

THE FOREST HILL NEWS

Published weekly by the Forest Hill church of Christ

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Forest Hill Church of Christ

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VISIT US SOON!

Sunday:

Bible Study..... 9:30 A..M.
Morning Worship.....10:30 A.M.
Evening Worship..... 6:00 P.M.

Wednesday:

Bible Study7:00 P.M.

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Kakinada, India
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Far East/World Evangelism
In Search of the Lord's Way
Truth for the World

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THE BIG SURPRISE

Kevin D. Beard

Sometimes surprises can be enjoyable. Finding a five dollar bill in the pocket of an article of clothing you had not worn in awhile would be an enjoyable surprise. But some surprises are not enjoyable. Should the dentist surprise you by saying, "We'll have to do a root canal," that surprise would not be an enjoyable one.

Some will receive a big surprise on the Day of Judgment. That surprise will not be an enjoyable one. Jesus spoke of this surprise in His sermon on the mount:

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven but he that doeth the will of my Father, which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name,? And in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works: And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity (Matt. 7:21-23).

It may seem strange to some that there will be religious people who will be condemned in the Day of Judgement, but that is exactly what Jesus said would be the case. Notice a few things about those whom Jesus said would be lost in that day.

1. **They recognized Jesus as the Lord.** These people will not be the atheists who blatantly deny even the existence of God. They will not be the Jews who rejected Jesus as the Messiah. They will not be the Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, or of any other religious group that does not follow Christ. He said that these would recognize Him as the Lord. This illustrates well the fact that mere verbal recognition of who Jesus is does not bring one salvation. Even the demons believe; yet they will not be saved (Jam. 2:19).
2. **They did good works.** Jesus does not deny their claims. These were ones who honestly believed that they were doing good works in the name of Christ. Many people spend their entire lives doing good and giving the credit to the Lord. Yet all who do such must be concerned with whether or not the Lord approves of their actions. These were condemned because Jesus never knew, or approved of them. The Lord's approval of good works comes only when those works are done in harmony with His will.
3. **They believed they were saved.** Whether they had misunderstood the teachings of Christ, or whether they were misled by someone else, these were ones, evidently, who sincerely believed they were doing right. But in the judgment day, they found out that the standard they had followed was their own, not the Lord's. Sincerity does not guarantee acceptance with the Lord. Paul sincerely believed he was doing right in persecuting the church, yet he was wrong (Acts 23:1).

Man's salvation is dependent upon his complete submission to God's will. Some will be surprised at what the Lord says to them. Make sure you are following what the Lord would have you to do, and not just what someone told you the Lord's will is. The only surprises on that day will be to the ones who thought they were saved, but actually were lost.

(Brother Beard preaches for the Fayette, Alabama church of Christ.)

IN PURSUIT OF PEACE

Rick Brumback

Many are searching for some ultimate understanding of life and means of finding peace and satisfaction. They often look to eastern religions for answers, and associated figures such as the Dalai Lama. Given our advanced culture and emphasis on scientific achievement, many look to health professionals and “how-to” books in a quest for ultimate meaning. But the key to successful living can only be learned from the One Who gives life – God Himself.

There was once a fellow, himself incarcerated, who claimed to have the secret of true peace and purpose. Thankfully, his advice was not only freely offered, but it was also inspired. The man was Paul. When he had heard about his good friends in Philippi who were enduring strife within the local body, and who were being tested by those outside the body, he gave to them advice that must surely be just as needed now (Phil. 4:4-7).

The first element he considered was “joy” (4:4). It is remarkable that he not only could speak of this word, but also demonstrate that he had found joy and its source, given his own condition. It is a striking fact that circumstances alone do not determine the condition of the mind. Christians can be joyous *inside* even when all is tumultuous *outside*. But to find joy within requires that we take time to reflect upon a few matters that should stand out in our minds. We are saved individuals whose purpose is to magnify Christ. God is able to supply our every need. Other people are being saved. We have many friends and fellow-helpers, making a great fellowship in the cause of Jesus Christ. Always God is concerned for our eternal well-being. These Christians in Philippi were told to have joy continuously because of these blessings, and we should as well.

The second element was “moderation” or “reasonableness” (4:5). It is likely that we all have names and faces in our pasts of persons whom we remember for the goodness and kindness they demonstrated toward others. It should be no surprise to us that God asks us to demonstrate these qualities to others in His name. One cannot be truly at peace without striving to be a blessing to others. The following terms may be substituted in place of “moderation”: geniality, kindness, gentleness, sweet reasonableness, considerateness, charitableness, mildness, generosity, and magnanimity (my personal preference). For magnanimity we may think of being big-hearted. None of these alone fully encompasses the meaning of the term Paul used, but together they give the rich sense of this word. This is not to be extended only to Christians, but to all people. It stands close to the comfort that we each enjoy from Christ. And Paul reminds that the Lord looks over us and is not only near in observation, but in manifestation when we treat other people right.

