

WHAT IS THE REAL ISSUE?

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

WHAT IS HUMAN GOOD?

taken from

Acts 16: 31, 32



Buddy Dano, Pastor

Divine Viewpoint

www.divineviewpoint.com

WHAT IS THE REAL ISSUE?

Tonight we're in Acts 16:31. This is a "famous" passage. Last time we covered the first part of it. In Acts 16:31 it says, "They said," Paul and Silas to the Philippian jailer, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." And then they added something at the very end, "and thy house." "Thy house" has caused problems with some people, but this is simply just an idiom. It doesn't mean if he believes, the Philippian jailer, and then members of his household are saved because he believes. **Everyone has to believe for themselves.** It simply means that what applies to you, Philippian jailer, applies to members of your household.

This was a common Greek idiom. Instead of saying, "you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved and your house, if they believe they will be saved." See, that would be too long of an expression for the Koine Greek language. It's too inefficient.

In the English language we have more words and a lot of double talk. The English doesn't have these idioms and "clipped" phrases that the Greek does. We're short in the English language on idioms, which simply say a lot of words but the Greek language is the most efficient language of all times for saying words and they do this by some very neat idioms. So, this expression, "and thy house" is very simple in the Greek but we would have to say, "if anyone in your family believes, they will be saved too." The members of the jailer's household will be saved exactly the same way as he is and THAT'S BY FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST.

The principle of faith seems to have left the scene as far as Christianity is concerned because faith is a **nonmeritorious system of perception.** It's the **only** system that is compatible with GRACE. **The true value of faith always lies in the object,** never the subject. In other words, you hear a lot of people saying, "Well you don't have this be-

cause you don't have enough faith." A lot of people say, "just turn your faith loose." The emphasis is always on the subject.

But the true value of faith is in the object, never in the subject. The value of faith always lies in the object and the object of faith in salvation is the Lord Jesus Christ. The whole issue in John 3:36, "He that believeth on Him is not condemned. He that believeth not on Him is condemned already." **The reason is because Jesus Christ did the work on the cross and He is the one who is judged. So, therefore, Christ must be the object in salvation.**

When I was going to school there was a great deal of discussion about Ephesians 2:8, 9. Some of the people were saying that "for by GRACE are ye saved through faith." And the words "that not of yourself" were referring back to not salvation, but to faith. Predestinationists take that verse and twist it that way. That faith is not of yourself is what they say. The thing is "that" is a neuter and can never go back to faith. It has to go back to the subject which is salvation. They just destroy it. People are confused about faith and where the merit really is in faith. **Christ is always the object in salvation.**

People always have a problem with Christ in the Old Testament, or salvation in the Old Testament. There are seminaries today in this state that teach that salvation is not by faith in Jesus Christ in the Old Testament, only in the New Testament. They say there are two ways of salvation.

When this verse says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," it is very simple in the English language because you see we have transliterated the word "Christ." In fact, we do not have an English word for the second Person of the Trinity. You go to the Bible and try to find, or even a dictionary, or whatever is in English, and you can't find an English word for the second Person of the Trinity. When you say "Jesus," that's a Greek word. "Christ"

is also a Greek word. Now you can go and tell someone about Jesus Christ and you're speaking Greek.

These words are transliterated into our language. "Jesus" is simply the Hebrew word for Joshua. Now you speak Greek and Hebrew. "Jesus" is Greek and "Joshua" is Hebrew. Both of them mean SAVIOUR. Jesus, in the Greek language means Saviour and Joshua in the Hebrew language means Saviour. **Christ is a Greek word and its equivalent in the Hebrew is MESSIAH.** "Christ" means the Anointed One and in the Hebrew "Messiah" means Anointed One.

So, Jesus is the Greek word for Saviour. Joshua is the Hebrew word for Saviour. Jesus Christ is the same as Joshua Messiah. One is Hebrew and one is Greek. But when you come to the English language, we have no word for Jesus Christ. If we translated "Jesus Christ" into our language we would have to say for the word "Jesus," Saviour and for the word "Christ," Anointed.

If you witness to someone in English and you said "Believe on the Saviour Anointed," they would think you were nuts. But that's really English and what you're communicating in is Greek. Now that will just show you how confused people are with the Gospel. Somehow when you say "Saviour Messiah" that doesn't click at any point. So, actually we don't use it.

One of the biggest problems for people is because we use the Greek words in transliteration. We have no problem understanding Jesus Christ as the second Person of the Trinity.

