

# The Philippian Gaoler Gets Saved

by Robin McKeown

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*The sermon emphasizes the transformative power of the gospel through the story of the Philippian jailer's conversion.*

**Duration:** 24:04

**Scripture:** Exodus 15:1, Psalm 40:3, Acts 16:25-26, Acts 16:30, Acts 16:34, Colossians 3:16

**Topics:** "Salvation"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the urgency of awakening from spiritual sleep and being saved from the possibility of going to hell. He uses biblical references, such as Romans 13:11 and 1 Thessalonians 5:4, to emphasize the importance of being awake and alert in one's faith. The preacher shares a story of a man who was saved after being cast into prison and another story of a man who was asleep in a boat and almost faced danger. The sermon encourages listeners to not only be saved but also to share their faith with others.

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## Transcript

Now turn with me tonight please to the Acts of the Apostles chapter 16. Acts chapter 16 and we'll commence our reading at verse number 22. Acts chapter 16 and reading at verse number 22.

And the multitude rose up together against them, that's against Paul and Silas the preachers, and the magistrates rent off their clothes and commanded to beat them. And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailer to keep them safely, who having received such a charge thrust them into the inner prison and made their feet fast in the stocks. And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises unto God and the prisoners heard them.

And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so the foundations of the prison were shaken and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's bands were loosed. And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out a sword and would have killed himself supposing that the prisoners had been fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice saying, Do thyself no harm for we are all here.

Then he called for a light and sprang in and came trembling and fell down before Paul and Silas and brought them out and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. I want to read that verse again. And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus

Christ and thou shalt be saved.

And they speak unto him the word of the Lord and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes and was baptized, he and all his straight way. And when he had brought them into his house, he said, Meet before them and rejoice, believing in God with all his house.

That's our reading. May God bless it to all our hearts with what will follow. It'll be very difficult perhaps to speak on Acts chapter 16 and the story, the very remarkable story of the conversion of the Philippian jailer without making mention of a very important development in this chapter.

I hardly ever read it that it doesn't touch my heart. It was when Paul got the Macedonian call, a man saying, Come over into Macedonia and help us. And immediately Paul and Silas, they endeavored to go, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel unto them.

And they crossed the Aegean Sea and set foot for the first time on European soil. And I'm deeply grateful tonight the gospel ever came to Europe. You know, I'm glad I ever heard it.

I'll never forget when as a rebel sinner and God broke my will and I went to gospel meetings that I refused to go to. I remember going and sitting and listening to the greatest message I ever heard. I wanted to be saved.

And the only message that can meet your need tonight, if you're not saved, is the message of the gospel. There's no other message in all the world that can meet your need but the gospel. Thank God tonight for the gospel.

There's no message like it. I want us to look at a story of conversion. And I look at it in a way that even the younger ones I hope will be able to remember it.

We have two men and they're preaching the gospel and there's an absolute rebellion against them. And to cut the story very short, they're very severely, I suppose we would say whipped, but they were given those stripes, many stripes and they were handed over to a jailer and he was told, now you keep them safely and securely. So to discharge his responsibility, he took them and with absolute callousness and carelessness and ruthlessness, he just cast them into the inner prison, made their feet fast in the stalks and I think he went to bed.

That man was saved before the morning. My friend, you could get saved in the gospel tent tonight. If you want to sit up with me to midnight and argue against that, you'll not persuade me.

I believe with all my heart you could be saved on that seat where you sit tonight. Here's a man, he went to sleep and he little had any idea that before the morning he would be rejoicing. You see, when you get saved, you rejoice.

We're going to see that in a moment. The first thing I want you to do in thought, come into this prison with me. I know our brother's going to tell you the times he spent in prison.

Well, I've been in prison too, not as a prisoner. I remember one occasion with a group of students going to Grendon Underwood Maximum Security Psychiatric Prison. What a handle.

