

What Must I Do?

Acts 16:30

Nearly 2000 years ago, a jailer in the city of Philippi asked the powerfully profound question, what must I do to be saved? Personally, I can't think of a question that carries as much weight as that question does. What must I do to be saved? You know, when we talk about eternity, spiritual things, it matters whether or not we find our belief system in divine truth.

You know, the Bible tells us that all Scripture is given by the inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness, that the man of God might be complete, thoroughly equipped unto every good work. And Second Timothy, chapter three, 16 and 17. When we talk about spiritual things, matters of faith, does it matter whether or not my belief system is rooted in the Bible?

I would submit to you that it does matter. It is incredibly important. And the reason is because this is the book that will one day judge us. You remember the Apostle Paul said in Romans chapter two, in verse two, Paul said, and we know that the judgment of God is according to truth. Now somebody might ask the question, what is truth?

Well, Jesus said, sanctify them in truth. Your word is truth. John 17 verse 17. It was the Lord Jesus who said on one occasion he that rejected me, and receiveth not my word has that which judges him. The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. In revelation chapter 20 we have a picture of the final judgment, the last day, the terminal day in the history of mankind.

And John said, I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God. And then note this expression, and the books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. Question what books did John have in mind there? It's my conviction. He was talking about the eternal Word of God. He was talking about the truth, the gospel, to understand that one day we're going to stand before the creator of all the earth.

We're going to give an account of the deeds done in the body. That's what Paul said. Second Corinthians chapter five in verse ten. That being the case, wouldn't it stand to reason that I would want to align my life with divine truth? You know, it was said of the Bereans in Acts chapter 17, verse 11, that they demonstrated noble hearts because they searched the scriptures daily to see whether those things were so.

They were as Luke said, more noble than those in Thessalonica. They received the word of God with all readiness of heart. What is the heart have to do with it? Well, the heart is the receptacle into which the seed of the kingdom, which is the Word of God, is sown in a person's life. That seed, if deposited in an honest and good heart, as Jesus said in Luke 8:15, will ultimately yield fruit.

So my question number one do you have a good heart? Do you want to know what the truth of God is? And then number two. Not only do they have a receptive heart, but they had an open Bible. Are you willing to look at what the Bible has to say? Investigate the contents of this book to make absolutely certain that what you believe can be found in the scriptures.

To understand that this book right here will one day be opened on that great and final day. Does it matter whether or not my life is in harmony with this book? Well, listen to what Jesus said in Matthew seven. The Lord said in the great sermon on the Mount, not everyone

who says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my father which is in heaven.

What Jesus was saying is that our entrance into the kingdom of heaven, predicated on our willingness to submit to the teaching of the scriptures. Now, I know that there are a lot of folks in the world today. What they've tried to do is alter or bend the Word of God to fit their lifestyle, to fit their belief system.

But what I understand based upon the teaching of Scripture, is that I must alter my life to fit the teaching of Scripture. Paul said, let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom. That is, you allow the Word of God to find a home in your heart. That being the case, when we talk about examining the scriptures, searching the scriptures to find out whether the things that we believe and practice are so, are we willing to do that?

Are we willing to take an objective mind into our study? Think about it like this. When a scientist is interested in running a series of experiments, he's got to have an objective mind. So he enters the laboratory and he begins running certain tasks, and then he draws his conclusion. Well, if his conclusion is going to be correct, he's got to be objective in his analysis.

By the same token, if I want to make sure that my life is in harmony with the Word of God, I've got to free my mind of any prejudices and then be willing to take at face value what the Bible says. So we circle back to our question what must I do to be saved? In acts chapter 16, Paul and Silas had men beaten with rods.

The Bible tells us that they had been they had been placed in prison, feet fastened in stocks. And Luke said at midnight they were praying and singing praises to God. According to the text, an earthquake occurred. The jailer of the prison having been entrusted with their care. There. Custodianship, the Bible says, and he drew a sword and was about to take his life because he thought they had escaped.

This earthquake occurs. Prison doors are opened, and Paul and Silas called for light and said, do yourself no harm. We're all here. And the Bible says that this man asked them this question, sirs, what must I do to be saved? Powerful question, isn't it? What was the response of Paul and Silas on that occasion? You remember they said, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved, you and your household.

Now, there are a lot of folks in the world today when they read acts chapter 16, and particularly as they zero in on that text, they say, well, there it is. If I want to be a Christian, if I want to be a followers follower of God, all I have to do is believe in my heart that Jesus is the Son of God.

