

Woodland Baptist Church  
 May 23, 2012 - Wednesday Night in the Word  
 Acts 16:25-40 The Jailer is Saved

1) INTRODUCTION

2) READ VERSES 25-40

3) VERSES 25-26 God's \_\_\_\_\_ can come

a) <sup>25</sup> **About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, <sup>26</sup>and 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 bonds were unfastened.**

i) The persecutors, known as lickert's, intended to dishearten and discourage Paul and Silas, but instead has the opposite effect.

(1) After being beaten the way they had been, one might expect moaning and growing, as they had to be sore, lonely and wondering if God was with them at all – but that was not the case. They praised God that they were *worthy to endure suffering* for the cause of Christ – Philippians 3:10-11 - 10 I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, 11 and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

ii) **Psalm 119:57-64** - 57 You are my portion, LORD; I have promised to obey your words. 58 I have sought your face with all my heart; be gracious to me according to your promise. 59 I have considered my ways and have turned my steps to your statutes. 60 I will hasten and not delay to obey your commands. 61 Though the wicked bind me with ropes, I will not forget your law. 62 **At midnight I rise to give you thanks for your righteous laws.** 63 I am a friend to all who fear you, to all who follow your precepts. 64 The earth is filled with your love, LORD; teach me your decrees.

b) **And the prisoners were listening to them** – the Spirit moved the disciples to sing and it was so unusual and so shocking that everyone in the prison chimed in to listen to them sing...no doubt some form of deliverance Psalm...and while they are singing...suddenly...

- i) **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 bonds were unfastened** – while Paul and Silas were singing and most likely being mocked and ridiculed by some of the prisoners – an earthquake would strike terror upon them and convince them that there was some form of divine hedge placed around these singers in the night...As earnest prayer provokes the power of God to shake the upper room...now the jail is shaken by the power of God through prayer.

(1) The results – all the doors were flung open to the cells and all the manacles are loosed from all the prisoners – freedom from the bondage of guilty chains.

4) VERSES 27-32 Our \_\_\_\_\_ to his intervention can \_\_\_\_\_ souls

- a) <sup>27</sup> **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.** <sup>28</sup> **But Paul cried with a loud voice, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here."** <sup>29</sup> **And the jailer called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas.** <sup>30</sup> **Then he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"** <sup>31</sup> **And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."** <sup>32</sup> **And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house.**

i) **When the jailer woke** – there is no question a spiritual metaphor here – Ephesians 5:8-14 - 8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light 9 (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) 10 and find out what pleases the Lord. 11 Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. 12 It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. 13 But everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light. 14 This is why it is said: "Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.

- ii) **He drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing the prisoners had escaped** -

(1) Notice that when he realized that all prison doors had been opened that his instinctive response was to what? Commit suicide! Why? Because his responsibility was to make sure the prisoners were kept imprisoned and he assumed that all of them would have escaped if the doors to the cells were open, especially the two prisoners most recently added to the census...but, they had not escaped, for whatever reason, they remained in the jail and speak out to the Jailer as he is about to fall on his sword. (Most likely the jailer had heard of Peter's escape from the Sanhedrin – Acts 12:19)

(a) *Matthew Henry* – “It was strange that some of them did not slip away, when the prison-doors were opened, and they were loosed from their bands; but their amazement held them fast, and being sensible it was by the prayers of Paul and Silas that they were loosed, they would not stir unless they stirred; and God showed his power in binding their spirits, as much as in loosing their feet.”

iii) What does Paul say? **Do not harm yourself, for we are all here –**

- (1) The Jailer called for “lights” – (the light of the gospel, perhaps?) – and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas
- (2) So, just the day before he was an antagonist toward these men...and now...he is falling at their feet in repentance asking the question that resides in the hearts of all men...

iv) What is the primary question the jailer asks? **Sirs, what must I do to be saved?**

- (1) *J.W. McGarvey* – “In the midst of life and health, when all goes well with us, we may thrust this awful question from us; but when we come within an inch of death, like the jailer at midnight, hanging over the point of his own sword, it rushes in upon the soul like a lava torrent, and burns out all other thoughts.”
- (2) What did Paul and Silas say? Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.
- (3) Notice the willingness of the repentant heart being converted by the Holy Spirit – his willingness to do whatever he must do to be saved and have what they have. How many times do we come across those in the church that draw the line and say, “No, I will not do that for the Lord.” Not the jailer – whatever was required is what he is ready to do.

(a) *Matthew Henry* – “Those who are thoroughly convinced of sin, and truly concerned about their salvation, will surrender at discretion to Jesus Christ, will give him a blank to write what he pleases, will be glad to have Christ upon his own terms, Christ upon any terms.”

v) Notice:

(1) The roles played – Paul was persecutor, now sharing Christ with a persecutor.

(2) The willingness to evangelize in a crisis - notice that they were ready to receive his questions no matter the circumstance – although they were tired, cold, bruised, beaten sleepy and sore...they lovingly shared Christ with him...they did not put him off and tell him to come by the river later...they struck while the iron was hot...we must harvest when fruit hangs low!