But I want to remind you of something. There are many thousands of languages, literally. In those languages, many times they do not translate "Jesus Christ" and they translate it into something in their own language. So whatever the translation may be for any given language for the second Person of the Trinity, it could be designated in some over 700 different languages. So whatever the designation is it's always the same Person, regardless of language.

Solo Cristo Salvo. That's Spanish for Jesus Christ is the only Saviour. They know who that is, that's the second Person. So, whatever the equivalent is, it's always the same Person regardless of the language. Whatever the equivalent is of "faith," it is always faith in that Person. That's the mechanics of salvation.

Everyone possesses in their mind faith. I don't care who you are or what you are, **you possess faith.** It's been given to you as a system of perception. Anyone who does not possess faith as a system of perception automatically goes to Heaven because they cannot appropriate God's GRACE in salvation by faith. Probably 70% to 90% of everything that you will ever learn in your life you learn through the perceptive system of faith.

Knowledge is built upon knowledge. The basic knowledge for every subject in the Word begins with faith. You know, it takes a lot of faith to believe certain things. If you ever took a historical geological course, the things that they try to pass off on the students require more faith than most people have.

Many times you witness to people and they say, "Well, I just don't have faith." That's a lie. They do have faith. They're just trying to get off the issue. They have placed their faith in a lot of things.

It's hard for me to believe that an intelligent adult could accept what they teach in historical geology. It's unbelievable to see people all around us swallowing that course in geology. But there's nothing like it in the world. Like, it simply proves things which it never does prove. It's amazing to me that historical geology gets many Christians that go to college to believe in it. That's hard for me to believe.

Whatever faith people have to believe, well it certainly is strong in certain areas, probably in the wrong areas. There are all sorts of things that are required to believe in this academic world, not only in college, but even sometimes in graduate school. We are required to believe things that are absolutely

false and yet people believe on these premises and they build a whole system around them, a scientific system. A whole subject of one sort or another.

Of course, faith underlies everything. People often come and say, when you're witnessing to them, "I don't have faith." If you talk to them for awhile you'll find somebody says that they follow some philosopher, like Immanuel Kant and his categorical imperatives. They just roll that jazz off their tongue, because they learned it in school. They are taught all of these different things and they have to write a thesis on one of these philosophers.

Then one guy said, "I'm a follower of Spinoza." I said, "Yea, I know about Spinoza. I learned about him, too. He had a lot of faith. He pushed his mother down the steps and killed her because she was a 'parasite.'" "How was she a 'parasite?'" "Well, his father went out to work and she spent all the money on food and rent." So, this philosopher, as a child, Spinoza, pushed his mother down the steps. Now so follow him.

Or a guy says, "I'm a follower of Decartes," and he rolls his tongue around and his eyes roll. Or one of the other rationalisms. But, you cannot rationalize away faith, because even to follow those philosophers, to get to the point of following them, you have to get under the perceptive system of faith. So, **faith is something that is common to all of us.** Faith is something by which we live daily in our lives.

In fact, our faith in many areas is stronger than it should be and weaker in other areas where it shouldn't be. **We have strong faith in our country and some policies which are actually destroying us.** People who believe in the "war on poverty," it takes a lot of faith. People who believe on, for example, world peace through disarmament, it takes a lot of faith to do that. That's the exercise of faith. To believe on things of that sort, you really have to be out of it.

There's no question that many people in this country are living under an Ivory Tower

and a cloud when it comes to something vital and something real and something important, such as salvation.

So, it's not any simple expression that you find in Acts 16:31, when the Lord, through Paul, says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," because Christ is the object and you have the faith with which to put your confidence in Christ, or else He couldn't give you that issue. Faith has to be common to everyone, just like salvation is.

So if someone says they don't have enough faith, they're lying. Somehow this is too much to believe in Christ. But, you know, the same people that say they just can't do it, it's too much, well, they believed in Castro as the Saviour. They believed in Martin Luther King as the Saviour. They just had a whole hour on TV on him as the Saviour of the world.

There was once a person by the name of Franklin Roosevelt and he was a saviour for eight years. And then there was Joe Stalin. He was a saviour. And Karl Marx, he was the saviour. And Buddha. And Gandhi, why he made all the awards, by sitting on pins. I've been sitting on them all my life and I never got a medal.

