

The Bulletin

Meeks St. Church of Christ

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“What Must I Do To Be Saved?”

by Wayne S. Walker

In the sixteenth chapter of the book of Acts, the apostle Paul had come to the city of Philippi in Macedonia, the northern part of Greece. While there, he and his co-worker, Silas, cast a demon out of a slave girl. Her masters were upset that they would no longer be able to use her fortune-telling powers to gain money, so they had Paul and Silas put in prison.

That night, while Paul and Silas were singing and praying, a great earthquake shook the prison, the doors were opened, and the prisoners' bands were loosed. The jailor awoke, saw the condition of the jail, and, assuming that the prisoners had fled, drew his sword to kill himself. However, Paul shouted, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here." The jailor then fell down before Paul and Silas, brought them out, and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

They told him to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and then preached to him and his household the word of the Lord that they might know what to believe. He took them the same hour of the night, washed their stripes, and was immediately baptized with his family.

We do not know exactly what was in this jailor's mind when he spoke to Paul and Silas. He may have heard something about their preaching. He was undoubtedly influenced by the terror of the earthquake and his close brush with death. He may have noticed the demeanor of Paul and Silas in prison. In any event, he asked the most important question anyone can ever ask. "What must I do to be saved?"

I. The Need to be Saved.

This question implies that there is a need to be saved. A man who cannot swim and falls in water needs to be saved from drowning. A child who is kidnapped by a person threatening to kill it needs to be saved from murder. As tragic as these situations are, there is something even worse from which every responsible person needs to be saved. "*For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*" (Romans 3:23). If one can understand this pamphlet, he has sinned. What does this mean?

Sin is defined as "lawlessness" or a transgression of God's law (I John 3:4). We sin by committing "unrighteousness," that is, doing something that is not right in God's sight which He condemns (I John 5:17). And we sin by omission, that is, failing to do something that God commands (James 4:17).

"All have sinned." Some people respond, "How dare you call me a sinner!" Yet, we all know that we do things that are wrong and fail to do things that we should. "*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us*" (I John 1:8). We need to be saved from the punishment attached by God to sin.

What is that punishment? "*For the wages of sin is death ...*" (Romans 6:23). Just as the drowning man or the kidnapped child is in danger of physical death, so those who are guilty of sin will suffer spiritual death, which is separation from God both in this life and in eternity. It is from this that we need to be saved.

II. The Possibility of Being Saved.

The fact that this question is recorded and answered in the Bible also implies that even though we have all sinned and deserve death, it is possible to be saved. How? *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life"* (John 3:16).

God loves us, whom He created in His image, so much that He does not want to see us suffer punishment for sin. Therefore, He gave His only begotten Son. *"...Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures"* (I Corinthians 15:3). We deserved death because of our sins. However, Christ, who did no sin and thus did not deserve death, suffered this punishment for us.

Therefore, just as a child who is kidnapped might be redeemed by the payment of ransom, so a price has been paid for us to be redeemed from sin and its punishment. Paul wrote of Christ, *"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace"* (Ephesians 1:7). It is the blood of Jesus that makes it possible for us to have our sins forgiven.

Once these sins, the wages of which is death, are forgiven, then we no longer deserve death and are given life. *"He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life"* (I John 5:12). Thanks be to God who has made it possible for us to be saved from our sins by sending His Son, Jesus Christ, to die for us that we might have redemption and life!

III. Things We Must Do.

This question implies as well that there is something which we must do in order to be saved. Certainly, there is nothing that we can do to make atonement for our sins. *"For by grace you have been saved through faith and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast"* (Ephesians 2:8-9). *"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit"* (Titus 3:5). No amount of good works can make up for the wrongs that we have committed. We are dependent on God's grace and mercy for salvation.

However, this does not mean that there is nothing for us to do. God has extended the free gift of His pardon to all mankind with certain conditions attached. *"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven"* (Matthew 7:21). *"If you love Me, keep My commandments"* (John 14:15).

We cannot earn salvation by doing these things, but to receive salvation we must meet God's conditions. When the people on Pentecost realized that they were sinners, they cried out, *"What shall we do?"* (Acts 2:37). When Saul of Tarsus came to see His need for Christ, he asked, *"Lord, what do you want me to do?"* (Acts 9:6). They understood that there was something for them to do. No one can be saved without doing what Christ says we must do to be saved.

IV. The Gospel

We must hear the gospel of Christ. The word "gospel" means good news. Jesus told His apostles, *"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature"* (Mark 16:16). Why? Because Paul said of the gospel, *"It is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek"* (Romans 1:16). The gospel is God's revelation of salvation.

Why is important that we hear the gospel? *"For 'whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.' How then shall call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? ... So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God"* (Romans 10:13-17). Because Jesus Christ gave His life as a ransom for our sins, He wants us to listen to His word.

We must also believe the gospel. The basic message of Jesus was, *"Repent, and believe in the gospel"* (Mark 1:14). This means believing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. *"For if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins"* (John 8:24). The scriptures were written *"that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name"* (John 20:31).

