

RECEIVING REDEMPTION

"What's It Mean to Be Saved?"

Acts 16:25-34

INTRODUCTION:

The basis for today's lesson is the conversion of a man and his house in Philippi. The city was named for Philip of Macedon, who conquered it in 360 B.C. It was in the Macedonian region of Achaia and was also a Roman colony. Paul visited Philippi on his second preaching tour, and it was on this visit also that Lydia & her group became members.

In cities like Philippi where there was no synagogue Jews usually met at a peaceful place, usually by a river or some water source, to engage in their worship, prayers, and scripture readings. Acts 16:16-24 relates that it was at a time such as this when they were going to the place of prayer that Paul & Silas were met by the slave girl who was possessed by a spirit. Then for several days she followed them around announcing them to be **servants of the Most High God, who were proclaiming the way of salvation!** Because of such annoyance Paul cast out her spirit of divination, only to acquire the wrath of those who had been profiting from the girl's fortunetelling. *So Paul & Silas were arrested, beaten and thrown into prison.* **[READ TEXT]**

Whether God uses **extraordinary events** to bring salvation to people, or the *simple preaching of the gospel, He will always do as He promised --- HE'LL SAVE ALL WHO BELIEVE IN AND FOLLOW AFTER HIS SON, OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST!*

I. WHAT DOES "SALVATION" MEAN?

- A. The word salvation is translated from the Greek word *soteria* [σωτηρια-4991] and "denotes deliverance, preservation, or salvation" - Vines Expos.Dict.NT Wds.
1. Vines: "The word is used in the NT of the spiritual and eternal deliverance granted immediately by God to those who accept His conditions of repentance & faith in the Lord Jesus, in Whom alone it is to be obtained, Acts 4:12."
 2. "Salvation" is a **quality relationship** granted in the mind of God *when we are forgiven and BY WHICH we gain entrance into His family, or His church!* Acts 2:47-*"praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved."*
 3. It is, literally, the result of **changing our status** with God; it is a **pledging of our devotion** to Him; it is a **promising our allegiance** to One Who gave His Son to deliver us from our sins!
- B. In the strict sense of the meaning of the word, "salvation" means we have **met the criteria of God** in order to obtain it and **WITH IT, all that is compatible with the blessings of God that accrue to the righteous!** Eph.1:3 [ASB]; 2 Cor.1:20 [AGP]; Eph.1:7 [Red. & For.].
1. We must properly understand that SALVATION comes by the grace of God, **UNEARNED** by human efforts! Eph.2:8-9; Titus 2:11.
 2. Although it cannot be **EARNED**, or **DESERVED**, it is **STILL** a **BLESSING** that must be **ACCEPTED**, since it **DOES INVOLVE** our **status** and a **commitment of our devotion and allegiance!** Jno.3:16; Rom.5:8-9; Heb.5:8-9. **B+R+C+B=S**
- C. **SO**, to **sum up** the meaning of SALVATION:
1. It is a **status of relationship** that takes place in the mind of God.
 2. It is **not OWED by God**, but is a result of His lovingkindness through His grace.

3. It is *not FORCED ON US by God*, but must be RECEIVED by those who desire being a part of God's Family!
4. There are definitive, *qualifying steps*, set by God, *to receive salvation*.
5. And, although it shouldn't be necessary to mention, you can't ACCIDENTLY, or MISTAKENLY, receive SALVATION!

