



9/18/26

I've been really thinking a lot about what Tim said about being a blessing and leaving a hole. As I considered Paul's letter to the Philippians, I thought that he was probably a huge blessing to the believers there (and for the other churches as well). His absence left a huge hole. So, on this week's episode of Chosen and Cherished, it seemed only right that we consider what that means in our own lives. If you'd like to listen to the podcast, here's the link... <https://summitpoint.org/chosen-and-cherished/>

*Blessings,
Jonna*

Acts 16:25-34

This week is our baptism celebration when believers in Christ will stand in a tub filled with water (I hear it's warm) and give testimony of why they are being baptized. They'll answer several questions.

- 1. Have you A - admitted that you're a sinner, B - believed that Jesus died and rose again to save you from your sins, and C - confessed Jesus as Lord?*
- 2. How and when did that happen?*
- 3. What's life like now with Jesus?*
- 4. What's one thing about Jesus that blows you away?*

Well, in Acts 16, I get to read about the salvation and baptism of an unlikely brother in Christ. I only know him as "the jailer." I'd like to imagine how he would answer the questions at his baptism.

Baptizer: First, Brother Jailer, have you A - admitted that you're a sinner, B - believed that Jesus died and rose again to save you from your sins, and C - confessed Jesus as Lord?

Brother Jailer: Emphatically YES

Baptizer: How and when did that happen?

Brother Jailer: It was the craziest thing. These missionaries came into town and started preaching about what they called, the good news of the gospel. Their leader, Paul, said there was a guy named Jesus who was no ordinary guy. He was the Son of God who gave His life for the sins of the world. And he said that this Jesus also rose again. I just laughed at him. But he went on and on proclaiming this gospel!

Next thing I know, I'm told to put this guy in shackles with one of the other missionaries! Apparently, he had cast a demon out of a slave girl and her owners brought charges against him for going against our Roman law. They beat him and his friend up pretty badly. I helped. I was told to put them shackles in the part of the jail that was reserved for the worst criminals. I guess they figured if he could cast a demon out of someone, they'd need to make sure he was bound up pretty strongly. I didn't bother cleaning any of their wounds... these guys Paul and Silas. And they didn't try to fight me! They weren't mad. I thought, "Are these guys crazy?"

THEN, they started singing and praying... while the blood just dripped down their bodies! It went on until midnight. All the prisoners were calm and listening to them. I've never seen anything like it! I was trying to sleep, but I have to say... the songs and prayers were stirring something in me I didn't even know was there.

THEN... about midnight, there was an earthquake and ALL the doors opened and the shackles fell apart! My heart just stopped! I was trembling. I know who I work for. They were not going to understand. They would expect me to keep all those prisoners from escaping. How could one man do that? I figured anything I could do to myself would be far more quick and far less painful than what they were going to do to me. So I decided to fall on my sword. Let them clean up the mess.

But as I was about to die, I heard Paul yell to me, "Don't do it! We're all still here!" What??? It would be shocking enough that Paul and Silas didn't escape. But NONE OF THE PRISONERS ESCAPED!!! That's crazy! Why would they not leave? And why would Paul want to save my life after how I treated him??? It must be JESUS! This gospel Paul talked about must be the reason why. I want to know that Jesus!!!

So I went to Paul and fell down before him and Silas. I was trembling. The adrenaline rush on my body from fear and relief was uncontrollable. I brought them out into the light and begged them respectfully, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (I certainly have never called a prisoner "sir" before. But I've never seen a prisoner like this.)

Their answer shocked me. I'd never heard anything like this. They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." What? That's it? No jumping through hoops? No proving myself worthy? No cleaning up my act first? Just believe? That's too easy!

Is it true??? And my whole family could have this Jesus as well??? How could I say no to this??? The Lord Jesus Christ pursued me and offered salvation to me. He saved my physical life and He saved me for eternal life.

So they explained this gospel to me and my whole family. I know my family was shocked to even see me. They'd never seen me without a scowl on my face, without hatred coming from my heart. If the gospel would make that kind of change in me so quickly, they wanted to know this Jesus, too. So here I am with my family in this tub (or actually in a body of water), all proclaiming the name of our Savior Jesus Christ, changed forever.

Baptizer: That's awesome. So what's life like now with Jesus?

Brother Jailer: Well, it's only been a few hours, but everything's different already. I am so full of joy. I did nothing to deserve this gift from the Lord. He did it all. I want to live for Him the rest of my life on earth and then go and spend eternity with Him when He calls me to my new home called heaven. In a million years, I would never have believed this could be possible.

Baptizer: Amen, Brother. What's one thing about Jesus that blows you away?

Brother Jailer: One thing??? How about a million things??? But... If I have to pick just one, I guess I would say His mercy blows me away. He KNOWS everything about me. His knowledge of me didn't start a few hours ago. Paul and Silas shared Psalm 33:14-15 with me, "From where He sits enthroned the Lord looks out on all the inhabitants of the earth, He who fashions the hearts of them ALL and observes ALL their deeds." The Lord KNOWS everything I've done and none of what I've done is so big that the cross can't cover it. That's a mercy I've never known.

Baptizer: Praise the Lord, Brother. Why do you want to be baptized?

Brother Jailer: I want to be baptized here with my family out of obedience to Jesus Christ and because I want everyone to know that I love Him with my whole heart. I am committed to live for Him for the rest of my time on earth, and I am willing to die for Him if that's what He allows. I would consider it a privilege to die for Him who died for me. I know that, because of Jesus who is alive, my death is not the end. Death will be the servant that ushers me into the presence of my Savior forever. Praise His name.

That's how the jailer became my brother. I'm looking forward to meeting him someday.

O Lord, I pray that I will have the same joy in my salvation as my brother the jailer had. Let me never think that he needed You more than I do. Let me never forget that You pursued me just like You pursued him. Let me never take the gospel for granted. Him for me... so me for Him.