Grendon Underwood Maximum Security Psychiatric Prison. I tell you that was a tough place. There were tough young men in that prison.

Tell you one of the things they had them doing, just to dispel and to use up some of their energy, they were so fit, they had them out with sledgehammers breaking rocks, breaking big rocks. Well, I want you to come into this prison with me at least in thought and I want you to come into it about midnight and the first thing I want you to notice, a very unusual thing for a prison at midnight. The first thing you do is you can close your eyes if you like, just open your ears and there's two men and they're singing.

They're singing. You see when you're saved, oh I don't mean I have a lovely singing voice, not that we do solos in the tent by the way, but if I started a solo now you'd likely all go home. I wouldn't blame you.

But I'll tell you this, I can sing in my heart. I have a song I love to sing since I have been redeemed and if you're not saved you could perhaps have a very beautiful musical voice but you can't sing this song because you're not saved and you don't know it and it's not in your heart. Here's what Paul writes to the Christians, Ephesians chapter 5 and verse 19, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.

You see that's what happens when you get saved. There's a song in your heart and it's to the Lord and if you're not saved you don't know it. So they're singing.

In fact in Colossians it's very similar, chapter 3 and verse 16, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. You know when Israel came out of Egypt and God gave them that mighty redemption and took them over the Red Sea, you know the Bible says, then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord. The Lord hath triumphed gloriously.

The Lord is my strength and song. He has become my salvation. When you're saved you can sing unto the Lord.

Now come on, are you saved? Well it's also one man saved anyway. But what about you tonight? You need to be able to sing this Psalm. As David said in Psalm 40, he hath put a new song in my mouth.

Even praise unto the Lord many shall see it and shall fear. You know I think it's about 50 years ago there was a ship sailing to Australia and on that ship was an Irish boy of six years of age. In 1998 I spent I think it was two and a half weeks in his home.

He's not six now, I told you 50 years ago, but he's six then. And with his wife and lovely family, spent very happy days. Ernie told me about standing on that ship holding his mum's, inside of his mum's dress as a little boy of six near the railings.

The weather was beautiful as the ship got near to Australia in that much warmer climate than we know here. He says I'll never forget it. They're all sitting up on the deck, on the deck chairs and the weather was beautiful and the ship was gliding nicely through the waters and there was very little sound apart from the ship I suppose, the noise of the engines and a few seagulls for they're getting near land.

And he says I'll never ever forget it. He says a young woman came walking out. He says I even remember she had a lovely blue dress on her.

I still say it's nice to see women in dresses. And she walked right out into the middle of the deck chairs with her head down. And then she stood still.

Everybody was talking. The hubbub of all the chat. She started to sing the hymns in this book.

In fancy I stood by the shore one day, by the beautiful murmuring sea. She went on through that hymn and the lovely chorus, the last two lines of the chorus concerning the Lord Jesus. She sang I took him that day as my saviour, the stranger of Galilee.

She had something to sing about. And Ernie told me when she had finished, she dropped her head again and walked slowly back from the deck chairs and down below deck. But his mother intercepted the lady and said to her that was absolutely beautiful.

Do you know what she said? I cannot preach. I looked at all those people and I wondered do you know anything about my saviour? You see she had a song to sing. Did you notice in the reading please? Did you notice? It says the prisoners heard them.

That's not really literally what that verb is. It's not really the verb to hear. It literally means the prisoners were listening.

Why? Because they never heard anything like this before from the inner prison. They may have heard oaths and curses but never before did they hear two men at the inner prison with their feet fast and the stocks with their lacerated backs and they're singing praises to God and the prisoners were listening. So this story begins with singing.

Then something happens. I come down to verse number 26. She's not singing now.

Singing stops. We have a shaking. A shaking.

You see it says in verse number 26 and suddenly. You see God often moves swiftly. We're a bit slow aren't we? Even in gospel meetings it takes a while to get the tent full you know.

