

Schedule of Meeting Times:

WKAC 1080 AM Sunday 7:30 AM
 Study Sunday 10:00 AM
 Worship Sunday Morn 11:00 AM
 Worship Sunday Eve 5:00 PM
Singing every 2nd Sunday evening
 Study Wednesday 7:00 PM

Preacher / bulletin editor:

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"...And he called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas, and after he brought them out, he said, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?'"

—Acts 16:29,30

**Servants during July:**

Songleader: Dwight (7), Stanley (14), Larry (21), Dwight (28)

Reading: Mike M

Announcements: Stanley

Table: Larry, Marty, Mike M

Wednesday Lesson: Larry (10),

Stanley (17), Kris (24), Larry (31)

Lawn Mowing (week starting): Kris (7), Marty (14), Stanley (21), Larry (28)

Area Meetings: Belgreen, 21-26, Jarad Hagan; Piney Grove, 28-31, Bryan Gibson;

Parkway, 28-8/2, Terry Benton

Hays Mill church of Christ

21705 Hays Mill Road

Elkmont, AL 35620

The Bible . Examiner

"Examine everything carefully..." —1 Thessalonians 5:21 NASB

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The Night Paul and Silas Sang

Part 2, by Dick Blackford

Sometimes discouraged Christians seek to become more spiritual in their walk and worship by gimmicks or quick fixes. But growing spirituality will not be found in external circumstances—consider the night that Paul and Silas sang, Acts 16:22-40!

these two prisoners sit at his table, v34! What stretched this man's emotions from one end to the other? It was Christianity! Jesus Christ can make life worth living! No, he hadn't heard the gospel yet (not till v32), but he had seen Christianity in action! These were unique prisoners.

The Jailer

Here was a man who was on the very edge. He was within fractions of a second and fractions of an inch of taking his own life when he heard a voice that offered him hope. Within moments here was a man whose emotions were stretched from one extreme to the other. He had gotten as low as a man can get. From a state of despair and desperation he rises to heights of joy as he and his family and

- They were honest in not escaping, even though they didn't deserve to be there. Rare indeed!
- They were singing hymns of praise. In most cases, if any singing is going on it is "Gloom, Despair, and Agony on me..."
- They saved his life. He represented the government that put them there. They could have said, "Tough luck, Buddy. Serves you right. We're outta here."

Most hardened criminals will kill in order to escape.

Some Contrasts

Here were some beaten down prisoners who should have been miserable, yet they're happy! Here was a man who was in power and authority—a free man on the outside. He should have been happy, but he was miserable! He saw the contrast and it caused him to blurt out loud a question that many people are ashamed to ask: What must I do to be saved?

We see another contrast in how we treat others. The principle of Christianity is that we should love people and use things, Lk 6:31; Eph 4:28; Mt 25:14-30. Men often reverse that. They love things and use people. Those men who brought the charges did not love the slave girl as a person. They used her as a thing—like a freak in a side show. Paul and Silas not only silenced some unneeded advertising but they freed her from the clutches of the devil and his cohorts. They loved her.

With what smugness the jailer must have thrown Paul and Silas into the inner prison and clamped them into the stocks. At that point there was no love for these prisoners. But they not only saved his life. Ultimately, they also saved his soul. The jailer had seen enough Christianity in action to give him second thoughts. Paul and Silas were looking for opportunities. That's how spiritual men think.

His Conversion

In answer to his question, they told him to “believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,” v31. It is one thing to tell a person to believe and quite another to tell him what to believe. They had done the one but not yet the other. We could proclaim all day for people to believe on the Lord, but they can't respond until they know what to believe. It is in the next verse, v32, that they spoke the word of the Lord to him—without which no man can be saved, Rom 1:16. If he was saved when they told him to believe, v31, then he was saved before he heard the gospel, v32, making the gospel unnecessary!

Upon hearing the “word of the Lord,” the jailer and his household were baptized immediately. This writer is aware and has participated in some inconvenient baptisms—driving in a blinding storm, hospital baptisms, breaking the ice on the pond, etc., but there surely has never been a more inconvenient baptism than the one we read of here in Acts 16.

- An earthquake had occurred. We should never do anything rash after an earthquake for it can lead to disaster, especially in the darkness;
- They had been through an emotional upheaval with the jailer almost taking his life;
- The wounds of Paul and Silas needed attention;
- They had to go elsewhere for the baptizing;
- It was after midnight. Yet it

couldn't even wait till the next morning!


What could possibly have made this so important that he was baptized immediately in spite of all the inconveniences? Was there anything in “the word of the Lord” that would bring on this urgency? What had the Lord said on this subject? “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned,” Mk 16:16. That's what made it so urgent! This was the answer to the question he had asked. Did you notice that the jailer never made any of the arguments against baptism that false teachers often make today? He had a different attitude toward “the word of the Lord” than those who make these arguments.

Lessons for Christians

These events happened in a short period of time. We should never underestimate our influence, even in a brief encounter. Look at how they

changed this man's life! Does your Christianity show when you are in dire circumstances?

I have often wondered why Paul didn't tell the authorities immediately that they were Roman citizens instead of waiting till the next day to inform them that they had been beaten contrary to Roman law. Perhaps some providence here. If he had done that he might never have met the jailer, and we wouldn't have this moving account of the events that led to this man's conversion. And the church at Philippi might not have become the beacons of light that they became, Phil 2:15. As a charter member, I have often wondered just what part the jailer and his family played in that little epistle of joy in which some form of that word appears so often, Phil 4:4. It may be that farther along we'll understand these things.

Paul and Silas sang that night. And what a night it was for singing! 

Remember in Prayer

Mike B continues to deal admirably with his cancer. **Hazel** is still recovering at Goldton in Athens, Rm “111 Market St W.” **Carolyn** had relatively extensive surgery on her broken foot, and continues to recover. We thank God for His kindness to all three of these brethren!

Please seek a change in the direction of our fellow citizens, and

God's mercy for our nation. pray for the safety and wisdom of those that now do and will in the future lead it, 1 Tim 2:1-6. Yet in all this, pray that God's will be done, understanding that He knows what is best, Psa 75:6,7.

Please continue to pray for those other brethren we know and love, including **Betty; Kathy Mitchell;** and **the Pollard Family.** 