

BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

Salvation Only by Grace Through Faith

Acts 16:25-34. Romans 1:16-18. Galatians 2:20. Ephesians 2:8-10

Copy this sheet for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.

Leaders' Responsibilities:

Important: Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a Unit of sessions needs to have access to the "Basic Information for Leading the Unit of Study". That information is often provided at the beginning of that Unit of sessions. The weekly session "Background" located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day's study.

1. **The Gathering Time Leader** will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.
2. **The Bible Study Leader** will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)
3. **The Worship Time Leader** has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the **Worship Time** that can aid in participatory worship.

Prior to this Coming Session:

Gathering Time Leader:

Find the Acts 16 passage in *The Message* or prepare to read it dramatically from any version which is available to you. This is a good opportunity to involve a new person in participating in the teaching time.

Bible Study Leader:

Important note to the leader of this study: Salvation by God's grace alone is a precious and true doctrine. However, some other Christian denominations do not interpret it as we do. You have an important responsibility to guide your group today in such a way that you nor they are guilty of putting down or belittling the beliefs of another Christian group or an individual's point-of-view. Don't allow someone in the study to be hurtful in their comments on this subject.

Provide paper and pens for writing testimonies. Have a whiteboard or blackboard available for listing ideas generated in the brainstorming session.

Worship Time Leader:

Copy the scripture passages to be used at the beginning of the worship time. You may make copies from the last page of the Worship Time materials. If possible, ask three different people to read ahead of time. Include children as appropriate. Ask them to read in a strong and clear voice.

Music Sources:

“Without Him” *Baptist Hymnal, 1991, #300*

“Freely, Freely”, *Baptist Hymnal, 1991, #273*

“Jesus is Lord of All”, *Baptist Hymnal, 1991, #296*

“I'll Live for Him”, *Baptist Hymnal, 1991, #298.*

1

Copy this section for the Gathering Time leader.

Gathering Time: (Suggested time: 15 minutes)

Salvation Only by Grace Through Faith

Focal Text

Acts 16:25-34. Romans 1:16-18. Galatians 2:20. Ephesians 2:8-10.

Background Text

Exodus 6:2-8. Matthew 1:21; 4:17; 16:21-26. Luke 1:68-69; 2:28-32. John 1:11-14, 29; 3:3-21; 36; 5:24; 10:9. Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 16:25-34; 20:32. Romans 1:16-18; 3:23-25; 4:3-13; 5:8-10; 10:9-13. Galatians 2:20; 3:13; 6:15. Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-22. Hebrews 5:8-9; 9:24-28. 1John 2:1-2. Revelation 3:20.

Main Idea

Salvation by grace means salvation as a free gift on God's part. But God cannot give except as man receives. Receiving salvation as an unmerited gift on God's part is faith.

Question to Explore

How can a person be saved?

Teaching Aim

To help the class explain the way of salvation

Gathering together:

Read the Acts 16:25-34 passage from the powerful interpretation in ***The Message*** if possible. If ***The Message*** is not available, read the scripture dramatically as if telling a most interesting story. You may want to ask an older child or youth to read. Ask them ahead of time so that they can read it through several times.

First thoughts:

Our lesson today is an old, old story that we never tire of hearing. We will focus on salvation by grace through faith.

Everyone's faith story is different. For some, it is the radical, life-changing, one moment to the next experience which is demonstrated in the story of the jailer and his family. For others faith comes more slowly. It may be the result of careful nurturing as an infant, loving teaching as a child and a challenge to own one's faith as a teen. However

different our stories may be, each one is miraculous and a joy to hear and to share. We will worship together today as we think of how God brings salvation into individual lives.

Closing the Gathering Time:

Sing together “**Without Him**” *Baptist Hymnal, 1991, #300*

Take time at this point to mention items of prayer concern for the church, announcements of ministry or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation. Pray for these needs. Remember to praise God in prayer.

Break time! Take five minutes between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won't need to leave during the Bible Study time.

Distribute youth/adult Bible study outlines or paper for note-taking, if available.

Also hand out the activity sheets for preschool and younger children to use during Bible Study and/or worship.

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Copy this section for the Bible Study leader.

Note to the Bible Study Leader: Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the “Teacher Preparation” for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the “Bible Study Plan” for the actual session.