Believe in him and I'll be saved. Well, let's just back up for a moment or two. Again, he asked the question, what must I do to be saved? Their response? Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you'll be saved. You and your household. The very next verse, though, tells us that they spoke the word of the Lord to him and his household.

Well, why would they do that? Well, to understand that based upon where this man was in terms of a belief system, Paul and Silas had to lay a foundation. In other words, they had to begin at Ground Zero. This man was a pagan. He didn't know anything about the Lord. Now, granted, he could have heard Paul and Silas singing and praying to God, but nonetheless they had to start with Jesus, the Son of God.

That's why, when asked, what must I do to be saved? They said, believe on the Lord Jesus

Christ, and you'll be saved, you and your household. But the text doesn't stop there. No, Luke said that they spoke the word of the Lord to him and his household. Well, why would they do that? Well, because the Bible says faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.

To understand that, they had to talk about Jesus. Now go back and look at some of the great preaching and teaching that Paul and Silas had done throughout their ministry. And you could go back beyond that and look at Paul and Barnabas, Paul and Barnabas, Paul and Silas. There were times when they had to lay a foundation. You had people that didn't know anything about the Lord.

I think about over in acts chapter 17, when Paul made his way to the city of Athens, you remember the Bible tells us that the focal point of his preaching was Jesus and the resurrection. Well, that aroused a lot of curiosity. But in verse 16, the Bible tells us that when Paul made his way to Athens, that intellectual capital of the day and time, that day and time, the Bible says his spirit was stirred within him.

Why? Because the whole city was given over to Todd Dollar Tree. Well, that term there stirred. Paul's spirit was stirred. He was exasperated. He was burning with anger. Why? Because he recognized that these people had been steeped in idolatry. They didn't know anything about the one true living God. So what did he do? You remember he passed by, found an altar with the inscription to the unknown God.

He said, whom you therefore ignorantly worship him I declare to you. And then he said that God is the one who has made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on the face of the earth. Not worship by the hands of men as though he has need of anything. No, God is the one who brought this world into existence.

The one true living God. Now those people, on that day in time, they were acquainted with all the varying God. Some have said it was easier to find a god in Athens, and it was to find a person. Well, maybe that was the case. Maybe not. But nonetheless, Paul pointed out that God made from one person, that is Adam, all the nations of men to dwell on the face of the earth.

He underscored the fact that God is the giver of all life, breath, and all things, that it's in him that we live and move and have our very being. So what was Paul doing in Athens? He's laying a foundation. He's got to begin by pointing out that Jesus is the Son of God. There is one true God. We talked about God the Father, the eternal word, Jesus the Son, the Holy Spirit.

So Paul is laying a foundation just like in Philippi. Paul and Silas, they're taking a man who was a heathen, a pagan, and they've got to teach him about Jesus and his work on planet earth. So what about Jesus? What would he have talked about? Well, I would imagine that he went back and talked about that God the Father had a plan of redemption.

God was the Son of God was the originating cause of our salvation. Jesus the Son, the sacrificial cause, the Holy Spirit, the revealing cause. But God had a plan in place to save the human family. That plan involved the coming of his son to planet Earth. And so he could talk about the second. Remember, the Godhead was clothed in human flesh for the purpose of saving humanity from sin.

Since the problem, isn't it? Paul said, all have sinned come short of the glory of God. None. Righteous? No. Not one. John said that sin is a transgression of the law in first John chapter three and verse four. Sin leads to death. Paul would say in Romans 6:23, the wages of

sin is death. The gift of God, eternal life in Christ Jesus.

So Paul has to begin talking about Jesus and the thrust of his work here on planet Earth. I think about when Jesus said in John chapter ten, I've come that they might have life and have it more abundantly. In John chapter 14 and verse six, Jesus would say, I am the way, the truth, the life no man cometh unto the father but by me.

And you think about those people that believed in a multiplicity of gods. And yet here is Jesus saying, I am the exclusive way to salvation. I'm man's answer to the problem of sin. In acts chapter four, verse 12. Peter and John said, neither is there salvation in any other. There is no other name given among men whereby we must be saved.

If we're going to be saved, it's only going to be through Jesus. It's through Jesus. It is in Jesus. So he talked about no doubt, Jesus the Son of God, the Lord. Jesus said, except you believe that I am, you'll die in your sins. John 8:24 the Lord also said, if you die in your sins, where I am, there you can I come.

