

The Night the Jailer was Converted

Acts 16:26-34

Introduction:

- A. Paul and Silas jailed at Philippi, Macedonia.
 - 1. Their “crime” – casting “spirit of divination” out of slave girl.
 - 2. Their treatment – arrested, beaten, put in maximum security.
 - 3. Their release – Midnight earthquake and jailer’s response.
- B. Paul and Silas were found in three positions the night the jailhouse rocked.

Discussion:

I. Prisoners.

- A. The *formal* charge: Unlawful troublemakers (vv. 20-21).
 - 1. Unfair to charge “troublemaker” or “division causer” period! (Cf. Acts 17:6; Rom. 16:17).
 - 2. Unfair to stigmatize one with generalities: “anti”, “troublemaker”, etc.
- B. The *real* reason: Selfishness of masters (v. 19) – cared neither for girl or law.
 - 1. People often hide real gripe behind more acceptable language – often called “spin”
 - 2. Brethren often use high sounding principles as pretext for sin (Matt. 15:4-5).

II. Prayers (v. 25)

- A. Praying and Singing is not the sounds of enraged self-pity (cf. Mt. 5:11,12)
- B. Praying and Singing openly, without shame, in heathen prison.
 - 1. The prisoners heard them!
 - 2. Many afraid to be caught religious away from “church.”

III. Preachers (v. 32).

- A. The sinner’s question: “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” (v. 30).
 - 1. Saved from what?
 - a. Not earthquake – it was over.
 - b. Not Roman penalty – prisoners were safe.
 - 2. What must *I* do? – Not God, Christ or Holy Spirit.
 - 3. What must I *do*? – Not feel or experience.
- B. The preacher’s answer: “Believer on the Lord ... (vv. 31, 32).
 - 1. Answer began where the jailer was – an unbelieving pagan.
 - a. Answer to Pentecostians began where they were – believers (Acts 2:38).
 - b. Answer to Saul of Tarsus began where he was – penitent believer (Acts 22:16).
 - 2. Answer was not “faith only” – but, active, living faith including repentance and baptism.
- C. The believer’s baptism (v. 33).
 - 1. The time shows the urgency and importance.
 - 2. The place shows how baptism was performed.
 - a. Not in the jail (v. 30).
 - b. Not in the house (vv. 33, 34).
 - c. Hence, not sprinkling.
 - 3. The prerequisites and results show that no infants were involved (vv. 32, 34).

Conclusion:

- A. You can be saved like this family did and rejoice like they did.
- B. You can then behave like Paul and Silas: Suffer joyfully, pray and sing unashamedly, Preach plainly.