Teacher Preparation

Salvation Only by Grace Through Faith

Focal Text

Acts 16:25-34. Romans 1:16-18. Galatians 2:20. Ephesians 2:8-10.

Background Text

Exodus 6:2-8. Matthew 1:21; 4:17; 16:21-26. Luke 1:68-69; 2:28-32. John 1:11-14, 29; 3:3-21; 36; 5:24; 10:9. Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 16:25-34; 20:32. Romans 1:16-18; 3:23-25; 4:3-13; 5:8-10; 10:9-13. Galatians 2:20; 3:13; 6:15. Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-22. Hebrews 5:8-9; 9:24-28. 1John 2:1-2. Revelation 3:20.

Main Idea

Salvation by grace means salvation as a free gift on God’s part. But God cannot give except as man receives. Receiving salvation as an unmerited gift on God’s part is faith.

Question to Explore

How can a person be saved?

Teaching Aim

To help the class explain the way of salvation

Introduction to your personal study:

As a child my parents had encouraged me to attend church and Sunday school. The experience, while being worthwhile, left me lost at sea without an anchor. I believed there was a God but I had spent years in church and had not heard about a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. I felt that I had missed the mark and something was missing from my life.

In my early twenties, I met a young lady who shared with me that I personally needed to ask Jesus Christ to be my Lord and Saviour. She shared a simple illustration that showed me that I was separated from God by a deep gully. The illustration showed clearly that Jesus was the bridge across the gully of sin. I would have to personally

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confess my sins, believe that Jesus died on the cross for the forgiveness of my sins and that He rose from the dead to give me eternal life. She shared that the gift of salvation, eternal life, was free, but it was up to me to accept the gift. I had to invite Jesus to be my Lord and Saviour.

That evening I considered all she had said, and the next morning I asked Christ to be my Saviour. Then and there my life changed. Jesus started me down a road that has radically changed my life and continues to change it each moment I say "Yes, Jesus". There have been some low places in my life, but because Jesus was there with me, I was able to work through those difficult times. The high places have been great also, but I know I could never have done the things I have done if I had not said yes to Jesus those many years ago. As a dear friend of mine has said when people commented about the opportunities that have come her way, "The opportunities to serve would never come to me unless I had learned to say "YES" a long time ago."

Our God does own the cattle on a thousand hills, but you and I can not expect to enjoy all his treasures unless we are willing to say yes to the Lordship of Jesus in our lives.

Background:

Please ask for and read the information contained in the "**Basic Information for Leading the Unit of Study**", found at the beginning of this Unit. Whoever downloaded this session for you should have that material for you as well.

This lesson material is a picture of what a person's life is like. Without Christ we are only self-centered and greedy. Someone may be a good-living person, but under the moral exterior he is still a person in need of redemption. The miracle is that Jesus died on the cross for each and every one of us. When we accept him and his gift of eternal life we change and become new and different. The outside shell may appear the same but the force that controls our life is changed. This indwelling of the Spirit is a free gift, but we must accept it. Many of us fight at the idea of submitting to Jesus, but we hand our lives over to foolishness and greed with out a second thought. Jesus is waiting for all people. You and I must share his love with everyone every chance we have.

Focusing on the Meaning:

Acts 16:25-28 Praise and Worship

Acts 16:25 Our story begins with two men in jail after they had been severely flogged. Our brothers in the Lord worried less about themselves and more about their walk with the Lord than many of us do. They were hurting and chained but they were praising and praying. Paul had a reputation of being a man of prayer so there is little doubt that he was praying and praising God. The subject of their praise and prayer was Jesus. These men were taking the opportunity to worship God because they understood what it meant to give their lives to the Lord 100%. In similar circumstances, we might find

ourselves complaining or even doubting God's leadership in our lives. But these men accepted this situation as an opportunity for praise. You and I must take all opportunities to praise and worship Jesus. It is so clearly stated "... **the other prisoners were listening to them**". Could Paul and Silas have been praying for deliverance from prison or were they simply praising God for his help in the past and the unexpected opportunity to worship with fellow prisoners in the jail? We will never know their prayers, but we do know that others were listening.

16:26-28 The earthquake was a test for all that were there. Let us imagine that we were in such an underground dungeon when the chains miraculously fell off and the doors flew open. How long do you think you might be in that jail? The guard saw the situation the way I might have. He was about to kill himself knowing that the automatic penalty for escaped prisoners was his own death. He was not waiting for his superiors to impose the penalty. But in the midst of the noise and confusion there was one calm voice that yelled out, "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!"