This is why the jailor was told, *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, and your household"* (Acts 16:31). *"But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him"* (Hebrews 11:6).

V. Repentance and Confession.

We must repent of our sins. Jesus told the people of His day, *"Unless you repent you will all likewise perish"* (Luke 13:8). In preaching the gospel, the apostles preached repentance. Paul said, *"Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent"* (Acts 17:30). We cannot continue in a sinful life and expect God to save us.

What is repentance? The word signifies a change of mind or heart. *"For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted"* (II Corinthians 7:10). Repentance is a change of mind produced by godly sorrow for sin that leads to a change of life. It is a turning away from sin and a turning toward God.

We must also confess Christ. Jesus said, "Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 10:32). This simply means having the courage and conviction to acknowledge publicly that Jesus is the Christ, as did the Ethiopian eunuch who was willing to confess, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts 8:37).

Why is this so important? Paul explained, "That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:9-10). We cannot be saved without openly pledging ourselves to Christ.

VI. Obedience to the Gospel

We must be baptized. Jesus said, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:16). As the apostles preached the gospel, they said, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). The Bible never says that we are saved then baptized because our sins have already been forgiven. It says that we are baptized "for the remission of sins."

When we are baptized into Christ, we are baptized into His death (Romans 6:3-4). Jesus shed His blood in His death; therefore, we are baptized into the cleansing power of His blood. When we are baptized, we put on Christ (Galatians 3:26-27). All spiritual blessings, including salvation, are in Christ, so we must put Him on in baptism to have salvation.

"There is also an antitype which now saves us -- baptism" (I Peter 3:21).

Why must we do these things? Again, it is not to earn salvation by good works but to obey God's terms for salvation. What if we do not obey? When Jesus returns, He will come, "taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (II Thessalonians 1:7-8).

However, if we obey, we are promised a reward. Jesus Christ is said to be "the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him" (Hebrews 5:8-9). He is the source of salvation not just to those who believe Him, but to all who obey Him.

Have you obeyed?

News and Notes: Sick and recovering: Tim Harris Sr, Tim Harris Jr, Chad Harris, Martha Norvell (Mississippi Care), June Lawson (Lisa Busby's Mom), Debbie Keplinger, Janis Johnson, Daniel Holloway, Betty Hurst, Peggy Harville (cancer), Clois Wright, and Dan & Linda Hunt, Mollie Harris, David Taylor, Danny Cottrell, Gary Doles, Joe Felks, Randy Beaty, Sam Johnson, Sherry Doles, Ronnie Fowler and wife, Melissa Felks (Betty Hurst's daughter) had surgery on her foot last Thursday, and with Star, the doctors found four lumps on her thyroid.
Fred Johnson

Those Who Serve:

Announcements:	Paul Busby
Opening Prayer & Scripture Reading:	Tim Harris Jr. <i>John 14:12-14</i>
Song Leader:	Jerry Kenemur
Lord's Supper:	Russel Briggs
Preaching:	Brian Meade
Sermon:	"When God Says No"
Closing Prayer:	Lee Busby

“When God Says No”

Lesson Text: **John 14:12-14.**

- Not a “*blank check*” to receive any and all requests.
- It Must be qualified to God’s Will.

I. The Will of God in Two Senses:

- (1) God’s Will For Us In Scripture- **Matthew 7:17 and 21; 1 John 2:17.**
- (2) God’s Providence- **1 Cor. 4:19; Philemon 15; James 4:13-15.**
 - There are times when God answers “**Yes**” “**No**” Or “**Wait.**”

II. God Says No, Sometimes Because It Goes Against His Plans.

- A. Can we through ignorance of God’s plans, ask for things contrary?
 - (1) Peter did- **Mark 8:31-33; Matthew 17:1-5.**
- B. Jesus in the Garden- **Matthew 26:39-42.**

III.Sometimes Because We Ask From God Wrongly.

- A. **1 John 5:14-** Must be according to God’s will; What if it’s not?
- B. We must ask in faith- **James 1:5-7.**
- C. We cannot ask for selfish things- **James 4:1-3.**

IV.Sometimes Because Of Sin’s Consequences.

- A. Moses- **Deuteronomy 3:21-29; Numbers 27:14.**
- B. David- **2 Samuel 12:13-23.**
- C. **1 John 5:16-17.**

V.Sometimes To get Us To Trust In Him.

- A. **2 Corinthians 12:7-10.**
- B. “*Whatever God doesn’t deliver us from, He helps us to go through.*”
- C. **James 1:2-4.**

VI.Sometimes Because It’s Not In Our Best Interest.

- A. **Mark 10:35-40.**
- B. Asking for a wife- Garth Brooks Song: “**Unanswered Prayers.**”
- C. God may have better things for us later.

VII. How Do We Handle It When God Says No?

- A. Are we shaken by it? Does It Overthrow Our Faith?
- B. Do We Take It Personally? Think That God Has Something Against Us.
- C. Think That He doesn’t Care?
- D. Or Do We Trust In God With All Our Heart Still? Like Moses, David, & Jesus.
 - (1) Remember That God Knows Best.
 - (2) God’s will must go before our own will.