So you would establish the fact that Jesus was the Son of God. But then why speak the word of the Lord to him? Well, if you are going to preach the man, you've obviously got to preach the plan. He had to have a foundation laid. He's got to have somebody to believe in. So once he comes to a measure of understanding with regard to Jesus being the Son of God, he's got to act upon that.

Why? Because we're not talking about a dead faith, but rather an obedient faith. Remember in Matthew chapter seven, not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, to enter the kingdom of heaven, but he that do it, the will of my father, which is in heaven. So we're talking about an obedient faith. So the Bible tells us that the jailer took them the same hour of the night, washed their stripes, and immediately he was baptized along with his family members.

Well, why were they baptized? The Bible says in acts chapter 16, when they were asked the question, what must I do to be saved? They said, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you'll be saved, you and your household. Well, why then be baptized? Why do so immediately? Well, number one, because baptism is what puts us into Christ Jesus.

You see, we have to be in Christ in order to appropriate all of your spiritual blessings. In Ephesians chapter one at verse three. Paul said, every spiritual blessing known to man resides in one place that's in Christ. That means if I'm in Christ, I am in a very unique position in life. Well, where then is salvation located? Second Timothy chapter two, verse ten.

The Bible says salvation is in Christ. Matter of fact, God's grace is also located in Christ. Second Timothy chapter two and verse one. Wherever God's grace goes, it's always accompanied by divine teaching. So if salvation is in Christ, the question of the hour, how do I get into Christ? Now I know that there are some that would say, well, all you have to do is believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you'll be saved.

That's what the Texas what does say that? But again, we're talking about laying a foundation. He had to have someone to believe him. That someone was Jesus. Why? Because he's the author of eternal salvation to all who believe him or who obey him. Hebrews chapter five eight and nine Jesus is the author and finisher of our faith according to Hebrews chapter 12.

So when we talk about Jesus, the Son of God, to understand he's the way, the truth, the life. Did you know that there's a correlation between Scripture and salvation? The Bible

says God would have all men to be saved. Listen to him and come to the knowledge of the truth. Truth sets free. That's why we've got to go to the scriptures and investigate to find out.

Okay, have I done exactly what the Lord has asked? When the question was raised, what must I do to be saved? Number one, this man had to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Well, why? Well, because faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. So you heard the Word of God. We walked by faith, not by sight.

Second Corinthians five verse seven. But belief in Jesus is essential to my salvation. How do I know that? Because the Lord Jesus said in John eight verse 24, except you believe that I am, unless you come to believe that I am the eternal, self-existent one. He said, you'll die in your sins, and if you die in your sins, where I am, there, you cannot come.

So this man had to come to an understanding of Jesus, the Son of God. But then when he washed their stripes, was that not indicative of a penitent heart? I think so what is repentance demanded? Do you remember in acts chapter two on Pentecost day, the Bible says that when those who were assembled on Pentecost heard the gospel in its fullness for the very first time, the Bible says that they were convicted.

Cut to the heart, pricked in their heart. They wanted to know. They asked Peter and the other apostles, men and brethren, what shall we do? Well, Peter said, repent. Repentance is a change of heart, followed by a change in our actions. So this man was penitent. But then we confess with our mouth what we believe in our heart.

Well, what would that be? What? Jesus is the Son of God. I'm willing to acknowledge that I'm willing to live each and every day under the banner of the good confession. But I'm not through. No. I'm also instructed to be baptized now. The Bible says he took them the same health, and I washed their stripes and immediately was baptized.

He and all his family. Well, why were they baptized into Christ? They needed the blood, didn't they? The only way that you can contact the blood of Jesus is to go where it was shared. It was shared in death. John 19:33 and 34. When this man was baptized into Christ along with his family members, they contacted the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus.

Now wait a minute. You're telling me that I've got to be baptized in order to be saved? Don't take my word for it. Let's go back and look at acts chapter two. In acts chapter two. You had people in Jerusalem present to observe Pentecost. That was in acts chapter two, the birth of the New Testament Church. The apostles were endowed with the baptismal measure of the Holy Spirit.

Luke said they began to speak in other tongues as the spirit gave them utterance. They were speaking in intelligible languages. Languages previously unknown to them. They are guided by the Holy Spirit. So you had inspired me in preaching and inspired message. Well, who then was the focal point of their message? Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles, wonders, and signs, which he did by him in your midst.