Faith was being tested here by all. Paul and Silas' faith was tested because they had to believe this was the work of God and that God had a plan for their lives in this situation. They submitted themselves to the Lordship of God and stayed in the prison knowing there was a bigger plan than their own safety. What stopped the other prisoners from escaping, we will never know until we see Paul and Silas in glory, but there was a "force" at work in this situation. The guard submitted to the calm voice, and his faith was awakened and stretched.

Acts 16:29-30 The Question!

Acts 16:29-30 This passage is very interesting. The jailer came to Paul and Silas and asked, "What must I do to be saved?" We must remember that he had been asleep when the quake came but he knew whom to search out and question. Had he heard of the disciples before? Had he listened to what they were saying during the night? Had Paul and Silas kept the other prisoners from escaping? Again the answers are unknown, but they had impressed the jailer enough so as to be sought out and questioned. A question for us today might be, "Who are you making an impression upon?" While you and I go about our daily activities, we must remember that we are setting a tone that non-Christians are observing. What do others observe in your lifestyle? Would they want to have a relationship with Christ because of what they see Christ is doing in your life?

Acts 16:31-33 The Answer

Acts 16:31 Paul's answer to the question is the key to salvation – believe in Jesus Christ as Lord. This is the only answer needed. Nothing else is required for salvation. Each person in the jailer's household also had the opportunity to recognize their need for salvation and trust Christ for forgiveness.

Acts 16: 32-33 The requirement for baptism is clearly outlined in this passage. V31 states emphatically that one must believe in Jesus before being baptized. In the following verses we see that one must hear the Word. Paul and Silas spoke the word “to all the others” in the house. Because of free will, the jailer and his family responded to the call of Jesus on their heart. The master’s example made it easier for the jailer’s household to respond to Christ, but each one needed to personally believe and then be baptized. The passage is another example that the Christian’s job is to share the truth, in word and deed. Some will not respond but many will. Our job is to share and encourage. It is the Holy Spirit’s job to convict and to draw people to Jesus.

Acts 16:34 The Outcome

Acts 16:34 The coming of Christ into your life will make a change that is noticeable. The jailer cared for the wounds of the men and then he fed them. The joy of having the freedom of Jesus’ grace made a change in this jailer that was noticeable. Some Christians tell me, “There has been no change in my life since I came to Christ.” This writer would question whether there has been a genuine experience of repentance and renewal if no change is observable. As one surrenders himself to Christ, one must change. Jesus’ call on our lives is not natural to our human nature and one must change to walk closer to Jesus. The change may not be immediately noticeable to you, because in some instances it is a quiet change, but the change should be noticeable to others. For some new believers, the change will be so radical that it will be impossible to hide, even if they wanted to.

Romans 1:16-18 The Gift

Romans 1:16-17 The gift of salvation through faith in Christ is two-sided. First, the gift is free for all who believe. Paul was not ashamed to share the message with all people. The message has three aspects that must be understood. The first aspect is that God had a plan for his people to have a right relationship with him even before Jesus Christ was born (Genesis 12:2-3). The second aspect is that we are not justified by anything we could do, but only because of the grace of Jesus Christ. Finally, consider our new life in Jesus. It is not enough for us to stay away from sin, but we must have a life style that is an example to others of a life with higher standards. These standards encompass our talk, our actions and even our thoughts. To live by this high standard you must have anchored yourself completely in the faith of Jesus Christ and His grace.

Romans 1:18 The flip side of this gift is sobering. Just as one has the opportunity to receive Christ as Saviour, one also has the opportunity to reject Christ as Lord and Saviour. The wrath of God will deal with those who constantly refuse to accept the gift of eternal life through Jesus.

Galatians 2:20 He Lives

Galatians 2:20 This verse is often misunderstood by Christians who are young in their faith as they profess they have been crucified with Jesus. It is not unlike Zebedee’s

sons asking to drink from Jesus' cup and to sit on his right and left side. They did not understand what they were asking. The penalty for our sin was paid when Christ was crucified on the cross for our sins. We no longer live for our greedy selves when we commit to the Lordship of Jesus in our life. As we submit, we live by faith here on earth with Jesus inside our being. We allow Christ to direct our thoughts and actions. When we die, we continue to live with him. The passage states clearly that Christ lives in us because of our faith and submission to him. We have only died through his death on the cross for our sins as we forsake sinful ways.