II. WHAT'S SALVATION REALLY MEAN --TO US?

- A. Does your discernment of the word "*salvation*" indicate [1] the reality of SIN, [2] the terribleness & the eternal nature of its consequences, [3] the ineffectiveness of our own efforts against it, and [4] our futility and hopelessness without Jesus Christ, the Savior?
 1. Can we really perceive that "*salvation*" is our condition after we've been ridded of the awful GUILT of our SINS?
 2. Can we really connect "*salvation*" to the acts of God's righteousness by which He effects our freedom from that "GUILT"?
 3. Do we really "get it" that we are SAVED because we have BELIEVED THE LORD and ACTED ON THAT FAITH in order to be REDEEMED?
- B. Can't we understand that the way God pictured His salvation to Abraham and others is precisely for the purpose of getting us to accept it? Gen.15:6-"Abram believed the LORD, and He credited it to him as righteousness."
 1. What is required for people to BELIEVE that something is true, even in the physical realm?
 - a) There must be a BELIEVABLE SOURCE of information --- and that information must be imparted! [No matter how believable your information may be, if you don't tell me about it---I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!] Mt.17:5; Jno.8:21.
 - 1) There should also be some corroborating kind of acceptable evidence that the information is true and pertinent.
 - 2) Interest, concern & any action is usually predicated on how closely associated one may be to any consequences the truth may involve!
 - b) Why do people respond differently to warnings --- even those they believe are true? Are different responses just differing degrees of believing the information? [Illustrations of three warnings given in Bible class lesson: Blind person crossing street/ Bridge out/ Termites in house!]
 - 1) Some will accept a truth and act on it immediately! [Like blind man]
 - 2) Others rationalize themselves into unbelief and inactivity because to accept would be inconvenient, or require undesirable action. Belief is often thwarted by the consequences of faith: viz, ACTIONS! [Like where the bridge was out]
 - 3) Some will believe the warning but will procrastinate to their own utter destruction! [Like house with termites]
 2. God wants us ALL to be saved! 2 Pet.3:9; Acts 4:12-"Neither is there sal.in any other.."
- C. Why do people who are in positions that jeopardize themselves SPIRITUALLY respond to warnings of DANGER in different ways?
 1. We each will bring into any given situation a lot of "baggage" we've picked up, along with "presuppositions" we've formed from our past --- so it's not ASSURED that any of us will react rationally, regardless of our status!

- a) There may be some of the members of our physical families [*immediate and extended*] who are not saved [have not responded to the dangers of eternity without God] --- *what's **that REALLY** mean to us?*
 - b) There may be some of the members of the local congregation where we attend who are not saved [have not responded to the dangers of eternity without God] --- *what's **that REALLY** mean to us?*
 - c) There may be some preachers and elders we know who are not saved [have not responded to the dangers of eternity without God] --- *what's **that REALLY** mean to us?*
2. ***What these things should mean to us*** is that these are realities we all must face without allowing ourselves to be deterred from our own faithfulness and allegiance to God!
- a) AND, that even *those whom we love*, and even *those with leadership abilities* and even *those with a good knowledge of the scriptures* **still have to comply with the requirements of God!**
 - b) ALSO, that we, personally, must persevere as followers of Christ, and not be misled by ANYONE, no matter their *relationship to us*, or their *understanding*, or their *experience*, or their *amount of time* in God's service!
 - c) **BUT MOST OF ALL**, that our *relationship*, and *service*, and ultimately when we stand before the Lord in *judgment* is both **personal and INDIVIDUAL**, and ***we'll have to give an account for our own condition!***
3. God impresses us that we, **INDIVIDUALLY AND PERSONALLY**, can be saved from our past sins and lay hold on eternal life --- *what's **that REALLY** mean to us?*
- a) We understand that to mean that we are the guides of our own destiny, and need to give heed to the tender pleadings of the Son of God Who died for us on the Cross!
 - b) Notwithstanding any help or assistance or encouragements that others have given us in our development [physically -- mentally -- spiritually] we must understand that **we're where we are right now in our standing with God** because of our own decisions and actions! **NO ONE ELSE can take the credit or be blamed for it!**

CONCLUSION:

Following Jesus Christ is what **brings us to God** and *obtains for us salvation!* We can believe all about Jesus, both as a person and as Deity, and still not be saved! **SAVING FAITH** involves a person realizing his sinful condition, repenting of his sins, and being baptized for their remission in order to be a part of God's family!

"SALVATION"! *What a wonderful thought!* And the only way to obtain it from God is through His Son, Jesus Christ! Do you know anyone who needs to bring their life to Christ right now? How about YOU?