

Read: Acts 16:25-34

What Must I Do?

Acts 16:30-31

He then brought them out and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.”

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Can you picture the scene? The ground had just finished rumbling from an earthquake. A man rushes to find that the place he was in charge of, the jail, had doors standing wide open. Oh no! He was going to be in *big* trouble if all the prisoners had escaped! This was the worst thing that could have possibly happened for the jailer in the city of Philippi.

But suddenly this worried and scared jailer heard the voice of the apostle Paul, “We are all here!”

What? How could this be? Why would the prisoners stay? What was going on here? There was something different about these prisoners named Paul and Silas who had been singing hymns all night long!

Still scared and confused, the jailer asked them, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” Now perhaps this man was worried about saving his life and not getting in trouble with his Roman government bosses. But more likely, this man recognized Paul and Silas were a different kind of people with a different kind of message. This jailer wanted to know what they knew—“How can I be saved *spiritually*?” Listen again to their beautiful response, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.”

What a wonderful message! The jailer wanted to know if he could *do* something to earn his way to heaven. But Paul and Silas shared with him the good news of the gospel—it’s already been done! The Lord Jesus has done it all! He came to live perfectly in the place of that jailer and all people. He came to die to pay for the sins of that jailer and all people. He rose to life to prove his victory to that jailer and to all people. There is nothing left to do, only to believe what has already been done by the Lord Jesus. And so, in the greatest miracle of this story, God worked faith in Jesus in the jailer’s heart. The jailer believed—he and his whole household—and they were then baptized as children of God’s eternal family.

Every Christian has a different story. Some join God’s family right away when they are baptized as infants. Some learn the good news of Jesus in school. Others hear about Jesus when they are adults, and still others when they are very old and near the end of life. But the wonder of God’s grace is that God has done all the work. God has saved each person through the life and death of Jesus, and God has worked faith in their hearts to believe it. What a blessing!

Want to know another blessing? You now know how to answer the most important question of all time! What must someone *do* to be saved? NOTHING! Simply believe in the Lord Jesus! Praise God . . . and tell others!

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- Why was the jailer in this story so afraid?
- What did the jailer want to know from Paul and Silas?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- The most important thing for all people in the world is to know how to get to heaven. What's the simple answer you can share with those who don't know?
- Do you know anyone who doesn't believe in Jesus? How or when could you share the good news with them?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- Explain this statement in your own words: The jailer asked a question of works, but Paul and Silas gave an answer of faith.
- Some have said there are really only two kinds of religions in the world—religions based on good works and religions based on grace. What does that mean?

Closing Prayer:

God, I am so thankful that you have worked faith by the power of your Holy Spirit in my heart so that I believe in the Lord Jesus. Now help me to share with others the good news of our Savior so that they also might believe. Amen.

Hymn: CW 89:1,4,6 – To Jordan's River Came Our Lord

To Jordan's river came our Lord,
The Christ, whom heav'nly hosts adored,
The God from God, the Light from Light,
The Lord of glory, pow'r, and might.

Then from God's throne with thund'rous sound
Came God's own voice with words profound:
"This is my Son," was his decree,
"The one I love, who pleases me."

Now rise, faint hearts: be resolute!
This man is Christ, our substitute!
He was baptized in Jordan's stream,
Proclaimed Redeemer, Lord supreme.