

Is Your God Dead?

by Rolfe Barnard

The sermon emphasizes the importance of having a living God who hears prayer and the need to go out and show people the way of salvation.

Duration: 45:54

Topics: "Worship And Praise", "Salvation Through Faith"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the story of Paul and Silas in jail. He highlights how their imprisonment was a result of them sharing the way of salvation with others. Despite being in jail, Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises to God. Their worship was so powerful that an earthquake occurred, opening the prison doors and setting them free. The preacher emphasizes the importance of sharing the way of salvation and encourages the congregation to respect the church as a place dedicated to meeting God and spreading His glory.

Transcript

I invite you to turn with me to the 16th chapter of the book of Acts. I guess we'll have to bring a hospital out and bring my bad back and weak mind and preachers locked or whatever it is matter with it. We are having quite a time.

The 16th chapter of Acts, and I want to speak to you on this subject, is your God dead? Last evening we suggested that a congregation that dares to call itself a church of the Lord Jesus Christ, that's quite a claim, isn't it? We dead sure not claim to be a church that was purchased with the precious blood of the Son of God, unless we mean business. And I get so disgusted as to go up now on the land and believe in the church. We pay God a compliment again for meaning when there's a silly statement if you'll just think it through.

But we all do it because old Quakers would rebuke us and the New Testament would rebuke us inviting somebody to come to church. But we're not here from inviting people to attend church. Pay a little attention to the Bible building the church.

How silly we are. If you can't go to church, the church they've been commissioned to go with that on. I want to congratulate you and you can see that it's dedicated.

Is your God dead? I said last night if you attempt to have what you call a revival meeting don't have because his reputation that's involved. The Bible God says, O thou that hearest prayer. The God of the Bible is.

If yours don't, well you've got the wrong God. And we ought not to. Wording last night, I don't like these posters.

They got revival. We got in the habit of that. You can't bribe him.

He hears. He likes it. And we're the ones that believe.

Not a few. If this church, this congregation, of course, is within the congregation, suppose the same people, suppose they believe as a unit, as a body, in the God of the Bible, O thou that hearest. There's not a church where the membership believes in a God, in our church, but as a church.

You say, well we're very small. Well, suppose you had and they believe in the God of the Bible. The God that said, O thou that, but if you believe that God heard prayer, you'd bombard him as it, and if you believed it, you'd find out he's exactly what the Bible says he is.

He is a God. I want to speak to you from the 16th chapter of Acts this morning. Is your God dead? In the book of Acts it's very interesting to notice that a sovereign God can go about the business of bringing a lost sinner to a saving knowledge of him through Christ Jesus in any way he sets out to do.

I sometimes go to places and they say, Brother Barnes, this is the way we do it here. I say, well, if you'll excuse me, we'll do it some other way, because you'll be able to make a God out of the way you do things. And you say, well, now God has to work in a certain way.

No, he don't. No, he don't. He does as he pleases, and he accepts nobody's advice.

Is that right? That kind of God you worship? Does he ask you for advice every once in a while? No, no. He reigneth in the heavens. And we need to remember that sometimes God goes about bringing a sinner to salvation in a different way.

He always brings them to the right place if he's going to save them, but he may go at it a little different way. And here in the 16th chapter of Acts we have this God who hears prayer, and this God who saves sinners. I'm so glad that I can't save anybody, because if I could save anybody, I'd have to damn somebody.

Because Jesus Christ bought you on the cross, and he's either going to send you to glory, he's got to do one or the other, he's got you on his hands, you know, you belong to him. And God's turned you over to him. And then the question of what you're going to do with Christ is, he's going to save you or you can put that down, but he's going to be your judge or he's going to be your Lord and Savior, isn't that right? Because you belong to him.

Everybody in the world has been bought by the Lord Jesus Christ, and God has given unto him our eternal destiny. The Lord Jesus Christ will decide whether you're sent to hell or whether you're saved. Now you don't believe that, do you? You think you'll decide.

No, he's not giving you to decide. God's turned us over to his son. And a lot of people say, I don't like that preacher, and I suggest to them that they get him a club, and if they can find God, knock him in the head,

tell him you don't like the way he's running things.

And maybe you can get rid of God and be God yourself, or you could come down, offer your spiritual high horse and become a beggar and say, Lord, if you will, you can fix me up. You don't have to, but if you will. You see, there's just two places for a fellow to take the reference to God.

Cut them out! Amen? You ready to do that? Or fall at his feet and say, if there's any crumbs falling from your table, that'd be mighty nice. Amen? Amen. Well, so this sovereign God who has brought us, goes about saving people.

In 16th chapter of Acts, here in the 14th verse, he educates, he brings something to the salvation. And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshiped God, heard us, whose heart the Lord opened. Open your heart and let Jesus come in.