(3) The forgiveness offered – the beating, torture and harsh jail conditions are not mentioned – this man’s soul took priority over everything else.

vi) <sup>32</sup> **And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house.**

(1) We should always have the Word of the Lord ready in our hearts and minds to minister, for we never know when the Lord will call upon us to witness for him – and we must be ready, we must be read! To be ready, we must be WELL READ! We must be prepared in season and out of season.

b) Very, very ironic that the magistrates, likerts and owners of the slave girl in trying to end the trouble-causing prayer meeting by the river, had unknowingly advanced the gospel even into the stench and darkness of the Philippian jail.

5) VERSES 33-34 \_\_\_\_\_ brings refreshment, healing and \_\_\_\_\_

a) <sup>33</sup> **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. <sup>34</sup>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.**

i) Notice now they were welcome in the jailer’s private quarters and given access to the finest his home can offer – nurturing for their wounds, a comfortable place to sleep and the jailer submits to **baptism**.

(1) **1 Cor 9:11-12** - 11 If we have sown spiritual seed among you, is it too much if we reap a material harvest from you? 12 If others have this right of support from you, shouldn't we have it all the more?

6) VERSES 35-36 God's intervention can \_\_\_\_\_ our \_\_\_\_\_.

a) <sup>35</sup> But when it was day, the magistrates sent the police, saying, "Let those men go." <sup>36</sup> And the jailer reported these words to Paul, saying, "The magistrates have sent to let you go. Therefore come out now and go in peace."

i) What a quick change of heart these magistrates had...what had happened?

(1) The Earthquake they had felt the night before caused them concern to come and check on the prisoners and allow them to leave.

(2) Their consciences had kept them tossing and turning all night for the abuse they had allowed Paul and Silas to receive without a fair hearing.

(3) Or...the fact that this order was given with no further developments may indicate that they had only imprisoned the brethren, as they had scourged them, to gratify the mob; and now that the clamor of the mob had ceased, they had no further motive to detain them.

ii) **1 Peter 3:13-17** - 13 Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? 14 But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. "Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened." 15 But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, 16 keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. 17 For it is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

7) VERSES 37-38 God's \_\_\_\_\_ must not be \_\_\_\_\_

a) <sup>37</sup> **But Paul said to them, "They have beaten us publicly, un-condemned, 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."** <sup>38</sup> **The police reported these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid when they heard that they were Roman citizens.**

i) Paul was not seeking vengeance, but the protection that was available under the law that had been circumvented for whatever reason in the heat of the moment the day before.

ii) *Matthew Henry* – “He did it likewise to mollify (to sooth their disposition) the magistrates toward the Christians at Philippi, and to gain better treatment for them. It would engender in the people a better opinion of the Christian religion, when they saw that Paul had a fair advantage against their magistrates and could have brought his action against them calling them to account for what they had done, and yet did not take advantage, which was very much to the honor of that worthy name by which he was called.”

8) VERSES 39-40 God’s \_\_\_\_\_ demands \_\_\_\_\_.

a) <sup>39</sup> **So they came and apologized to them. And they took them out and asked them to leave the city.** <sup>40</sup>**So they went out of the prison and visited Lydia. And when they had seen the brothers, they encouraged them and departed.**<sup>6</sup>

- i) The terms were promptly complied with – for men who can be induced to pervert justice by the clamor of an unthinking mob will nearly always prove cowardly and weak-minded when their crimes are exposed, and justice is likely to overtake them.
- ii) If the repentance of these magistrates had been sincere, they would not have desired them to leave the city but would have courted their stay, and begged of them to continued in their city, to show them the way of salvation.

## 9) CLOSING THOUGHTS

a) God’s intervention can come suddenly

- i) We must never forget that God knows exactly where we are and is intimately involved in our circumstances; although he can and does intervene suddenly, sometimes his intervention happens slowly over a long period of time and uses human agents, instead of natural ones such as earthquakes and storms.

b) Our response to his intervention can win souls

- i) We must always remember that salvation begins and ends with God through the provision of his son, independent of our works, however, there is no question that we are called to share the gospel and enter into the suffering of others for the purpose of Gospel ministry. We must respond by the leading of the Spirit and be willing to put our selves at risk for God.

c) Fellowship brings refreshment, healing and rejoicing

- i) **1 John 1:1-4** - 1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life— 2 the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us— 3 that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our **fellowship** is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. 4 And we are writing these things so that our **joy** may be complete.
- ii) Christian fellowship brings peace with God first, then peace with mankind, as Paul taught, Romans 12:18 - If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. How the world know we are his disciples? Our love we show to one another.

d) God's intervention can change our circumstances

- i) Remember that changing our circumstance does not always mean our deliverance. It may be God's will that we suffer and or die, much like Christ and the apostles...our attitude should always be for his will, no matter what that means.
- ii) Daniel 3:16-18 - 16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. 17 If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. **18 But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."**

e) God's intervention/works must not be concealed

- i) When God has clearly intervened and done miraculous works, we should let his works be know to the world...not concealed and hidden.
- ii) **Matthew 5:14-16** - 14 "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

f) God's Intervention demands exoneration