What do you mean they don't have faith? Sure they have it. **It's just in the wrong directions and stronger than it is in the right direction.** When God says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," **you're able to do that with no effort whatsoever.**

The whole problem is there's a satanic principle behind that. When you say, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," Satan is right there and he's using this phrase, "If our Gospel be hid, it's hidden to them that are lost, to whom the god of this world," Satan, "has blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine into them."

Now, in verses 32-34 we come to the second miracle. In verse 32 it says, "They spake unto him the Word of the Lord." It's

really amazing to me how people always get to Acts 16:31 and never get to this verse. I've never heard anybody quote Acts 16:32. "And they spake unto him the Word of the Lord."

I want you to see a principle here. Remember the background. This jailer is about to commit suicide. He's about to take his life. They give him Gospel information, but then they explained it to him. See, there are times when people need a shot, like "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," right then and there, because it's imperative, **but you have to give them some explanation of it afterwards.** Sometimes it isn't a critical situation, like, someone who is not committing suicide, and you can explain a lot of it, then tell them to believe in Christ. But you couldn't in this case. I want you to notice this because after Acts 16:31, most people stop, in their reading and never get any further. You will notice here that they gave the mechanics of salvation in one brief sentence, verse 31.

Now, in verses 32-34 there is amplification. The secret to this man's problem was in what he stated, "What must I do to be saved?" He used the Greek word for salvation, which is SOZO, which has two connotations for "saved." One is PHYSICAL DELIVERANCE and another is SPIRITUAL DELIVERANCE. They use that word both ways.

In verse 30 the jailer was thinking in terms of physical deliverance. He was in a jam. The prisoners had fled. The doors were open because of the earthquake. He knew if he was detected that all the prisoners were gone, that he would have been killed by the Romans because he was responsible. So he's about to take his life by falling on his sword. And he says, "What must I do to be delivered?" Saved or delivered has the same definition here. So, he's thinking in terms of physical deliverance, where most people that you talk to are talking about something temporal. But you can tune in on the eternal through the temporal.

In other words, what good is it if you can solve a problem in time and the person's going to go to hell?

So, this was a clue for Paul and Silas. Therefore, in verse 31, they took the word "saved," he said, "What must I do to be saved?" and they said "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." They just took this term and turned it right back on him. So they gave it a spiritual connotation.

He's saying "What must I do to be physically delivered?" And they say "What you need to do is be spiritually delivered." Saved, saved. That's the same thing we do when you talk to people and they have some difficulties and you're just zeroing in on the eternal.

Some say, "Well, you know this guy was telling me about this problem and that problem," and I said, "Yes. I know that. I've been there, too. But I'll tell you how to handle that problem right here and now. Here's what you have to do." Zero in on the eternal. **THAT SOLVES THE TEMPORAL. You can't solve problems in time until you settle where you're going. Problem solving is God's business.** Let's get saved first. **All other problems are just temporal and they won't last, but if God solves it, IT'S SOLVED.** If we solve it it's never solved. It may be a temporary setback.

So, the word "saved," SOZO, now gets a spiritual connotation. The jailer probably was saying in verse 30, "How can I get out of this jam?" They told him not only how to get out of that immediate jam, but how to get out of ALL jams for the rest of his life, including eternity, with the emphasis on eternity.

So, they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," and you're not only going to get out of this jam, but you're going to be in the Plan of God forever. See, that's a different way of approaching things.

So, I ask you a question, when they show a show on TV and some guy's going to jump off a building, they always send up some psychiatrist or some idiot with a black bag and they try to coax him off by telling him about the cat and the bird that will miss him. What do you do, or what do you tell someone, in context here, who's about to

commit suicide? "Oh, don't do that. Your wife will miss you." "She's the one that drove me to it." "Your cat will miss you. Think of the poor guys that have to clean up after you mess up the sidewalk." Here it is, right here. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," and then jump.

Then, when they told him this, they told him that his household could do the same thing. They didn't stop there but they gave him the mechanics, that's this next verse. That's my point. And I suspect that in the mechanics Paul gave him things that he (Paul) would write very shortly. In other words, he would go back and tell him how he stated in Romans 7:10, 11, now listen jailer, you have inside of you something with which you're born. You're born with an old sin nature. This old sin nature has an AREA OF WEAKNESS, which he teaches in Romans 6. It also has an AREA OF STRENGTH. From the old sin nature's AREA OF WEAKNESS you have all of your personal sin. And from your AREA OF STRENGTH comes your human good. He says, "inside of you also is a lust pattern."