But I don't know nothing about that little Jesus that has to wait for you to let him in. There's a song that sings, let him in. Well, if he's that little, he's got to wait for you to let him do something.

He couldn't help you much if you let him in. But the Jesus of the Bible don't need your help, and he don't need you to let him do anything. He's been exalted, and he's sitting on the throne.

Isn't that right? That's been in the Bible. Of course, we haven't heard nothing about it in our generation. But the Jesus of the Bible, where is it? He's sitting on the throne.

And if we could find some Christians around here that start using the Bible, you'd quit asking sinners to let Jesus come in, and you'd go to asking God. The sinner can't open his heart. God has to do it.

You don't believe that, do you? But so, yeah. We ought to change our praying and never make any reference to God at all. We ought to say, Oh, Bill, won't you please save yourself? Of course, God's Son died on the cross, and he's been raised from the dead, and exalted, and sitting on the throne.

But the poor little fellow, I feel so sorry for him. He's helpless, and he can't make a move, till big old you decides to let him do something. Isn't that a pitiful way to preach the Christ of God? And the Lord Jesus, the bidding of the Lord, a woman named Thyatira.

She had a big clothing store. She's a dealer of purple. She sold her own licks, and while she's around the Lord, we ever got a survivor, start using it.

And you came, and only God can. And we believe that. But we don't believe that.

We believe sinners save themselves. God has saved sinners. God has saved sinners.

And so the Lord in one whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. See, you're going right straight to hell, if you don't become a faithful, persistent, praying, listener to the word of God. Because faith cometh how? Faith cometh how? How does it come? What does the scripture say? Romans 10, 17.

Don't anybody here know that verse? Huh? Well, the cat got your tongue? Faith cometh how? By hearing. And hearing what? The latest television show? No. Hearing by the what? Word of God.

There's no way on God's earth for sinners to believe in Christ, except that God works a miracle as he's listening and enables him to believe on the one that word's told. We're running around here saying, won't you please accept Christ? Well, why all the tomfoolery is that? I have to do a little more accepting and care less. Nothing like that in the scripture.

Ah, I'll tell you right now. If we believed the Bible, we'd have praying churches, because the Bible talks about a God who hears prayer, and the Bible talks about a God who opens sinners' hearts so they'll hear the word of God. That's right.

Of course, nobody gets saved now. They decide to duck them in a pond and take them in the church and let them go to hell. But nobody's ever saved, apart from God working a miracle and opening that old heart, so a little of the truth of God's word can find lost within there.

For the scripture says we're born of the what kind of word? The incorruptible word of God. And some of it's got to get in there for you to be saved. Isn't that right? And we've just got two weapons, members of this congregation.

We've just got two weapons. That's the proclamation of the cross of Christ. Throw them away.

That's the only thing God's given us. And they're the two things we don't use. We have nothing about intercessory prayer.

And we've had 60 years of preaching without ever touching side, top, or bottom of the truth of the gospel. And we've got a generation of church members that's sure for hells I'm preaching to. They accepted Jesus, but God never.

There it is right there. So the Lord opened her heart to the things which were spoken of Paul. You go in that shop and every time she didn't have a customer, she's sitting down reading the word of God.

She's sinking in. How do you get saved? Huh? Saved from it how? By hearing. Not by your decision, but by hearing.

And hearing by the word of God. Well, she got baptized and her whole household, and she said, if you've judged me to be faithful, come on over to my house and abide there. And she constrained that.

Then in verse 16, the sovereign God brings another person by a long, drawn-out process. I want to read how this poor little old girl suffered as God pulled out her gods and the demons out of her life. I've seen God work on a man for 10 or 12, 15 years.

Man, he's in agony. He's living in hell. God was pulling him and things were coming out.

And he quit that. See, God always puts you under the law. And that's a hard school, master, before he brings you to Christ.

And Lydia just sitting there quiet, and the Lord came in a quiet way and opened her heart. So for the first time in her life, how long has it been since you can go through the average church meetings for a year and never hear one word that's rightful? But we don't come to hear from God. We come because we like the preacher.

If we don't like him, we don't come. And so if all we listen to is the preacher, he's just a voice, and we understand he's a voice, and we're not coming to hear him. We're coming to hear from God through him.

Well, here's a little woman and came to pass as we went to prayer. A certain damsel, verse 16, possessed with the spirit of divination, met us, which brought her master as much gain by soon sin. And the same followed Paul and us and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the Most High God, which show unto us the way of salvation.

She wouldn't go out and invite anybody to the meetings. We should do what the Bible says, go out and show them the way of salvation. She said, Brother Barney, there's somebody in trouble, and they call for you, and you get over there, and they say, Oh, I tell you, I sure wish I could be saved.

