

# What Must I Do to Be Saved?

## Acts 16.16-40

“...complete withdrawal isn’t a moral choice. So how does one respond to the world’s chaos in a way that is socially responsible – and that preserves mental wellbeing?” Madeleine Aggeler, The Guardian

“About midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.” Acts 16:25

One of the things that ought to clearly distinguish us as followers of Christ from the raging world around us is the peace that we possess while remaining on mission for Jesus.

### **I. The Slave Girl: Salvation Through Information. Acts 16.16-18**

“As we were going to the place of prayer, a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by fortune-telling.” (16:16)

"pneuma pythonia" = a Python Spirit

Satan’s Lie: I don’t need God if I have the knowledge that God has. I can find my own solution.

“Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.”

Hebrews 2:14-15

“The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.” Deuteronomy 29:29

As Christians, we don't need to know everything that God knows in order to have peace in this world. We just need to know the One who has been given all authority in heaven and on earth.

### **II. The Slave Owners: Salvation Through Wealth Accumulation. Acts 16.19-21**

“But when her owners saw that their hope of gain was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the market before the rulers.” Acts 16:19

"For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.” 1 Timothy 6:10

“No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.” Luke 16:13

“Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.” Colossians 3:23-24

“For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living.” 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12

“By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He considered the reproach greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward.” Hebrews 11:24-26

“And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. To our Father and God be glory forever and ever. Amen.” Philippians 4:19-20

Insanity is the act of believing that holding on to or accumulating wealth can save us.

Our wealth is the supply of God for the people of God to serve the mission of God to the glory of God.

### **III. The Magistrates: Salvation Through Political Manipulation. Acts 16.19-21**

“The crowd joined in attacking them and the magistrates tore the garments off them and gave them orders to beat them with rods. And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely.” Acts 16:22-23

“They have beaten us, uncondemned, men who are Roman citizens, and have thrown us into prison: and do they now throw us out secretly? No! Let them come themselves and take us out.” Acts 16:27

Paul and Silas want a clear vindication of their name for the sake of the name of Christ and for the future of its mission in Philippi.

"The Lord is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?"

The Lord is on my side as my helper; I shall look in triumph on those who hate me.

It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man.

It is better to trust in the Lord than trust in princes." Psalm 118:6-9

"The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD; he turns it wherever he will."  
Proverbs 21:1

**Salvation is not through the ability to exercise power over people. It is by trusting in the One who has all authority in heaven and on earth.**

#### **IV. The Jailer: Salvation Through Self-preservation. Acts 16.24-34**

"When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped." Acts 16:27

"But Paul cried in a loud voice, 'Do not harm yourself, for we are all here.' And the jailer called for the lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them out and said, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' And they said, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.'" Acts 16:28-31

Christian, we do not have to save ourselves from suffering and shame. Christ has taken our shame and our suffering and is neither ashamed of us or willing to forsake us until we are safely home with Him crowned with honor.

#### **V. Paul and Silas: Salvation through Faith Alone. Acts 16.24-27**

"About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them..." Acts 16:25

How Paul and Silas refuse to save themselves?

- Paul and Silas sing in prison.
- Paul and Silas stay in prison.
- Paul and Silas stand for justice.
- Paul and Silas encourage the brethren.

"Whoever seeks to preserve his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will keep it." Luke 17:33

Saving our lives is an impossible and foolish endeavor. Christian, you are a servant and you are a son. Sing and serve, and leave the saving to King Jesus.

## What Must I Do to Be Saved? – Acts 16:16–40

### Ten Core Study Questions

1. In a world filled with confusion and chaos, what makes the peace of Paul and Silas in prison (Acts 16:25) so distinctively Christian?
2. The slave girl's story shows a desire for knowledge and control apart from God (vv. 16–18).  
Why is “knowing enough” never enough to bring true peace or salvation?
3. How do people today seek “salvation” through information, technology, or self-help — and how does the gospel confront that mindset?
4. The slave owners valued profit more than people (vv. 19–21).  
How can the love of money quietly shape our priorities and erode our faith in God's provision?
5. Read **Philippians 4:19–20**. How does this promise reshape the way believers view wealth and generosity?
6. The magistrates used their power unjustly and politically (vv. 22–23, 35–39).  
What does this teach us about the danger of trusting in human power or systems for our security?
7. When the jailer asked, “What must I do to be saved?” (v. 30), what kind of salvation was he looking for — and how did Paul redefine it?
8. What does it mean to “believe in the Lord Jesus” (v. 31)? How is this different from simply believing *about* Jesus?
9. Paul and Silas sang and stayed in prison when escape was possible (vv. 25–28).  
What does their response teach us about faith, endurance, and surrender to God's will?
10. Which false savior are you most tempted to rely on — **information, wealth, power, or self-preservation** — and how can you daily renew your trust in Christ alone?