Then he says, "listen, you've been a soldier. And you're a retired soldier now and so you're a jailer. You know something about the lust pattern and about power lust and approbation lust in the military, and materialism lust. You're familiar with those things. This is the motivator for most individuals, because we're all born with this old sin nature and born spiritually dead. You have to become spiritually alive. There's only one way. We have mentioned it, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

The reason that they approach it that way is because of what He did for you. See, He is eternal God, but He became a member of the human race. As a member of the human race He went to the cross and the sins of the world were poured out on Him. When they were poured out on Him they were judged. All the sins of the human race, since the beginning of the human race have already been judged. "He bore our sins in His own body on the tree." He could say, "Your

sins, Mr. Jailer, the sins of your entire family, the sins of all the people here in Philippi, have all already been judged. They were judged at the cross. At the same time that Jesus Christ was judged for our sins, HE REJECTED HUMAN GOOD." He would tell him that there's no system of human good that you can apply to the situation for eternal salvation. **There's no way that you can be saved by your own works,** because the principle is, "For it's not by works of righteousness that we have done, but according to His GRACE He has saved us."

There are not too many people who know too much about the Gospel anymore. They are not clear on the Gospel. The first thing that they hit on are sins and habits of the person. That person doesn't want to hear that.

The other day I had an opportunity and I just thought I'd tell this guy this thing out of the clear blue. I said, "I found some principle that I've been looking for for a long time. I knew this principle existed. It's been in my craw for a long time." I said, "You know all these do-gooders that you see around." "Yeah." See, that's his heavy spot. "Those hypocrites." I said, "You know something? I knew there was something wrong with them." "What, what?"

I said, "You know when you stand before the Lord He's going to judge you for all of those good deeds you've ever done." I said, "I am so glad I found that. You can't believe it." I really caught him on it because that was his weakness. He was saying that most people who go to church always are hypocritical. Those do-gooders and the "thou shalt nots."

I said I'm going to get this guy sooner or later and so I waited for the opening and that was the one and he bought it. He said, "Where is it?" "I don't want to tell you where it is because you'll get offended." "No tell me." "No I can't tell you where. You know how you get. You get all upset. Well, it's in the Bible." "Where?" "It's in the Bible." "Really? Where?" "Revelation 20:12 and 15." He said, "No one ever told me that. My priest never told me that."

JESUS CHRIST DID ALL THE WORK. Therefore, anyone can approach the cross by just expressing their faith in Jesus Christ. That's why I told you Mr. Jailer, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." When you believe in Jesus Christ you enter into the Plan of God. First of all, stage one. Then eventually stage three, eternity. **But, if you're negative to the Gospel, which is the cross, then you react and you reject the Plan of God and the ONLY thing that is NOT JUDGED in your old sin nature, and all that you stand on in your last record before the Lord, is HUMAN GOOD.**

Someday you will be brought up before the Great White Throne Judgment and you'll be judged and cast into the Lake of Fire. I want you to know, Mr. Jailer, you'll be cast into the Lake of Fire **on the basis of human good.** The world has never heard that. We aren't the first ones who have taught this but, people are weak in that area because they always want to bring out the person's habits. Something irritates the preacher and he harps on that and **that's not the issue.** When I found out that **people are judged according to their works,** it was deliverance for me. Because I didn't know what kind of good to produce.

Your good deeds are the basis of your condemnation, Revelation 20. The unbeliever stands at the Great White Throne Judgment and he stands there **because he has rejected Christ as Saviour, but the basis of his indictment is all of the good deeds that he has ever accomplished.**

You have to realize the principle of the Law of Double Jeopardy: **you can't be judged for the crime twice.** Our sins were judged on the cross. They will NEVER be judged again. God's justice is accurate and fair. **The unbeliever's sins were judged at the cross. And the unbeliever's sins will never be judged again.** What an approach that is! "Do you know, Mr. Unbeliever, that all of the sins you ever committed that these people have been telling you about, the preachers and everyone, you're never going to be judged because of that?" Christ be-

came sin. He took those sins and God is fair and He can't judge the same crime twice.

Now you've got him set. "Well, what is salvation?" **"FAITH IN CHRIST."** See, it's a different thing than most people teach. That's why the Holy Spirit, when He convicts, He convicts of **unbelief in Christ,** not liquor, and girls, and cards. He doesn't convict him of personal sins. **He convicts them of unbelief in Christ, because unbelief in Christ places that person in the last judgment.**

The only people at the last judgment are those who have rejected Christ as Saviour. John 3:18 says, "He that believeth on Him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the Name of the only begotten Son of God." Therefore, rejection of Jesus Christ places him at the last judgment.