Takes people a few nights to get gathered up. I don't know where they are but it takes them a time to come. You see but God doesn't.

See God can work swiftly and suddenly it says here there was a great earthquake so the foundations of the prison were shaken. Mind you sometimes before somebody gets saved there's a bit of a shaking. Mind you it takes it.

Sometimes an individual needs a shaking before they get awakened to understand they need Christ. You know the 21st of March 1748. There's a young man of 23 got a real shaking on a ship in mid-Atlantic and have I mentioned one of the most famous hymns in the Christian language.

You know who I'm talking about. His name is John Newton and he wrote that lovely hymn Amazing Grace. How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me but I tell you before he got saved he was shaken.

A dreadful storm. A violent storm in mid-Atlantic and the man was terrified. He was shaken and John Newton got saved.

Do you know when he was an old man preaching in London? Nobody said there's congregation on one occasion indeed on more than one occasion. As an old man he said you know I'm an old man and my memory is nearly gone but I can remember two things. You say what's that? Well I'll tell you what he said he could remember.

Firstly that I was a great sinner and secondly Christ is a great Savior. Any wonder he could sing. Is it any wonder when we're saved we can sing because all right we were great sinners but thank God we've trusted the great Savior.

What about you tonight? Have you trusted Jesus and a saving power? Come on stop the kidding. Don't run for high for shelter in religion or in church or in chapel or in anything. It's only Christ can save.

Well have you trusted Jesus and a saving power or you're washed in the blood of the Lamb with a shaking but there's a problem. There's a man sleeping, sleeping. I presume I cannot prove it but I would be reasonably assured from the passage you see he never heard the singing because he was sleeping and it took that earthquake to weaken him because he was sleeping.

Now I don't see anybody sleeping in the tent tonight if you do I'll wake you up but that's not the point. The point is you could be wide awake physically and absolutely asleep in regard to your danger. Look could I tell you tonight I hope I do it with tenderness in my heart.

Come on Mark sit down. Let me tell you this. Let me tell you this.

Do you understand tonight if you don't get saved you will be in hell and you'll be there eternally absolutely no coming back. You know some years ago at what's now known as Belfast International Airport there was a mother and father stood and their only two daughters they had no sons they had two daughters and those two daughters were leaving or emigrating to the United States of America and their mother and father were totally and absolutely brokenhearted. They were weeping their eyes out and didn't want their daughters to go.

You know one of them said as she hugged her mother and father they had no intention of coming back but she was trying to console them. She says if we don't like it we'll come back. My friend if you die in your sins and go to hell you'll not like it but you won't be coming back.

There's no coming back. Get awakened tonight to that awful dread possibility that you could die as you are and go down to hell. The man was sleeping.

You know the Bible says knowing the time Romans 13 and verse 11 knowing the time that it is now high time to awake out of sleep. I'll be getting awakened tonight. That would be good wouldn't it? Paul writes to Thessalonians chapter 5 is it verse 46 let us not therefore sleep as do others but let us watch and be sober.

My friend get awakened tonight please because if you don't you're going to be in hell and you need to be saved. You know the man was sleeping and he got awakened. Some of you will because the tracks at the back there but some of you will have read the story of the guide at the Niagara Falls a young man and one day things were fairly slack.

Oh there were tourists there and visitors okay yeah and but but he wasn't required so much and he just got into his boat and he lay down to rest and he fell asleep but with the swaying and movement of the water his boat became loose from its moorings and started to go with the flow and then some of the bystanders the tourists saw it and they realized at first they didn't know there was anybody in the boat then someone said there's someone in the boat and someone started to shout at him to get him but he was sleeping and he didn't know his danger and they hollered at him but he didn't hear them and then the boat came and it came and it got a sort of caught on a piece of protruding rock and they called at him get on the

