

18.9.22 Communion Sunday Evening Service

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Date: 18 September 2022

Preacher: Reverend Iain Macritchie

- [0 : 0 0] Good evening, a warm welcome to the service this evening. Good to see all of you, those from different congregations as well. It's good for us to come together and to worship God.
- And also those who would desire to be with us, we're conscious. We miss those who have been with us in the past over the years, but who are struggling with health just now and who are watching online.
- So it's good for us to come together, all of us, and to worship God in this hour. One or two things just to remind you of. First of all, that after the service this evening, there'll be a fellowship here.
- So if you're able to stay behind, please do so. And we'll have a time of informal fellowship and there's tea and coffee and all kinds of things. So please stay behind for that.
- If you're able to do so, Ian will be sharing his testimony. And one or two other things, perhaps I don't know what he's going to share, but I know Harris is a special place for him and this is where he came to know the Lord.
- [1 : 0 2] And so we look forward to hearing about that and having the chance to ask him any questions at all that you may have in any area of theology that I cannot come near. This coming week, you've seen notices.
- I'm not going to go through them all, but I do want to just underline again that we don't have a prayer meeting this week on Wednesday night at half past seven as we would usually do. We have a meeting on Thursday night at half past seven and there will be prayer at that meeting.
- It won't be on live stream or Zoom because we have Adam with us who will speak about the ongoing mission to Muslims in various countries, which is a very sensitive work and not one that we can have on the web broadcast.
- So many of you have heard Adam in the past and those who have heard will want to come back. Many of you won't have heard him at all and I cannot stress enough how much you would benefit from coming to hear the stories of how the Lord is working through him in these different places.
- So be encouraged Thursday half past seven for that midweek meeting. And the last thing to say is just a thank you to Ian on your behalf.
- [2 : 2 3] Some of you may scoot off before the fellowship, so I'll say thank you just now. We've very much benefited from the ministry through Ian over the last couple of days.
- And just on your behalf, I want to thank Ian and we will pray on for the work in Graver as well. I'm sure we'll cross over the Clesham from time to time and we'll look forward to having you back.
- So once again, thank you for your ministry and I'll hand over an eye and ask that you lead us in worship. Thank you, David, once again.
- And just to say thank you to you as well. It's been a joy and a privilege to be with you over these days. And we just pray that the Lord will above all else bless his word to our hearts.

We're going to worship him now. We're going to sing to his praise. It's the first item of praise in Gaelic from Psalm 40. Psalm 40. I'll read the first two verses in English.

[3 : 27] I waited for the Lord my God and patiently did bear. At length to me he did incline my voice and cry to hear. He took me from a fearful pit and from the mighty clay.

And on a rocky set my feet, establishing my way. We'll sing these verses to the praise of God in Gaelic. We can remain seated for this singing.

Tim. Him he did Treas aud è il passo a new.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[5 : 03] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Let's unite our hearts in prayer. Let us pray. Lord our God, we come and we once again seek to unite our hearts in worship.

[7 : 24] that we would be still and we would know that you are God, that you are the one, if we are yours this evening, and whom we live and move and have our very being.

you are our all and in all you are the potter and we are the clay the work of your hand being fashioned into vessels fit for your kingdom in Christ and so we bless you Lord once again for the wonder of an opportunity such as this an opportunity where we can gather together around that promise that tells us that where two or three gather in your name you are there in their midst we come in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and none other we come pleading that promise and we ask that our gathering this evening would be one that is so characterized by an outpouring of your Holy Spirit drawing us and leading us to draw with joy from those wells of salvation that we might know what it is to have our souls refreshed in your word that we might even know what it is as we have sought to do in the days gone by to see Jesus we oh Lord are aware that we are not worthy of such an honour or such a blessing we know that by nature we are a people who choose to turn our back on you and to give ourselves over to the sinful things of the flesh forgive us we pray forgive us for so flippantly looking upon that which cost you so much that which led you to the cross that which broke that communion between yourself and the Father

O Lord we know that our sins indeed cost you to experience intensively what we ought to have experienced in hell extensively and so we praise you all the more for the wonder of that salvation that has been wrought for sinners such as we are and if there are any here this evening who are unable to go into such wonders for themselves who know the truths in their head but are yet to have these truths applied to their hearts and their lives we pray oh Lord that even this evening you would come that you would come and do a mighty work that you would accompany the word of your truth with great power so that it might find a lodging place in the hearts of every man and woman boy and girl gathered in here who are as of yet strangers to you you are able oh Lord we believe in the power of your spirit and your word and so we pray come Lord Jesus come and show us something of your wondrous works afresh this evening hour so that sinners would be brought from darkness to light from death to life we thank you oh Lord then for every blessing that we have enjoyed from your hand even in these days that blessing of friendship and fellowship in the Lord and in the gospel uniting friends together and making new friends in the Lord what a wonder it is that although we are all so different you have given to us our own personalities and characteristics our own gifts and talents yet ultimately we meet at the cross and tonight we can say we are all one in Christ Jesus and so we thank you oh Lord for this family of faith a family that mirrors something of the loving kindness of the father that we seek to come and worship today we pray for this particular family here in North Harris as they continue to seek to share the good news of the gospel that you would be with them that you would lead them and guide them and encourage them in your truth and in your work that every effort that they make to point those whom they love in this community to Jesus and even those whom they don't know that all would be blessed and that they would see the increase for your glory for time is so short and eternity is so long help us then to make the best use of our time keeping the main thing the main thing that Jesus Christ died for sinners and that salvation is ours for the taking even this evening by faith and so we pray now that as we come around your word that you would speak to us afresh in it we thank you that you've condescended to reveal yourself to us in a way that we can understand a God who is infinite eternal and unchangeable yet a God who speaks to us through words we see even in this your loving kindness for you have come alongside us and chosen to show us something of who you are and so speak to us we pray and grant us all the more