The indictment is on that part of the old sin nature which HAS NOT been judged. That's human good. If evangelists were accurate, this would be their message. But they always throw their own feelings into it and they say, "Brethren, when you stand before the last judgment," and then they walk about, "Woe unto you. What will you tell God about this thing and that thing that you've done?" They always mention two or three sins that shock them and therefore, they are supposed to shock everyone else. This is supposed to shock you and because you're shocked, you come running down the aisle at the end.

That's NOT what is going to happen at the last judgment. At the last judgment God's going to be there, you won't. The unbeliever will be. God will say to the unbelievers who are there, **only unbelievers will be there,** He'll repeat what He said before in Revelation 20, "According to thy deeds, according to thy deeds." God will say to the unbeliever "Remember those good deeds that you performed? Remember how you helped to build that hospital in Houston? Do you remember how you helped the widows fund? Remember how you helped that old lady across the street? Do you remember how you stopped on the Southwest Freeway and rendered aid to a lady who had a flat tire,

and got her number and met her for happy hour?" That's why guys do that. I thought I'd let you know. They don't stop for me.

He'll say, "You know, all those good deeds are the basis for the indictment." I'll tell you this. **All the good deeds in the world are NOT good enough.** Isn't that interesting? Isaiah 64:6 says, "All our righteousnesses," plural, "are filthy rags in His sight." **All the good deeds in the world cannot save one person.**

So much for Gandhi. You know people went for that, they went ape over that, because he was a "peace person." If He took everyone's good deeds since the beginning of time, billions of good deeds, and applied them all to one person, He couldn't get that one person in Heaven. **There isn't enough good in the history of the human race to save one person.**

The only way people can be saved is by believing in Christ. He was judged on the cross, Gandhi wasn't. Gandhi should have been judged on the cross, but not for the same reason. Jesus Christ took our place. Jesus Christ is our Substitute. "Neither is there salvation in any other. There is none other Name under Heaven whereby we must be saved."

That's what is meant by verse 32 here when it says, "And they spake unto him the Word of the Lord." I want you to see this in context here, because a lot of people miss this principle. They gave the jailer, in context, who was trying to commit suicide, the mechanics, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," because he's just about to kill himself. And then the explanation of the Plan of God in order to solve his problem.

You have here "They spake unto him the Word of the Lord." In this case "The Word of the Lord" is the Gospel. The Gospel means "GOOD NEWS." It was a long time before someone presented the Gospel to me as GOOD NEWS. They always came over bad.

Then there are some people who go around, who try to play little "language" games. They say, "Gospel means to gossip

Christ to someone." You haven't lived until you've heard that one. Every time you find someone who is trying to find some shortcut to Christianity and they're clever and they say, "Gospel means gossiping Christ." It doesn't mean to gossip Christ at all. **Gossip is sin.**

It's like they say "Jesus freaks." You can't put freaks next to Jesus. That's sin also. People are trying shortcuts but you see it's all flack. It's funny, people are saved by the Gospel yet they can't explain it? That ought to tell you something about the GRACE of God. If the believer had to explain the Gospel, he'd never be saved, because he can't explain it.

Gossip is evil, not gossiping Christ. Christ has a GOOD connotation. The word "Gospel" is an Old English word which means GOOD NEWS. You always find people who go in for clever paramnesias because it really doesn't require any academic discipline. It doesn't require any knowledge of the Word of God so they come up with these little sayings. Some fundamentalists get a bad name and the whole reason is because not too many fundamentalists are studying anymore.

The liberal unbeliever, who has an academic background, knows the ignorance of these phrases and sayings. He laughs at the average minister who says, "The Gospel is gossiping Christ." People try to do that because they want to make a point. But there is no substitute for the Word!

The word "Gospel" originally meant GOOD NEWS 300 years ago. It was translated Gospel and it meant GOOD NEWS. But today Gospel means nothing. What does the Gospel mean today? It's lost its meaning. 300 years ago it was simply a good English word for GOOD NEWS. So, we should translate it that way! If we translate "Gospel" as GOOD NEWS, then a lot of our evangelists would have to scrap their sermons because they give 45 minutes of bad news, in which they try to hit your personal sin, and then they try to pick you apart and then at the end

they mumble something about coming to Christ or coming forward. They mix it all up.