What would you do, Brother Barney? I'd do what the Bible says. And old Cornelius was praying and living up to all the light he wanted, and he's hoping somebody would come along and tell him how to be saved. He didn't know.

And on the other end of the line, God likes you to get him to have sense enough to go over there and preach to a Gentile. And when Peter went over there, you know what he did? He did like you folks did. He went over there and took out his Bible.

He went over there and did what? Preach the gospel. And the scripture says, While he yet spake the word unto them, the Holy Spirit fell on them that he had already heard the word. You see now, folks, it's a tremendous thing to claim to be a Christian.

It's a tremendous thing to claim to be a Church of Jesus Christ. God's reputation is at hand. I'm looking in the face and telling you all to put a sign out there and quit playing mumbo tag and quit your little peanut ways.

And if you do not know how to go out in this community and show people the way of salvation, for God's sake, quit claiming to be a Christian. All on earth this little helpless gang of unsaved Church members can do. Every once in a while they get to feeling a little religious and they go out and invite a few people to attend some meeting.

God never told you to invite anybody to go anywhere. He tells us to go out and show people the way of salvation. Imagine Paul and Silas walking the streets of that city inviting somebody to come here and preach.

Huh? Well, that's a substitute to keep doing what God tells us to do. Exactly what Paul and Silas did, this little woman came and said, these, these are servants of the Lord. Invite us to a meeting, not on your bottom dollar, but show unto us the way of salvation.

When you take these scriptures and preach the gospel, you can't, why don't you quit claiming to be a Christian? Why don't you quit disgracing the name of Christ? Do you go out from this building armed with this book of the Holy Spirit bubbling over, not to invite somebody to go somewhere, but to show helpless sinners that you have opportunity, the way of salvation. See all hell would go to popping and rhyming if you had a church that pay a little attention. For God's sake, quit claiming to be a representative of a holy God.

Quit claiming to be a trophy of his marvelous grace. Quit claiming to have experienced his wonderful salvation, unless you at least can go and tell people what you've seen. Well, and this poor little girl, she just suffered.

Verse 18, this she did many days. Paul and Silas did. They understood that God feels mortal before he heals.

And somebody says, well, this little girl just many days. Paul finally being grieved turned and came out the same hour. And so the folks she was making money for, they caught Paul and Silas and took them down and had them judged.

And finally they put them in jail. And the jailer, verse 23, when they'd laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison for showing people. Now you ain't going to get no trouble at all, honey, as long as you can just go out from this little building.

Now once in a while invite somebody. The devil don't mind. But if you ever go to acting like a Christian and you get an opportunity, they like what you do too.

But I'll tell you something, huh? That's right. God never told you to claim to be one of his representatives when you haven't experienced salvation enough that you can tell other people that's witnessing it and what you've heard. I wish I could break this generation of church people.

They tell me they've been saved. And I wish I could get you to buy your Bible. And I could break you from these foolish things that are damning this generation while we sleep well at night.

I believe that a person who's not engaged in the business of showing sinners the way of salvation, I don't believe that person. He may be. And so they got put in jail.

Boy, you might too. Because things are going to stir in around here if you fill this town full. I'm preaching not here.

This is the place for you to go out from, amen, to show people the way of salvation. So they put them in jail. And they put them in the stocks.

And verse 25 tells another experience how Sovereign God, one, he just quietly opened a woman's heart and brought her to Christ. See it? And another, it's a long-grown outprocess. She went around for many days, dreaming, following Paul and Silas, that these are God's servants, and they show us the way of salvation, but she's full of devils.

And finally old Paul turned in mercy and commanded the demons to go out, and she was delivered. But here's another place of a fellow who the Lord just in a wonderful way brought salvation. Look at verse 25.

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 that 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 awakened out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, And then he called for a light, this jailer did, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out of the jail cells, and said, Sirs, what must I do to thee?

Now watch it, because the next verse, there's damn more people in any other verse except the first chapter of John. I verily believe we've used this scripture to send more people to hell than any other scripture in the Bible, except that text over in the first chapter of John.

He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, them gave he the right to become the children of God, even as many as believed on his name. Now listen, brother Barnwright, quickly, I'm going to let you go.

I'm desperate. I told you, young pastor, you could do a great work here. If you're Christian, listen to me.

I will help you. If you'll begin to do what I'm talking about, for God's sake, cut out this silly stuff about trying to get somebody to attend your church. There ain't no church to attend.

You're the church. Amen. And let this church go out where sinners are.

The men can go two by twos. The women can go two by twos. The youngsters can go two by twos.

If you've got a junior that claims to be a Christian, put him on the road, let him go to Veston. He ain't saved no how. Somebody starts this business, they didn't believe in women preachers.

If you believed the Bible, you would. The day God saved you, that's right. It's not optional whether you're a preacher or not.

