

Steve Clem's TSOM Internship Journal

Date: 3.23.2010

Scripture: Acts 16:29-31 (FAITH – The basic gospel devotional series)

And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household."

More in-depth reading: Acts 16

Insight: This jailer ended up with quite a testimony! Prior to Paul and Silas becoming prisoners, we do not know the heart of this man or the specifics of God preparing him for salvation. But we do know that after the earthquake shook the jail from its foundations and woke him up, as he thought the prisoners had escaped, he was ready to kill himself. I can see that he thought this was the end of the line for him. Better to commit suicide than to face his Roman overlords. Cruel masters indeed. Perhaps this was more honorable in his mind.

But, God and these events brought this man and his household to a place of preparedness for faith. The first thing that really stands out is that when the earthquake hit, all of the prison doors opened and all of the prisoner's shackles were loosed. This is clear to me that God himself wanted to make a point. It is in His character to open doors no one can close and close doors no one can open. And He breaks the chains that bind us. He is a kind Master indeed. A key point is that I believe He wanted to bring the jailer and his family to the point of salvation. Had the jailer been destined for death, it would be no small matter for the prisoners to have escaped, thus sealing his doom. But Paul, in season and out of season, always ready, cried out to stop the jailer from committing suicide. Paul saved him from his spiritual blindness and at a moment of extreme vulnerability, the jailer asked "what must I do to be saved". Perhaps, God had been working on him after all, or the realization of what he had almost done to himself, hit home.

We see also, the power of God in this situation. Intellectual faith did not work here. This event was ground shaking, earth shattering, faith-building stuff. And a Christian remained steadfast in God, not wavering, not escaping at the opportune time, but when asked, revealed Christ alone saves. Key to remember, is that the promise to the jailer is that through belief in the Lord Jesus Christ, he and his household would be saved. Years ago, I thought, this particular scripture would also apply to all believers. Get saved and all of your loved ones would be saved. But, I have to pause and ponder if this is really what is meant. Was this prophetic for only the jailer's household? Maybe, but I noticed in chapter 16, that Lydia and her household were also saved and baptized when she believed Paul's message by the riverside. So what I discover is that the person that is saved is a powerful influence over their households. I believe that the jailer was so moved that his family would have rejoiced over his salvation. First, he was saved from suicide, then was saved by faith into the family of God, and later his family followed suit. Lydia's salvation and baptism were not as dramatic, however there must have been a marked change in her. In both cases, I can imagine a vibrant, relieving, and joyful faith. Immediate baptism must have added a new dimension to the experience. What family member would not take note of these events and strange customs?

Prayer Request(s): Lord, help me to influence my daughter in a positive way by my faith. Help me to recognize the moment when she is ready, and if I have to baptize her as the priest of my family, then so be it. We'll baptize her in the bathtub and then when she is ready for public confession, we will take her to the church.

Answered Prayer: I have everything I need in this life to live a godly life in Christ Jesus and lead my family to growth in faith.

Insights into non-biblical reading: none.

Personal reflection: Lydia and the jailer were both baby Christians and followed Paul and Silas's leadership unto baptism. But I am struck by the fact that they didn't wait until Sunday service or for the scheduled baptism to come about. They did it immediately. Why wait? How different things are in our western culture. I have never considered expediency in water baptism. Of course, a person has to be ready for "public" confession. But, in this biblical account, I see a few witnesses are just as sufficient.