Here's a person, a jailer, and it's made clear to him. Even though Paul personally was an evangelist by gift, because he was one of the greatest evangelists of all time from the standpoint of soul winning, but **you don't have to be an evangelist to be a soul winner.** Some of the best soul winners in the world are NOT evangelists. Evangelists are the worst at soul winning. If you're going to win souls for Jesus Christ, you're going to have to make the issue clear.

Here we have a situation where you have a choice of two systems of presentation. You can begin with the mechanics, "Be-lieve on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." That's one approach. And you can explain the Gospel, or the GOOD NEWS after that. Or, you can begin by explaining the Gospel, if you have time, and then go to the mechanics.

So, there are two ways of doing it. Which ever way you do it, once you give the mechanics, you stop right there. You don't say, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ" and then get people to sign a card. You don't get people to raise their hands, to walk aisles. That's simply a psychological principle. **You don't have to overcome any psychological barriers or inhibitions in order to be saved.**

Some people say "unless the person comes down an aisle, or raises their hand, they have to overcome their inhibitions in order to be saved." No way!!! "Whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life." "Whosoever" takes care of those inhibitions also. "Whosoever" takes cognizance of the fact that some people are introverts. An introvert is never going to walk an aisle or raise his hand. He'll sit right there in the pew and believe in Christ. There's no issue in the Gospel of introversion. There are no inhibitions which are involved.

It's blasphemy to ask a person to raise his hand, to walk an aisle, to sign a card, to make a fool out of themselves publicly. No where in the Bible does it say

that before you can be saved you must be foolish. "Now drop all of your sense at the door. Make a fool out of yourself and then be saved." It's true that fools are saved, but they are saved the same way everyone else is saved, BY BELIEVING IN JESUS CHRIST.

You can stand on your head and believe in Jesus Christ if you want to, but that usually isn't advisable. You can sit in a pew and look like a mummy and still be saved. Because **all that it takes to be saved is faith in Christ and it's something that anyone can do,** from a low IQ to a genius.

All people have faith as a system of perspicacity. How do I know that? He wouldn't say "put your faith in Christ" if you didn't have it. How can we have a God say "You have to believe in Christ" and the person not be able to do that? It's just normal, logical common sense.

There may be some people who are not quite idiots, but almost, and they still can believe in Christ. They can sit right there and be saved. You can have the same salvation as a genius, if you're a genius. The genius does the same thing that a person who is one degree above a moron does, believes in Christ. They do exactly the same thing. They both get exactly the same salvation package. It isn't because one is smarter than the other, it's simply because of the fact that belief is in the same Person and the only Person who can save. **That Person is the Lord Jesus Christ. That's where the merit is.**

Let's get back to the GOOD NEWS here because the GOOD NEWS is very simple. First of all, it's bad news if you start out and tell someone that they are a sinner. It's true but it's bad news nevertheless. This is where the evangelists never get off of this point. They spend 50 minutes describing one or two sins. All he proves is that he is shockable and that he's lived a very sheltered life. He really ought not to say anything about Christ because he might muddy up the water.

But what does the average evangelist discuss? Let's face it. You've heard many of

them. They hit drinking, they hit drugs, they hit immorality, they hit living it up, they hit having a good time. **They make it sound as if any system of having a good time is sinful.**

By the way, **there are some systems of having a good time that are not sinful.** I thought I'd be the first to tell you. That should be good news for some.

Here's a person and all he can discuss is someone's drinking, someone's fornicating and this shocks him. He can say, "You know, 90% of the girls who are 16 and older are no longer virgins." And everyone says, "Oh, how horrible." Then he'll say, "By the time a young boy is 20 he will already have killed a quart." "Oh, dreadful." Then he'll say, "you know, this world has really gone to the dogs." "Amen, brother. Preach it." Do you know that this world has been going to the dogs for almost 5,000 years now, but has never quite made it? It's just that "X" number of people go to the dogs in every generation. Some generations have more "dogs" than others. People are not going to the dogs because they look like dogs.

You know, you see a shaggy head of hair. That doesn't mean that person is going to the dogs. It may be that he just can't afford the prices at the barber shop. I can't blame him. But, if a shaggy head of hair barks, then look out. Otherwise chalk it up to the fact that the individual is trying to express himself in his own way. It's an expression.

Now, the evangelist, and people, call this preaching sin. If you don't run down some kind of booze sermon and immorality lecture every time you stand up to preach they say that you're not "preaching sin." Someone called on the phone and wondered if I was going to preach sin Sunday. I said "yes." I made sure on Sunday that I hit the mental attitude sins. But they didn't want to hear that because that was an affront. They didn't "amen it" at all. But if I had switched to the booze I would have had four Amen's and a hallelujah.