Ephesians 2:8-10 Only By Grace

2:8-10 This is the key to our Christian beliefs and is the reason why we should always be about sharing our personal testimony of what Christ has done for us. GRACE saves us! There is nothing else. There is no amount of good work that we could do to earn our way into God's heaven. Good people do not make it to heaven. The gift of eternal life belongs only to those who have professed Jesus as Lord. It is necessary to believe that Jesus rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, along with confession and commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ, in order to be a Christian. Good works will not earn you salvation, but because of your salvation you should have an outpouring of good works that demonstrate your salvation experience.

Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible Study:

Each Christian must be about sharing Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour of the world. Our personal testimony should be relatively short and well thought out. Our lifestyle must be a life of being a servant to all persons. At all times we must remember that we have eternal life because of God's grace. His free gift has set us free to serve.

Our lifestyle and thought should always be that we were given the chance to hear about Jesus and respond to Him as our personal Saviour. We owe a debt that we cannot pay. With whom are we prepared to share God's grace? The answer must be with all people!

As I sat writing this passage, I was forced to stop and thank Jesus for coming into my life. I am afraid to think what my life would be like if that friend had not cared enough to share Jesus' love with me so many years ago. That friend became my wife in the months to come. Thank-you for caring enough to share with me Jesus' love.

For Personal Reflection:

What have I learned from this study?

What personal experience does this lesson bring to mind?

What is one action I will take this week to apply this Scripture passage to my life?

Bible Study Plan (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

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Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—or another praise chorus if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, etc.

Begin by helping the group locate the Focal Text in their Bibles. Also, share with them the Main Idea to be learned from the Scriptures, and the Questions to be Explored by the group.

Focal Text

Acts 16:25-34. Romans 1:16-18. Galatians 2:20. Ephesians 2:8-10.

Background Text

Exodus 6:2-8. Matthew 1:21; 4:17; 16:21-26. Luke 1:68-69; 2:28-32. John 1:11-14, 29; 3:3-21; 36; 5:24; 10:9. Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 16:25-34; 20:32. Romans 1:16-18; 3:23-25; 4:3-13; 5:8-10; 10:9-13. Galatians 2:20; 3:13; 6:15. Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-22. Hebrews 5:8-9; 9:24-28. 1John 2:1-2. Revelation 3:20.

Main Idea

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Teaching Aim

To help the class explain the way of salvation

Important note to the leader of this study: Salvation by God's grace alone is a precious and true doctrine. However, some other Christian denominations do not interpret it as we do. You have an important responsibility to guide your group today in such a way that you nor they are guilty of putting down or belittling the beliefs of another Christian group or an individual's point-of-view. Don't allow someone in the study to be hurtful in their comments on this subject.

Connect with Life:

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Invite group members to write a brief testimony (no more than three minutes) of how Christ came into and changed their lives. Provide pencils and paper. Have members jot down brief details of their lives before they knew Christ, how they became Christians, and what Christ is currently doing in their lives. When everyone has completed their writing, ask them to set their testimonies aside until later in the study.

Guide the Study:

Have a group member read Acts 16:25-34.

Search for an answer from the group: “What do you think Paul and Silas were praying about that night?” Perhaps a member has had an experience of ‘songs in the night’ that they would like to share.

Brainstorm a list of activities in our lives that might be a silent witness of our faith to others.

Guide the group to discuss the meaning of baptism.

Ask: “Why do you think the jailer and his household were baptized?”

Ask: “Is it necessary for us today?”

Read Ephesians 2:8-10 from a modern translation if possible.

Help the group to understand that there is no way of earning salvation.

Ask: “What is the only way to be saved?”

Ask: “What about good people with good intentions?”

If there is anyone in the group who is not a Christian, be sure to give a very clear presentation of salvation by grace alone. Invite response.

At this time, ask members to look again at their written testimonies. Encourage each one to give an audible witness of what Christ has done in their lives. If the group is large, have members share in pairs. Do not embarrass anyone by insisting that they share—they may not yet have a testimony. This could be their opportunity to meet Jesus personally.

Encourage Application:

If you have two or more youth, this is the time to give them the **Youth!!! Take Ten** page and allow them to go away from the adults and apply the lesson by and for themselves.