rock get on the rock but he didn't hear because he was sleeping do we

tell you in the gospel do you who the rock is it's not what the rock is it's who the rock is the bible says that rock that followed him and that rock was christ on christ the solid rock i stand all other ground is sinking sand my friend trust christ tonight and you'll be in the solid rock what happened was the boat became loose from the the way it was held at the rock and then it started to gather momentum and peace as it moved rapidly toward the falls and they hollered at him and the man awakened but he awakened when it was too late and over he went you see he was sleeping and don't sleep your way to hell this is far too solemn for that but i want you to notice something that's very important you know the man who was sleeping you would not have it he's shaking he's shaking it says well

it says here in verse number 29 that the man called for a light and he sprang in and came trembling he's shaking now you see if somebody's a man gets shaken before he gets saved chapter 9 soul of torches tremble he could see chapter 20 24 felix trembled but he didn't get saved this man was shaking i think i mentioned to you but tracy you could save that limavadi just a few weeks ago i'll never forget her telling me she says i sat in that meeting the very beginning of the meeting she says i was sweating i'm not saying you to sweat to get saved i'm not saying i'm telling what hurts me she said i was sweating and i was shaking she said did you see me shaking from the platform i said no tracy i didn't she was shaking and she wondered how am i going to get saved but i want to tell you

something see the man who was shaking do you know what happens next he's shaking that's what you need to do that's what you need to do tonight i love it he sprang in and came trembling and what did he say to them sirs what must i do to be saved as he's not sleeping now i think not nobody ever gets saved in their sleep he's seeking listen to what the bible says ye shall seek me and shall find me when you shall search for me with all your heart he's searching with all his heart now is that why you're not saved because you haven't really been seeking with all your heart something that means more to you than christ something that means more to you than god's salvation is it worth going to hell for the man is seeking and i want you to notice something man's in a hurry he's sprang in no time

wasting now when you want to get saved do not waste time you'll want to be i was going to say you'll want to be saved now i was nearly going to say you'll want to be saved yesterday there's no time for you to lose jesus love do not abuse heaven or hell which do you choose will you come come on young man in the tent tonight will you come to christ and trust him as you're the man seeking seeking sirs what must i do to be saved so he knows he needs to be saved that's quite evident some people don't know what you see he knows he needs to be saved and he's seeking salvation and he wants to know what will i do everybody wants to do something to be saved these are good preachers what must i do the preacher said believe on the lord jesus christ and thou shall be saved that's salvation that's

salvation do you the verb to believe is used eight times in john's gospel chapter three for god so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life whosoever believeth on him believe on the lord jesus christ and thou shall be saved what does it well you know the story of the cross where jesus bled and died where your debt was paid by the precious blood that flowed from his wounded side my friend tonight you need to believe not about him you need to believe on him take him as your savior rely entirely on him to save your soul it's nothing to do with anything that you can do you know people came to the lord jesus in john 6 and verse 28 and they said to him what shall we do see everybody wants to do that we might

work the works of god that we might work the works of god do you know what his answer was now i want you to think about it tonight because it could help you to understand how to be saved the lord jesus christ said this is the work of god that you believe on him whom god has sent there's the work of god to believe on him whom god has sent and god sent his son oh wondrous love could you believe on him tonight may you many a one has got saved through this verse in acts chapter 16 and verse 31 believe on the lord jesus christ and thou shall be saved the man who's seeking has now got salvation he's got salvation and you read later that he that he's rejoicing believing in god with all his heart let's tell you one other thing and that's very important you see the word of god he listened to the

scriptures but here's the thing i want to mention and then i'll sit down it says in verse number 34 when he had brought them out into his house imagine this boy bringing the preachers into his house people are nervous i'll be taking the preachers into their house someday you know but anyway uh i'll tell you what he did he brought them into his house and he set food before them you know that is that's sharing that's sharing the man could see it now he wants to share what he has in the work of god it's a great thing to get saved you know when you get saved you don't only get a song but you want to share you want to share ah may god bless his word to every heart with what will follow may you be saved even tonight god bless

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