If you don't run down some kind of booze lecture or immorality lecture every time you stand up to speak then they say you're not preaching the Gospel or sin. I've noticed that when you deal with passages in Scripture that deal with really horrible sins, mental attitude sins like jealousy, like pettiness, like gossip, like maligning, they never say "preach it, brother." Never. And they don't "Amen" at all. And they don't say "you have preached sin today." Usually they go out snarling and barking and not "amening." That isn't preaching sin to them. **But that's merely hitting them where they live.**

But you see, evangelists don't know anything about the Bible. I thought I'd be the first to tell you. As a result he spends 45 minutes on the fact that man is a sinner, he tries to come up with some bad news. That point is true. We are sinners. But that is NEVER the emphasis on the Gospel and it NEVER will be. Which all goes to prove a point: **People can be saved IN SPITE of evangelists and NOT because of them.**

Well, what is the GOOD NEWS then? The GOOD NEWS begins with the CROSS where our sins were judged. When you go to the unbeliever you say, whatever sins you have committed right up to this moment, whatever sins you will commit in the future, **those sins have already been judged.** NOW THAT'S GOOD NEWS. There never will be a sin in your life that has not been judged. All of your sins have been judged and that's EUAGGELIA, which is the word for GOOD NEWS. You can throw that in and he won't know what you're talking about.

So, the person says, "You mean to tell me that all of my sins have already been judged?" "Right!" "Where were they judged?" "At the court room of the cross." That's were God the Father judged them and He poured out His wrath on them. Since they have already been judged, there is NOTHING NOW BETWEEN YOU AND SALVATION. **Absolutely nothing.** All you have to do is just fall into it. Then he says, "How do I fall into it?" You believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. People say, "You mean to tell me that you can be-

lieve and that's ALL you have to do? "Yes, that's all you have to do." "How is that possible? It's too easy." It's because of what Jesus Christ did. **All of the doing has been done, by Christ. Jesus Christ was judged. Jesus Christ paid IN FULL so all you have to do is believe in Christ.** I don't care who you are or what you are, what sins you have committed, or how miserable your wife says you are, or how horrible you are, you have heard all the bad news that you need to, now let's get on with some GOOD NEWS.

Did you know that you can come to church and really hear something pleasant for a change? Jesus Christ had you **personally** in mind when He went to the cross. **Every sin that you've ever committed was judged, was poured out on Christ. He took it for you.** He took the whole wrath of God and now there is nothing between you and salvation except your own faith in Christ. So, why don't you "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ?" And thou shalt be saved.

Now you can begin to see scripturally the fact that Paul did not stand on one foot and then on the other and tell people to come forward here. He didn't say, "Raise your hand and everyone who has a mother stand up. And now that you're standing up and your hand is up, and now that you've put your hand to the plow, anybody that turns back is not fit for the Kingdom of God so come forward. And let me report to the headquarters that I got 40 today."

He didn't say, "We'll sing just one more stanza, Philippian jailer, just one more time, and if someone comes forward this time, well, I'll confuse them a little later when they get down here."

People need information today like never before. They don't need gimmicks. I know that people don't like this type of thing. It's because most Christians don't have a sense of humor or for too long they've been diluted. But, the Gospel does mean **good news**. Just because we have a problem in anachronisms doesn't mean that we have to fall apart and misunderstand. The Gospel does mean **good news**. **The good news is the fact that**

EVERY member of the human race is as close to salvation as faith, which is in his mind, which he already has, and some information about what Jesus Christ did for him.

You can ask yourself what's wrong with our generation. Well, if you just listen to their testimonies that should tell you something. We have people right here in Houston, who tell you at the drop of a word how they accepted Christ as Saviour and poured a bottle of Scotch down the drain. And how they gave up this and how they gave up that. And everyone "Amen," and just go crazy. All they are saying is that they are self-righteous people, disoriented to the GRACE of God, and because of what we gave up, this is something important, but it is **totally inconsequential**.

The whole issue is what God the Son did for us. It isn't what we do for God.

These people are self-righteous and are misleading. They give you the idea in their testimony that you must believe in Christ and must have about six cases of scotch and be able to throw them away and then you're saved. But the Bible doesn't say that at all. If God takes away from you the taste for whiskey, that doesn't mean one thing, not a thing. I don't know whether you knew that or not, as far as salvation is concerned. It doesn't mean a thing.