The third element found in the pursuit of peace is “prayer” (4:6). Not only are we to have joy within and considerateness all around, but also we are to be looking

above in dependence. A hindrance to peace and blessedness is an unproductive worrying over matters of life. Concern and care are important, but distressed anxiety can cause inaction or apathy. The cure for worry is prayer. It is not that we are to be inactive; we should be active to pursue worthwhile goals. Prayer alone will not suffice. There needs to be reflective planning and action, but predicated upon our prior approach to God. We are not to be apathetic; we are not told to have no desires or aspirations, or yield to the affairs of the human experience with a morbid fatalism. The antidote to worry is to pour out our hearts to God in prayer. Note the contrast between *for nothing* and *in everything* (Matt. 6:34; 1 Pet. 5:7). It involves not only prayer, which is the more general term, but also supplication, which involves laying forth our keenly felt needs. All of this is to be done with thanksgiving for a) past favors; b) present blessings; and c) firmly grounded assurances of the future.

If we have joy within, considerateness all around, and constant prayer to God above, then peace will result in our lives (4:7). This is called the peace of God, because it derives from Him. This also means that it cannot be found without Him. It is no wonder Jesus is called the Prince of Peace. This is what He was manifested to the world to secure – “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is staying on thee, because he trusts in thee” (Isa. 26:3). It is the God-given reward for having joy, magnanimity, and dependence.

(Brother Brumback is the preacher for the Southwest church of Christ in Austin, Texas.)

WAS THE PHILIPPIAN JAILOR SAVED BEFORE BAPTISM?

Jimmy Ferguson

The story of the Philippian jailor is found in Acts 16. The jailor was in charge of Paul and Silas, who had been arrested on false charges by the owners of a slave girl. They had cast an unclean spirit out of the girl, depriving her owners of the money they made by exploiting her (16:20-21). Because of this, Paul and Silas were arrested, beaten, and put into the innermost prison, with their feet in the stocks. The jailor was in charge of them until the officials could deal with them.

Beaten and bleeding and locked in the innermost prison, Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises to God even though it was midnight (16:25). Suddenly and earthquake shook the prison. Awakening from sleep, the jailor was ready to kill himself rather than face the consequences of letting his prisoners escape. Paul calmed him by saying, “Do thyself no harm: for we are all here” (16:28). He came in trembling and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” (16:30). Paul and Silas

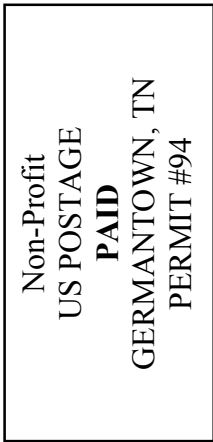
answered very simply, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (16:31), Denominationalists quote this verse often when referring to salvation. Since the jailor was not told to be baptized, does this mean that he was saved before being baptized? In the words of Paul Harvey, "Now the rest of the story."

Paul and Silas told the jailor to believe on Christ and he would be saved, but what did the jailor know about Jesus? It is unlikely that he had heard any of the sermons that Paul and Silas had preached at Philippi. He evidently knew nothing about Jesus other than what he had learned through their songs and prayers. Thus, they had to teach him. And that is precisely what they did after stating the necessity of faith. "And they spake unto him the words of the Lord, and to all that were in his house" (16:32). What did speaking "the word of the Lord" include?

Verse 33 states, "He took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway." Again, when they taught the jailor the "word of the Lord," what specifically did they teach him? (1) The verse states that he "washed their stripes," which indicates repentance. It is certainly no surprise that they taught the jailor about repentance since one cannot be saved in their sin. One must repent or turn away from sin. Jesus said, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Lk. 13:3). Thus, teaching the jailor "the word of the Lord" included the teaching him about repentance. (2) He was also baptized. Paul and Silas could not have adequately taught him about Jesus without teaching him about baptism since one is "baptized into Jesus Christ, and into his death" (Rom. 6:3). (3) The jailor washed their stripes and was baptized the "same hour of the night." Thus, there was an urgency associated with being baptized. Why? Because without it one is not saved (1 Pet. 3:21).

We should also note that the jailor and his family rejoiced after their baptism (16:34). They rejoiced, knowing their sins were forgiven. Thus, the jailor's faith led him to be baptized into Christ for the remission of his sins. Therefore, as with all other conversions in the book of Acts, he was saved when he was baptized into Christ and into His death (Rom. 6:3).

(Brother Ferguson is the preacher for the Stage Road church of Christ in Memphis.)



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