“Sirs, What Must I Do?”

Zanesville, OH | September 1, 2019 | John Pollard | Sermon Notes

**Foundational Scripture:** Acts 16:22-34

**Intro**:

* The story of the Philippian jailer is famous due to the nature of the events that occurred. Everything set forth in this story is highly unusual and indicative of the God of the bible. He is not like us which makes Him otherworldly. The enter narrative setup by Luke is extraordinary and the details are worthy of our attention and consideration. This well-known story can be boiled down to two main aspects; aspects which we all need to embody and appreciate.

1. **Blessed is the one who is willing to listen and respond**
   1. It is not common practice these days that you will encounter someone that is willing to talk about religious matters surrounding God and the bible. After all, our society is being taught to hate the truth and to embrace wayward opinionated ideas that make us feel better about the sin we commit and the things we indulge in.
   2. When faced with the real, genuine truth, many people counter it by suggesting they have made up their own truth and that’s what they have chosen to live with. It is a sad thing when one chooses his or her own path in life (cf. Prov. 14:12).
   3. This story, however, illustrates the blessings that can come when one is willing to listen and respond to the truth. The jailer had an attitude that a lot of people today have no experience with and that is his willingness to listen.
   4. He wants to hear what Paul and Silas has to say. Considering the sequence of abnormal events and recognizing the God they serve had a hand in all of it, he wants to know more.
   5. Paul and Silas spoke the word of the Lord to him and his household. They wanted to hear what they had to say but more importantly they were willing to respond to what they were speaking (vv. 31-34) and because of their willingness, blessings in abundance were given to them.
   6. The bible praises the attitude of the individual who is willing to listen and respond to the truth (Lk. 11:28; Jam. 1:19; Rev. 1:3). As a general principle, it is good that we hear what others have to say but not everything that is said demands that we always respond to it.
   7. But in the situation with the jailer, how can you not respond to the truth when you know the impact it can and it will have on your life? I wonder how different lives would be if people listened and how much better they would be if the responded to the truth!
2. **God’s uncanny ability to turn negatives into positives**
   1. God is no stranger to the subject of the extraordinary and the seemingly impossible (Matt. 19:26). This story once again emphasizes that idea. Paul and Silas who were severely beaten and thrown in prison, are able to sing and pray leading others to encouragement and salvation.
   2. In the midst of a massive earthquake, no doubt orchestrated by God, everyone is amazingly unharmed but more importantly forced to come to the realization that Paul and Silas are in fact from God carrying out His will.
   3. A jailer entrusted with the responsibility of watching over these prisoners, intends to commit suicide leaving his family behind but instead he is not only saved physically but also spiritually!
   4. This story demonstrates the power of the God of the bible. There is nothing to difficult for Him to do and there is no situation too bleak and dire that He is not able to turn into one of joy, celebration and life.
   5. We all need to strive to be people of faith. We need to trust in God and be willing to listen and respond to the opportunities of truth and salvation He lays at our feet that can and will change our lives even now and in the age to come.

**Conclusion:** Based on what I’ve learned about God and what I’ve read in the bible, I believe it’s safe to say that every person who wants to know the truth will get a chance to hear it. Every person who hears it will get a chance to respond to it. So, are we willing to change and be different? Are we willing to be a person of faith and trust that God can and will save us if we allow Him to? Salvation from sin is offered for those who are willing to believe, confess, repent, be baptized and live faithfully. If you haven’t obeyed God’s truth yet, what is stopping you from doing so today?