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Vaught Sermon Notes: A Study of the Book of Acts

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### Believe on Christ and Be Saved

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"Believe" is in the active voice and means that you have to believe for yourself. No one can do it for you.

"Believe" is in the imperative mood and means that you are commanded to believe if you expect to be saved.

"Thou shalt be saved" is a logical future. It means it is logical and that every-time someone believes he will be saved.

"Thou shalt be saved" is in the passive voice and this means that you can't save yourself but salvation is something that is done for you.

"Thou shalt be saved" is in the indicative mood and this means the reality of salvation is yours once you believe.

The phrase "And thy house" is a Greek idiom. It doesn't mean that if you are saved, then all in your house are automatically saved. It rather means that what applied to the jailer, applied to them. In English we would say it this way--"Mr. Jailer, you will be saved by believing in Jesus Christ, and if anyone else in your family, either wife or children, will believe then they will be saved too". But the Greeks had a way of saying this in a much more concise term.

The true value of faith always lies in its object--and the object is the Lord Jesus Christ.

JOHN 3:36 "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." Faith in Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation. Every person who is not mentally unbalanced has faith. No one can live without faith. Almost everything we believe has to begin with faith. Faith is something by which we live.

ACTS 16:32-34 "And they spake 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, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house." This is the story of the second miracle.

These verses amplify what had been stated concisely in verse 31. We read here that Paul spoke unto him "The word of the Lord". That jailer's house became a sanctuary and Paul and Silas preached to the jailer and his family for the rest of the night. Now most of us would have stopped with the accomplishment of verse 31, but Paul wanted to be sure that the jailer and his wife and family all understood the meaning of their new found faith. I wish we all could have been there that night and could have heard Paul explain to the jailer and his family the meaning of sin and the way of salvation. Paul told them how they were born spiritually dead and how they had become spiritually alive. Paul explained to them how on the cross Christ bore all of our sins and all the sins of the whole human race. Paul explained to them how you are saved by an act of volition. He possibly explained to them how in the Garden of Eden Adam and Eve went away from God when they said, "I will eat of the fruit of the tree and I will disobey God". Then he explained to them how Adam and Eve were given the plan of salvation and how they came to Christ by saying "I will believe". Paul no doubt explained to them that men are not condemned for personal sins but only for the sin of unbelief. Paul no doubt told them how you could take all the good deeds of all the people in the world and give those good deeds to one man and those billions of good deeds could not get even one man into the Kingdom of God.

In other words, they learned that night that there are not enough good deeds in the history of the world to save even one man. You see, all of this was included in the talk that night when it says that Paul spoke unto them "The word of the Lord".

We need to remember that the gospel is "Good News", that Christ died for our sins. Justification does not mean, "Just as if I had never sinned". It means just the opposite. It means that even though I have committed countless sins every day of my life that the moment I trust Christ, I am justified.

Let us look for a moment at the content of the "Good News".

1. The bad news is that I am a sinner.

Sometimes when we hear a sharp condemnation of sin we say, "Now that's what I call real preaching". It is not real preaching at all, for telling a man of his sins is not good news, but that is bad news. You don't have to tell a man about his sins, he already knows how terrible his sins are.

2. The good news is that we have a Saviour.

The good news begins with the cross. The good news is this--no matter how many sins you have committed, they have already been judged at the cross. Now that's good news! In the courtroom of the cross your sins have all been judged, paid for, pardoned. That's the good news the world is waiting to hear. At the cross God the Father judged those sins. All I have to do is believe. Yes, that's right, because Christ did it all and we can do nothing in order to get salvation. Jesus paid the account in full and that's the good news the world is waiting to hear. Too long the people have been deluded at this point. The gospel doesn't mean bad news, but it means good news. When you hear a testimony and someone tells you how much they gave up in order to be a Christian that isn't a Christian testimony at all. It is but a recital of a self-righteous person who doesn't know much about the grace of God. What we gave up is inconsequential--what is important is what Christ did for us on the cross. What's great is what Jesus Christ did for us on the cross. Paul didn't tell the jailer he had to stop being a jailer and give up drinking and wild parties. He didn't tell him to come join the Pauline Traveling Agency for the betterment of the world. We read, "He spake unto them the word of the Lord". We must know the gospel in order to give the gospel. I expect Paul related to them that night his Damascus Road experience and how in a moment of time he was changed from a persecutor to a preacher, from a menace to a missionary, from a sinner to a saint.

So that night Paul gave them the gospel and the Holy Spirit did the work in their minds. It must have been an impressive sight as that jailer listened, and as his wife listened, and as all the children listened. All of them made their decision right there.

Look now and see how the jailer has become a different person.

ACTS 16:33 "And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway." He "washed their blows". Having received Christ the jailer is now a different man. Having received Christ his whole attitude changed toward Paul and Silas. The words "Took them" comes from "Para-lambano" and literally means "Received them to himself on the basis of himself". In other words, since the jailer is now a believer he received Paul and Silas as believers. He gave them first aid. Evidently Paul and Silas had some deep gashes from the beating of the rods.

Evidently there was an interim here and Paul taught them the significance of baptism. Paul never baptized anyone until he explained to them the real meaning of baptism. He taught them what salvation was, and how they now had entered into union with Christ. He taught them that baptism meant identification, and how they were identified with death in the pardon of their sins, and how they were identified with life in the new found relationship with God. Paul taught them how they were saved and saved forever. Paul taught them the principle of 1 John 1:9. Just be sure of this--Paul gave them a clear explanation of the cross and faith and grace.

So when all in that jailer's house had a complete gospel briefing, they were baptized.

"Was baptized" is aorist, passive, indicative. This means that in a point of time they received baptism on the reality of their faith. It was a ritual that spoke of reality.

In our next study we will learn what they had for breakfast.