

The Bulletin

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“Straightway”

By Jarrod Jacobs

I stand in awe of God’s providence. How He makes things come together to accomplish His will never ceases to amaze me. The word in our title is a reminder to me of that providence. I remember a lady who came and visited with us over several weeks with her daughter’s family. She was a kind lady and though shy at first, opened up to me, and we had some good conversations about the Lord and her soul. One such study served as a “springboard” for her conversion and serves as the basis for this article.



Before I baptized this lady, she and I sat down to study the Bible. In our study together, we talked about Acts 16:25-34, where it says, among other things, that when the Philippian jailor heard the truth preached, *“he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway”* (Acts 16:33).

After reading this together, she asked me what “straightway” meant. I showed her that the word “straightway” in the KJV denotes the speed with which an event happened. Other Bible versions use the terms “immediately” (ASV, NKJ), “at once” (ESV, GNB), “right away” (NET), “without delay” (Webster), and “presently” (YLT) in this text. All of these words denote the speed with which the jailor and his family took this action. They did not wait for another day or time (Acts 24:25), but took care of the matter *“the same hour of the night”!*

Showing her this word prompted her to say she needed to become a Christian right away (Acts 2:38; II Cor. 6:2; Heb. 3:7-8)! Who knows how long she had been waiting and what excuses she might have told herself, but at this moment, when shown what “straightway” means, she changed and became a child of God (Mk. 16:16)!

What does this word teach us? Let me make a few suggestions.

Our Soul’s Salvation Depends Upon Our Action.

We understand Christ’s blood was shed for everyone (Matt. 20:28; Titus 2:11-12; Rom. 5:8; etc.) At the same time, our salvation depends upon our response to the Lord’s sacrifice. In the Philippian jailor’s case, he asked Paul and Silas, *“What must I do to be saved?”* (Acts 16:30).

Notice that the jailor recognized he had something to do. He asked, *“What must I do ...?”*. He was not the only one to ask such a question, either. On more than one occasion, folks in the New Testament recognized that they had to take action if they wished to be saved (Acts 2:37, 9:6, etc.).

It is the same for us today. If we expect to be saved, we must take action now (Heb. 5:8-9; Matt. 7:21)!

Our Soul’s Salvation Must Not Be Delayed.

The Philippian jailor not only acted, but he also saw the need for taking immediate action when it came to his soul (*“straightway”*). In our study, we find in Acts 16:25 that the apostle Paul and Silas were praying and singing at *“midnight”* before the earthquake occurred. After the earthquake, the jailor entered and took advantage of the gospel plan of salvation.

Therefore, after hearing the truth at midnight, this man determined he needed to be baptized into Christ for the remission of sins and did so immediately! They did not wait until a later time but went right then! What they had to go through to find a body of water to baptize them, I do not know. What I know is that he did not use the lateness of the hour and as an excuse for disobedience. Once he learned the truth (Acts 16:31-32), he responded *“straightway,” “immediately,”* or *“without delay”* (v. 33).

Had this man waited or put off his salvation for a day, a year, or just when he felt it *“convenient”* (Acts 24:25), he might have never been saved from sin! The New Testament clearly states: *“Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation”* (II Cor. 6:2). The reason for such urgency is because we do not have a lease on life (Prov. 27:1; Jas. 4:13-14). The jailor didn’t know if or when another earthquake was coming, and we don’t know what might happen in a day that would forever keep us from making our lives right with God. Friend, what is keeping you from being saved *“straightway”*?

Our Soul’s Salvation Should Be Our Greatest Concern.

The reason why folks like the Philippian jailor and our sister in Christ took action *“straightway,” “at once,”* or *“without delay”* is because there is no greater concern in life than the concern for our soul. At one point in His preaching, Jesus asked two questions: *“For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”* (Matt. 16:26). If this does not tell us something about a soul’s value, then what would? In these questions, Jesus shows us that one’s soul is worth more than anything in this world. Since this is true, why wouldn’t we respond to the gospel *“straightway,” “presently,”* or *“right away”*? To put it off is to take a great risk by assuming we will have yet another week, or another day, even another minute (Prov. 27:1)!

Conclusion

To borrow a phrase, what is hindering you from obeying the gospel (Acts 8:36)? Your soul is your most valuable possession. It is eternal (II Cor. 4:16)! Therefore, prepare your soul for eternity, and do so now, today, *“immediately,” “straightway,”* before it is everlastingly too late (Jn. 9:4; Ps. 90:8-10)!

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News and Notes: Sick and recovering: Tim Harris Sr, Tim Harris Jr, Chad Harris, June Lawson (Lisa Busby's Mom), Debbie Keplinger, Janis Johnson, Daniel Holloway, Betty Hurst, Peggy Harville (cancer), Clois Wright, Dan & Linda Hunt, Mollie Harris, David Taylor, Randy Beaty, Sam Johnson, Sherry Doles, Steve Switcher, Roy Robinson, Danny Cottrell (Dan's Dad) and Annie Jean Harrison.

Those Who Serve:

Announcements:	Russell Briggs
Opening Prayer & Scripture Reading:	Paul Busby <i>I Corinthians 15:1-4</i>
Song Leader:	Dan Cottrell
Lord's Supper:	Paul Johnson
Preaching:	Brian Meade
Sermon:	<i>"First of All"</i>
Closing Prayer:	Tim Harris Sr.