that heart of worship as we listen to your voice as we hear what you have to say to us that we would apply it to ourselves first and foremost that we might indeed grow in the knowledge and in the grace of the Lord we once again give thanks for our dear brother and sisters who have joined this congregation afresh we praise your name for that work of grace that has been worked in their life that you would be with them that you would be with Donald and Rosalyn and Jane that as they go out tomorrow into the world no doubt so full of the gospel in their souls yet in many ways the prime target for the evil one that you would be with them and lead them and guide them and protect them that you would enable them above all else to be found living that life of faith not even leaning or resting upon their feelings but upon your promises that are yea and amen in Christ Jesus our Lord these promises that are unshakable the same yesterday today and forevermore so that no matter how we feel

Lord what we experience you are there by our side every step of the way for which we seek to give thanks this evening hour and so come with us now as we once again sing your praises that we would lift our voices to the glory of your name that all we ask we ask in the precious name of Christ and for his sake amen well friends we're going to do just that now we're going to lift our voices and praise God by singing to his praise from Psalm 91 Psalm 91 in the Scottish Psalter reading at verse 9 of the Psalm because the Lord who constantly my refuge is alone even the most high is made by thee thy habitation no plague shall near thy dwelling come no ill shall thee befall for thee to keep in all thy ways his angels charge he shall we'll sing down to the end of the verse

[16 : 09] Mark 16 to the praise of God standing to sing because the Lord who constantly my refuge is alone because the Lord who constantly my refuge is are in the most high is made by thee thy habitation no plague shall near thy dwelling come no will shall thee befall for thee to keep in all thy ways his angels his angels charge he shall the end that I shall bear thee up still waiting thee upon on lest thou at any time should stash thy foot against a stone upon the adder thou shalt tread tread and on the lion's tongue thy feet on thang on temple shall and on the lion's young young because on me he set his love

I'll save and set him free because my great name he adorn he hath gone I will him set on high he'll call on me I answer him I will be with him still in trouble to deliver him and honor him my will with length of days unto his mind I will him satisfy

I also my salvation will cause his eyes to see well friends we can turn now to read the word of God together from the Acts the Apostles Acts and chapter 16 Acts 16 let us hear the word of God let us hear the word of God Paul

Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra a disciple was there named Timothy the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer but his father was a Greek he was well spoken of by the brothers at Lystra and Iconium Paul Paul and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places for they all knew that his father was a Greek and when they went on their way through the cities they delivered to them for observance the decisions that had been reached by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem so the churches were strengthened in the faith and they increased in numbers daily.

and they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia and when they had come to Mysia they attempted to go into Bithynia but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them.

[21 : 38] so passing to Mysia they went down to Throas and a vision appeared to Paul in the night. a man of Macedonia was standing there urging him and saying come over to Macedonia and help us.

and when Paul had seen the vision immediately we sought to go into Macedonia concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them. so setting sail from Throas we made a direct voyage to Samothrace and the following day to Neapolis and from there to Philippi which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony.

we remained in this city some days and on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to the river side where we were supposed where we supposed there was a place of prayer.

and we sat down and we sat down and spoke to the woman who had come together. one who heard us was a woman named Lydia from the city of Thyatira a seller of purple goods who was a worshipper of God.

the Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul. and after she was baptized and her household as well she urged us saying if you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord come to my house and stay.

[23 : 03] and she prevailed upon us. and she prevailed upon us. and we were going to the place of prayer. as we were going to the place of prayer we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by fortune telling.

she followed Paul and us crying out these men are servants of the most high God who proclaim to you the way of salvation. and this she kept doing for many days.

Paul having become greatly annoyed turned and said to the spirit I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. and it came out that very hour.

but when her owners saw that their hope of gain was gone they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers.

and when they had brought them to the magistrates they said these men are Jews and they are disturbing our city. they advocate customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to accept or practice.

[24 : 07] the crowd joined in attacking them and the magistrates tore the garments off them and gave 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.

having received this order he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stalks. about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God and the prisoners were listening to them and suddenly there was a great earthquake so that the foundations of the prison were shaken and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's bonds were unfastened.

