

Jailhouse Conversion

In Acts 16:16-24, we read about two preachers (Paul and Silas) being thrown in jail because their work gets in the way of corrupt men making money. Thankfully, their story does not end here. The event that follows is an amazing turn of events!

In Acts 16:25-30, Luke tells us about the conversion of the Philippian jailer. This is the same jailer that was guarding Paul and Silas. Who could have anticipated this? How did this happen?

A Crisis (Acts 16:25-29)

- While Paul and Silas were locked up, an earthquake occurred. It was so severe that it broke the prisoner's chains and opened all the cells.
- The jailer panicked. He feared that all of the prisoners were going to escape. Instead of dealing with punishment from the Roman government, the jailer was going to kill himself.
- Paul calmed the jailer. The apostle told him that none of the prisoners had escaped.
- We need to be aware of the jailers around us. These are the people who are experiencing stressful moments that may lead them to seek the Lord.

A Call for Help (Acts 16:30)

- During a moment of intense anxiety, the jailer begged for Paul to help him. He said, "What must I do to be saved?" This is likely a plea to develop a relationship with the same God that Paul served. Remember, earlier in the night, Paul and Silas could be heard praying and singing in jail (Acts 16:25). This likely had a positive impact on the jailer.
- The jailer would have heard Paul and Silas's singing and been impressed with their devotion to God during a difficult time.
- God expects us to have the same kind of impact on the world. People need to see something different about us (Matthew 5:16; Philippians 2:14-15). This could lead to evangelistic opportunities whenever they start having problems in their lives.

A Plan of Salvation (Acts 16:31-34)

- "Faith only" salvation advocates often use Acts 16:31 to promote their doctrine. Does Paul teach that in this verse?
- He does not! That doctrine stands in direct contradiction to James 2:24. Those who promote this teaching need to keep on reading (Acts 16:32-34). Paul also taught him about the need to repent and be baptized.
- Paul does not endorse a plan of salvation that contradicts the one promoted throughout the New Testament (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16).

Conclusion: Have you done what the jailer did to become a disciple of the Lord?

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