Did they know who Jesus was? Yes, they did. So when Peter and the apostles were asked men and brethren, what should we do? They didn't have to say, well, number one, you've got to believe in Jesus. They already believed in the Lord. They were at a different point in their spiritual life or spiritual lives than the jailer and his family.

He had to have a belief system created by the preaching and teaching of the Word of God. They only believed in Jesus. They knew who he was. They were well aware of the miracles and

wonders and signs that he had done in their midst. They'd put him to death. So when Peter was asked what to do, he said, number one, you need to repent.

And then he said, you need to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Listen to him for the remission of your sins. Repentance and baptism link together. Well, why then am I baptized into Christ so that all my sins can be washed away? Are you saying then that the water is what washes away my sins? No. So blood of Jesus.

You see, in Ephesians one verse seven, Paul said, it's in him that we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace. When I obey the gospel, my sins are washed away by the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus. Saul of Tarsus was a man that had been fasting and praying for three days after having seen the Lord on the road to Damascus.

When Annalize arrived on the scene, you remember what he asked? He said, now why terrorist now? Arise and be baptized. Listen to him and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord. That's exactly what the jailer and his family did in the city of Philippi. That's exactly what they did on Pentecost day. Well, what did they do?

They put their faith and trust in Jesus. They repented of their sins and confessed his name, and they were baptized into Christ. Now, let me just pause here and maybe try to drive home a point or two. I know that we live in a world today in which the vast majority of people have been taught that if you want to be saved from sin, here's what you need to do.

You need to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Accept him into your heart. And then recite what they often call the sinner's prayer. Is that what Peter told them to do on Pentecost day? Is that what Paul and Silas instructed the jailer and his family to do? Is that what? Is that what Philip instructed the Samaritans? Samaritans to do?

Is that what Philip instructed the eunuch to do? No. Well, what did they teach? They taught the very same thing in every case of conversion, you had belief, repentance, confession and baptism. And when a person was baptized into Christ, the Lord then added them to the church. Please listen very carefully. And I say this with all due respect, you will not find the sinner's prayer in the Bible.

It's not there. No, the Bible teaches that if we want to become a child of the living God, that we have to submit to the teaching of Scripture. You remember Jesus asked a question on one occasion, why do you call me Lord? Lord, and do not the things which I say in Luke 646 and again, going back to Matthew seven.

Was it not Jesus who said, not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he that do it, the will of my father which is in heaven? Did Peter know what he was talking about? Listen, he was an inspired spokesman. The apostles, they were the ambassadors of Christ. They were inspired me in preaching and inspired message.

In Matthew 16, when Peter made the good confession that Jesus was the Christ, the son of the living God, the Lord Jesus promised to build the church on that bedrock statement. He said, I'll build my church. That is, I'll build one church. That church belongs to me. But in verse 19 he said, and I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven.

What key signifies authority? On Pentecost day, the apostles took the keys given to them, and what they did was they unlocked the doors into the kingdom of God or church. You want to be a member of the church that you read about in the Bible? Would you like to simply be a New Testament Christian? Nothing more, nothing less.

Let me tell you how you do that. You come to understand that Jesus is exactly who he claimed to be the Son of God. You repent of your sins, you confess his name, and then you are buried with Christ in baptism. Now you remember what Jesus said in Matthew 28:18. All authority, all power, has been given to me in heaven and on earth.

When Peter commanded those people to be baptized, you remember in Acts 2, verse 38, they were instructed to repent and be baptized in the name of that means by his authority. These men were inspired spokesmen for God. They were speaking the authoritative word of the living God. So Jesus said, all authority had been given to me in heaven and on earth, and God the Father said, Matthew 17:5 concerning the son.

This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye him. So whatever Jesus says, I need to listen. I need to be responsive. I need to obey. So in Mark 16:16, Jesus said, he that believeth number one and is baptized, number two shall be saved. Number three I can understand that. So what Jesus said is belief and baptism precede salvation.

Peter said, repentance and baptism precede the forgiveness or remission of sins. Paul and Silas. They taught belief and the Lord. They taught repentance. They taught baptism into Christ. For what reason? For salvation. Isn't it interesting that at the conclusion of that story, this man rejoiced why he'd been saved? No wonder. Could I ask you today, have you done what the Bible says to do in the realm of the teaching of the Lord?

What must I do to be saved? Simple question. Simple answer. Search the scriptures. Hope to see you back here next week. Until then. God bless.

You. Well.

We got some done, brother.