After members have practiced sharing with each other, challenge them to share their testimony with at least one other person in the next week. Encourage them to name the person they have in mind.

Close with a time of prayer specifically for those with whom group members hope to share their witness this week.

Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time. Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.

Youth!!! Take Ten

Bible Study Application for Youth

You may wish to move away from the adults for the final five to ten minutes of the Bible study and help each other as youth to apply the lesson to your own needs.

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Acts 16:25-34. Romans 1:16-18. Galatians 2:20. Ephesians 2:8-10

A youth will lead the following activity and comments. No adults need to be present. If possible, teens should take turns in leading the application time.

A Philippian Drama

Prepare to dramatize the story of the Philippian jailer in the sharing time. You will be asked to share the drama with the whole group if you wish. Be creative. Enlist others to help if your group is too small. This is an action-packed story. Help others visual the excitement.

Worship Time (Suggested time: 30 minutes)***Salvation Only by Grace Through Faith*****Acts 16:25-34. Romans 1:16-18. Galatians 2:20. Ephesians 2:8-10****Beginning the Service:**

Sing “**Freely, Freely**”, *Baptist Hymnal*, 1991, #273
and “**Jesus is Lord of All**”, *Baptist Hymnal*, 1991, #296

Read:

First person: I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith”.

Second person: I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Third person: For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Romans 1: 16-18, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 2: 8-10

Offering:**Praying for the World:**

August, 2005 news reports indicate that the people of Niger, the second poorest country in the world, are suffering from famine and drought. Pray today for those countries

where famine is a constant threat. Examine your own lifestyle and ask what you can do to make a difference in world hunger.

Dramatic interpretation:

If youth have had the opportunity to dramatize the Acts 16 passage, ask them to share with the group at this time.

Sharing Guide:

This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond to God's call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to give direction and a concept for preparing an original message. The leader is free to choose other ways to communicate and share the concepts presented here.

A Night to Remember

Acts 16: 25-40

Not long ago, a young man sat with his family in the home of older Christians. He had recently given his life to Christ and been baptized. His journey of faith had been a long one. He had experimented with a variety of faith experiences and had made a commitment to Buddhism which had led him through several steps of study. His little girls started coming to a children's Friday night program at a church in his neighbourhood. After observing this church for over a year, Russell had sought out the young pastor and after many lengthy discussions gave his life to Christ. On the evening when he was visiting with the mature Christians, he passionately asked what he could do to transmit his faith to his daughters. How could he make sure that they were spared the arduous search which he had himself experienced?

Today's scripture tells the story of the jailer who accepted Christ after the miraculous happenings following the earthquake and the breaking of the bonds which held Paul and Silas and a number of other people as well. Free to go, hardened criminals chose not to leave. We can only imagine that God's power was so real in that place that all around knew that to leave would be to miss out on an amazing experience.

However, scripture is silent about the other people. What happened in their lives we can only imagine.

We do know that the jailer and his family experienced a transformed life. *The Message* tells us that after he saw that the prisoners had not escaped, he collapsed in front of Paul and Silas and asked,

“Sirs, what do I have to do to be saved, to really live?”

“They said, ‘Put your entire trust in the Master Jesus. Then you’ll live as you were meant to live – and everyone in your house included.’ They went on to spell out in detail the story of the Master – the entire family got in on this part. They never did get to bed that night. The jailer made them feel at home, dressed their wounds, and then- he couldn’t wait until morning! – was baptized, he and everyone in his family. There in his home, he had food set out for a festive meal. It was a night to remember: He and his entire family had put their trust in God; everyone in the house was in on the celebration.”

In this wonderful story we see some important aspects.

1. The most important question we can ask is, “What do I have to do to be saved, to really live?”

The brand-new Christian, Russell, had asked this question in many different ways and had sought for the right answer. The asking of this question is an important first step in making meaning in our life. It seems to be asking about eternal life and salvation, but also asks about that which will give meaning to our lives in the here and now.

Paul and Silas answer the question by telling the jailer to simply ***“Put your entire trust in the Master Jesus. Then you’ll live as you were meant to live....”*** The answer fills the need of the jailer for meaning for life in the future, but also for meaning for life on this earth.

