul & Silas were praying and singing hymns there was an earthquake which resulted in the chains falling off and the doors of the prison coming open. This led to an opportunity for “Prison Ministry” as the jailer, trembling with fear, fell before Paul and Silas and asked, ***“What must I do to be saved?”***

Of course the answer is: ***Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.***

The Jailer then took them to his house and washed their wounds:

Vs. 33 – At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized.

What happens in Baptism?

It is not just empty words or some hocus pocus, rather it is God’s Word connected to the water that creates faith in the heart of people from infancy to the golden years. We learn of the power and blessing of Baptism in these simple words of the Apostle Peter such on that First Pentecost Sunday after the resurrection:

Acts 2:38 – “Repent and be baptized, everyone of you in the Name of Jesus Christ FOR THE FORGIVENESS of your sins and you WILL receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 – The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off – for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

Each one us has been made priests and priestesses and kings and queens in God’s Kingdom.

Each one of us has the privilege of proclaiming Christ Jesus as Savior and Lord even in the most unlikely places regardless of where that may be.

In our baptism, we become connected to Jesus Who was also baptized.

Jesus insisted on being baptized Himself. When Jesus was baptized, He deliberately took our place as God the Father had sent Him to do.

II Corinthians 5:21 – “God made HIM, Who had no sin, to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.” -

- δικαιοσυνη θεου -

I Peter 3:18-22 – “For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit, 19 through Whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison 20 who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, 21 and this water symbolizes baptism that NOW SAVES you also – not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It SAVES YOU by the resurrection of Jesus Christ 22 – Who has gone into heaven and is at God’s right hand – with angels, authorities and powers in submission to HIM.” AMEN