If you're a child of God, he called you to preach. He gave you a woman or a man or a junior or an intermediate. Now the Bible says he gave some particular officer, but he gave all of God's people.

It's not optional whether you're a witness or not. If you're saved, you are saved. You don't decide whether you would be a light if you're saved.

You are the light of the world. You don't decide whether you want to be salt or not. If you're saved, you are the salt of the world.

And you don't decide whether you're going to preach the gospel. If you're saved, you do. Well, that's what he calls it.

That's right. Take 20 people that are saved and paying a little attention to the Bible. Boy, you can make it hard for Christian, Bergen, Ryan, and Gouffard, Radford.

There ain't nobody in Christian, Bergen, Radford, minding God. They just go into service once in a while. Every once in a while, they invite somebody to come to the meeting, most of them.

But how many people you know in Christian, Bergen, Radford, and all these towns around here, they've got a Bible. And act like that they know that Jesus Christ has made them his representative. He has represented Christ.

And that's some job, isn't it? God bless your heart. I'm here working down to that fact in your own wherever you are as an ambassador. Instead, be a reconciler to God.

Oh, ask. Goodness, pick up, folks. And I look in the face with all the pathos there is in my heart.

You've got no right to run your claim and be a Christian if you're a saint. Stand up on your hands. Let this world know I'm a representative of the Lord.

I didn't choose him, bless God, nor it ain't that I should, but I've chosen you. You know what? You know the reason I'm saved? God decided so. I guess you think you saved because you accepted Jesus, but you ain't.

The reason I'm saved, God said. He laid me on an old professor, and that old professor liked to worry me. Oh, what a mean preacher he didn't have.

It wasn't any way I could cry. He was just out of his mind. I tell you right now, I never will get over that.

Well, his old jailer just skipped. He's trembling. And he says, sir, what must I do to be saved? Now, I want you to believe on the Lord.

Now, listen, I'm going to let you go. God said, don't ever tell a sinner to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and tell him that he'll do it, he'll be saved, unless that sinner is trembling in a state of repentance under the power of God, wanting to be saved. I've heard dear persons, workers don't know about Christ, and say, oh, you got to do it.

Nowhere in the scripture is anybody ever told to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, unless they're just about to die to get saved. That's right. Elsewhere, what we need to do is go out and tell them what the Bible says, that unless you become a persistent seeker of the Lord, and when a man's seeking, seeking, trembling, he's not full of alibis, he just rejects.

I sure wish the Lord saved me. Huh? Then do what Paul did, see what I mean? Well, just lean on him. Huh? Lock, stock and barrel on who? Where is he now? Well, he was on the cross, but where is he now? Amen? And you'll ignore your weight on him.

Who? Well, Jesus, this generation, knows nothing about it. He enthroned Christ. Amen? And he's sitting on the cross, because he died on the cross.

Huh? God bless you. You seem to me to be sweet people, to be people who are anxious, but this old flesh hour is just, we need to learn how to die every day. I hope I carry up everything you believe in, because if I carry it up, it ain't worth nothing anymore.

I want to see, I believe we can have it, when we go to pay in some extent. I believe enough people, yeah, but let's just go to doing what the Bible tells God's people to do. Amen? Now, hell will I go poppin'.

Amen? Go study this morning. It's, it's a little bit, uh, near my heart. I'm not a novice, this in thirty-six years, except a full-time hitchhiking evangelist.

I've learned a few things. I'm entitled to a hearing, and you've given it to me. I don't ask you to believe what I preach.

And I tell you, it's time we just rolled about, and says the Bible. And I believe that obedient people, who are doing what they can, as God directs them, I believe they got it right, pour out His Spirit on our labors. For I can't win the soul of Christ, but in the deep sense, the Holy Spirit's the only thing that can get into Christ.

And wherever I go, I long to be used of God, to challenge God's people, who've lived all the days of your life. None of us have ever seen real revival there. And I believe it's, it's a, it'll break out where God's people quit listening to the traditions of men, and go to listening to the Word of God.

I think the only hope of God is to come in great power, don't you? But I don't believe He's going to come in great power, on a disobedient, lazy church. And I hope the Lord will just cut us all to pieces, grind us up, and we're like little children. We never have in our life, we begin to obey the plain teachings.

And I covet that. How you feeling, Brother Ray? Our Father, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we commit these therefore to God, help them to fill this community, to tell people what they've seen. And this one who sits on the throne, people get in touch with him, he transforms them.

For it is the power of God, the exalted in throne, eternal God, who is manifest in the flesh. Help me, our Father, to you. I pray that you undertake still for my body.

And I pray, Lord, that you be on mercy, glorify the Lord Jesus Christ. We'll say thank you in the shadows of breath. God is one who gives prayer.

God is one who, thank you, Lord, help us. We need you. In Jesus' name, we pray.

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