2. What parents do profoundly affects children.

Although we do not understand all that it means for a father or mother to accept Christ and teach about him, we do know that there is a powerful influence on children in the family when parents are deeply committed to Christ. The jailer’s decision powerfully affected all of his family.

One of the most devastating realities of life in many developed countries is the secular attitude which says “I will let my children decide for themselves about church. I don’t want to influence them one way or another so we won’t be in church while they are growing up.” This very blind view really says “There is nothing important about church; that’s why we don’t spend any time and energy on it.” It is, in fact, not a neutral position at all, but a very strong statement against the importance of worship.

Psychological studies have indicated that the most powerful indicator that children will have faith as adults is the influence of a father who worships God.

The jailer’s family was obviously so overwhelmed by the experience of the evening that they, too, believed. Scripture says that Paul and Silas said, “Put your entire trust in the Master Jesus. Then you’ll live as you were meant to live—and everyone in your house

included.” Later, it says that he and his entire family had put their trust in God; everyone in the house was in on the celebration.

It is impossible for us to know who was included in the jailer’s household. Were there extended family members—grandparents, orphaned nieces and nephews, unmarried aunts? Did the word “household” also refer to those servants who lived with the family?

Although we cannot answer these questions, we can know with certainty that Paul and Silas understood that the salvation of this man would have far reaching implications.

When Russell asked the older family what he could do to ensure that his family would love and serve Christ, they could answer that modeling his life before his family as a living witness would be the most powerful influence of all. A family where parents love and serve Christ—where the family is part of a church whose members pray for and support one another—where children see the church busy serving others and reaching beyond itself in transmitting faith, not by learning rules and regulations, by loving and caring relationships—cannot help but greatly influence the children to also love and serve Christ.

A group of young families chose to spend part of their holiday time on a family missions trip. Traveling ten hours from home, they prepared to lead children’s Bible camps on the beach, build a ropes course for the camp whose facilities they were borrowing, and do servant evangelism in the neighbourhood. Their overall goal was to strengthen the tiny church plant in this small town. A set of grandparents joined them as well as the Grade 6 son of a single mom in the church. It may well be a more remembered family holiday than other more entertainment based times. It will do much to teach children that their family loves and honours God.

3. When Christ comes into a life, there is celebration.

The church of which Russell is a part has celebrated with him on two occasions as well as individually in homes and conversations. When Russell was baptized, family members traveled from a long distance. Some were already believers; others were curious as to this new direction in Russell’s life. The church family gave a collective and spontaneous applause as Russell rose from the water—“Buried with Christ and risen to live in newness of life”. More recently, the church celebrated again when Russell’s wife and oldest little girl were baptized. A tiny little seven year old, Melody pulled herself up by the glass of the baptistry and peered over at the congregation. Again spontaneous applause broke out—everyone in the house was in on the celebration.

Call to Commitment:

Do we enjoy a celebration? Of course we do. We often make elaborate preparations for weddings, anniversary celebrations, graduations, and birthdays. Yet, one of the most wonderful celebrations of all is open all of the time. It is the celebration of a life given to Christ. It is a celebration that begins immediately and will last for eternity.

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Salvation Only by Grace Through Faith – 05-14-09-en

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This amazing Bible story that we are studying today contains all the elements of high drama. Paul and Silas have been jailed unfairly. They spend their time in jail praying and singing hymns to God while the other prisoners listen to them. Then, a violent earthquake shakes the prison. Deep within the dim recesses of the jail, all of the prisoners are freed. Yet no one leaves. The jailer assumes that the prisoners have fled. Terrified of the anger of his superiors toward him, he prepares to take his own life, but Paul shouts for him to stop.

The jailer must have been listening earlier to the prayers and hymns of the two men. Perhaps he was aware of the message they had been preaching in Philippi. He asks, "What must I do to be saved?"

Paul replies with the answer, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household". The jailer responds with immediate obedience. He also was baptized and he was filled with joy as was his whole family.

This beautiful true story is more forceful than any modern day movie or television program.

This is the word of God and it speaks to you and to me today. Let us be glad and rejoice in it.

Concluding the Service:

Sing "I'll Live for Him", *Baptist Hymnal*, 1991, #298 to close the worship time.

Copy for the three participants:

**Dramatic Reading:
(Use during Worship Time)**

First person: I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith”.

Second person: I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Third person: For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Romans 1: 16-18, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 2: 8-10