First of all you have to cultivate a taste for that. You just don't go into that all the way. That will kill you. You have to cultivate a taste for it. So, it's taken away. So what? Do you know what really is great? **What really is great is what Jesus Christ did for us!!!** That's what's great. NOT WHAT WE THINK THAT WE'VE DONE FOR HIM.

So, the emphasis is wrong today, terribly wrong. How many people know all the things that God does for every believer at the point of salvation? That the Scripture says, "Therefore, if any man be IN CHRIST, he is a new creature?" "The new creature" is because they are IN CHRIST. We're not "new creatures" because we change our behaviour pattern and give up this or that.

I know of a man who I would consider one of the greatest drinkers of scotch whiskey, probably that this country has ever known. He lived in New York City. No one could drink as much scotch as this man did.

There were two men that were friends, who were drinking buddies. They had drinking contests. They would start out with Hag and Hag pitch bottle scotch and finally one would give up. He couldn't take it anymore and he'd switch to champagne. Can you believe it? The other one would keep on going, drinking this scotch one right after the other.

Later on in life, a few years later, someone ran into this scotch drinker, who now looked entirely different. He said, "I haven't had a drink in four years." Here's an unbeliever who gave up whiskey and he sounded just like a testimony of a believer, except he wasn't saved. He isn't any closer to Heaven than he was before. In fact, **he's further**, because now he thinks that he's done something and he doesn't need Christ. But he isn't any closer. He didn't trust in Christ. He did all of this on his own.

As long as an unbeliever can be a strong person and give up something, like whiskey, and women, or whatever it is that bugs and confuses Christians, **anything that an unbeliever can do is not Christianity**. If you can get that principle in your mind, and think about it, ANYTHING THAT AN UNBELIEVER CAN DO IS NOT CHRISTIANITY.

Unbelievers give up this. Unbelievers give up that. Unbelievers don't do this. Unbelievers don't do that. **That's not Christianity**. Any unbeliever can do these things. They can go and give up things. What does it prove when someone gives up something? **Not a thing**. But when someone believes in Christ, God does many things for that person.

And He, God, can take some mangy person and make him a new creature in Christ. And that proves something. It proves that God still works and people do not know what God is doing. I would much rather have a person get up, give a testimony, and enumer-

ate four or five things that God did for him at the point of salvation. Only five out of maybe 35. **Because it is what God does for us that counts.**

God is in the business of doing and that's GRACE and that's what Paul is saying here. See, Paul says, "Now this is it," to the jailer. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," and then he gave him the Word. Paul didn't tell this jailer, "Now listen, Jailer, if you want to be saved, you can't be saved and commit suicide, because that's a venial sin. You have to give up that idea and you have to give up being a jailer, too. By the way, Jailer, I noticed the other night when it was cold that you took a nip. You have to give that up too. And I noticed one night, it was dark and raining and you didn't see but in this prison one night, there came a couple of dancing girls. You have to give that up, too. And I want you to know something, Jailer, we have a card for you. When you accept Christ as your Saviour you have to join. And then you have to promise that you will tithe, because we have this new organization called the Pauline Traveling Agency for the Betterment of the World."

There's a lot of confusion in the world today and some of it will never get straightened out, not until these people get some information. What they need is information. That's what Paul and Silas gave these people. The average Christian today cannot stand up and give the Gospel accurately. He says, "Well, I'm not very good at giving the Gospel, but I can tell what God did for me." I would say to that person, "What did God do for you?" He says, "Well, I was a nasty person before, but now He's made a better person." Now he's a self-righteous person and worse than he was before.

In other words, you must know the Gospel to give the Gospel. **You cannot communicate what you do not understand**. The average Christian does not understand the Gospel, even though he is saved by the Gospel. Here is the beauty. **All you have to do is believe in Jesus Christ and you are saved. In a second of time when you believe and from that time on, if you never**

learn another thing about the Gospel, you don't know anything about the Gospel, you don't know anything about the principle of propitiation or reconciliation, **but you're saved anyhow.**

Again, if it depended upon our understanding or communication of the Gospel, none of us would be saved. From the point of time when you believe in Christ **you have eternal life. That's what God can do.** All we do is just confuse it.

This pamphlet was taken from a class taught by Buddy Dano on April 12, 1983 from his series on the book of Acts.

Buddy Dano, Pastor
Divine Viewpoint
www.divineviewpoint.com