

JESUS ALONE

“In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”

—PHILIPPIANS 1:4-6

Paul and Silas were imprisoned in Philippi in Macedonia. They had been dragged to the marketplace, stripped, scourged, cast in a dungeon and locked in stocks, but were also praising and worshipping God while other prisoners listened. Around midnight, a sudden earthquake erupted; doors swung open, shackles fell off and prisoners were free to escape, but remarkably, none did. The jailor called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. He then brought them out and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” (Acts 16:29-30)

We all need saving, and not some more than others, but all of us in the same way to the same degree. There are no ‘maybe’ salvations, no middle ground. We all fall short of the glory of God, and cannot save ourselves. “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved,” Paul and Silas answered. The jailor listened to the Gospel, and along with other prisoners believed. He then brought Paul and Silas home with him, washed their wounds and set a meal before them. Before the night was over, his entire household believed and all were indwelt by the Spirit of Christ and baptized.

How do we know if the Spirit of Christ is indwelling us? Paul tells us to, “Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you - unless, of course, you fail the test?” (2 Corinthians 13:5). What would we be examining? What are we looking for? As exemplified by the jailor’s subsequent care of Paul and Silas, the way we live, our attitudes and behaviors give valid evidence to the presence of Christ in our lives. Part of what we will begin to recognize is that we now have an appetite for the things of God that we never had before, or it may be that appetite has been reawakened.

Paul is known as the “Apostle of the heart set free,” because he did not mandate rules, methods or programs, but taught freedom from them by receiving the life of Christ to be lived in us; not Christ plus various things... Christ alone. Paul looked back on his new converts with joy and looked forward with confidence, because he knew he could take himself out of the equation, and God would complete in them the good work He had started. Paul’s strategy was simply this: “I left you Jesus”, because it is Jesus alone who saves and brings us to Himself.

PRAYER: Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for the precious gift of Jesus. I pray His indwelling Spirit will bring me into a deeper knowledge and experience of You.

TO REFLECT UPON: What was my first indication of the indwelling of Christ in me?