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 but Paul cried out with a loud voice do not harm yourself for we are all here and the jailer called for lights and rushed in and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas then he brought them out and said Serge what must I do to be saved?

and they said believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved you and your household and they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house and he took them in the same hour of the night and washed their wounds and he was baptized at once he and all his family then he brought them up into his house and set food before them and he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God but when it was day the magistrates sent the police saying let those men go and the jailer reported these words to Paul saying the magistrates have sent to let you go therefore come out now and go in peace but Paul said to them they have beaten us publicly 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 the police reported these words to the magistrates and they were afraid when they heard that they were Roman citizens so they came and apologized to them and they took them out and asked them to leave the city so they went out of the prison and visited Lydia and when they had seen the brothers they encouraged them and departed Amen we pray God's blessing on that reading of his own holy word my friends we're going to join together once more before we come back to this passage singing God's praise from Psalm 130 Lord from the depths to thee I cried my voice Lord do thou hear and to my supplications voice give an attentive ear we'll sing the whole psalm to the praise of God standing to sing Lord from the depths to thee I cry

[27 : 29] Lord from the depths to thee I cry my voice Lord do thou hear come to my supplications voice give an attentive ear Lord who shall stand if thou O Lord should smark iniquity but yet with thee forgiveness is not fear thou mayest be

I wait for God my soul my soul doth wait my hope is in his word more than they that for morning watch my soul my soul wait for the Lord I say more than they that to watch the morning light to see let Israel let Israel open the Lord for within mercies be a plentiful redemption is ever found with him and from all his iniquities

Israel shall redeem well for a short time this evening we can turn back to the chapter we read together in act 16 Acts 16 16 I'd like us to take for our text the words that we have in verse 30 then he brought them out and said Serge what must I do to be saved and he said and they said believe in the Lord Jesus Christ you will be saved you and your household what must I do to be saved

I wonder if that is a question that tonight features in your heart is it a question that's of any importance to you a question that bothers you that you pondered upon that you think upon what must I do to be saved well tonight we're going to meet a man that asks this self same question and as we journey alongside this man who has this question answered we're going to consider three simple things we're going to see first of all fear fear secondly freedom and then lastly fruit fear freedom and fruit firstly then fear and in this part of the chapter what we find is Paul and Silas in prison they're imprisoned as a result of that gospel mission that they find themselves on with Timothy and Luke and they've traveled from Asia to Europe to Macedonia a region within which were the cities of Philippi and Thessalonica now it's in Philippi that we have the scene set before us here tonight up until this point Paul and his team they appear at least only to have had two converts in their whole missionary journey firstly this business woman Lydia this seller of purple who was found at the riverside in that prayer meeting and then secondly this slave girl it's as a direct result of their interaction with this particular slave girl that Paul and Silas are in prison what's their crime what have they done to this girl that's caused them to be put in stocks in jail quite simply they had freed her they had freed her from that demonic spirit that had possessed her very being and that might cause us confusion well surely this is a good thing if they freed this girl from this demon spirit why is it they've been cast into jail there's a good reason for this because this girl was a slave girl this girl of course because she was a slave girl she was obliged to work for her owners what did she do what was it that she did in order to raise money for her owners well she was a fortune teller and because she was a fortune teller because she was telling people their destiny as it were where she was making money people are always desperate to find out the future even today people will read horoscopes and they'll go to fortune tellers and all kinds of different people just to know what lies ahead there's good money to be made and so it was for the owners of this slave girl and of course because she's now healed from this spirit this healing had implications because this demon spirit has been taken from her no longer would she be telling fortunes no longer would she be making money for her owners and because of that her owners are out of pocket and again we see a window into the nature of man isn't mankind so often motivated by money money is the root of all kinds of evil money motivates so many people money is that which when people try and take it from you

you see the worst out coming out of people and so it was with these slave owners they're not happy they're far from happy and because they're no longer making an income from this girl they want to do something about Paul they want to punish Paul they know they can't make a complaint to the authorities this wasn't a valid complaint to make to the authorities so they would have to get Paul and Silas in another way they'd have to incriminate them and that's what they do they accuse them they accuse them of disrupting the city of breach of the peace verse 20 and when they brought them to the magistrates they said these men are Jews and they are disturbing our city they advocate customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to accept or practice of course this was out and out lies yet lies that nonetheless achieve the desired effect these men are as a result of these lies they're cast into prison cast into stocks in a damp, dark, no doubt filthy prison unaware of what the future would hold for them and yet they're innocent and you can't help but think they're surely wondering why have we come all the way to Macedonia and sometimes we can wonder why the Lord leads us in a certain path why have we come all the way to Macedonia only to end up in prison and sometimes the Lord's dealings with us are not revealed as to why not on this side of eternity at least we have to wait and so it's no surprise then that our first heading tonight is fear surely we ourselves would be fearful in such a position but yet friends that's not the tone of what we read quite the opposite because here these men are in this prison praying and singing hymns praying and singing hymns to God what we see here is a spirit of worship what a witness what a witness what a witness to all the other prisoners here are two men who are wrongly imprisoned and all they can do is sing praises to God why is this?

[37 : 45] well one commentator puts it like this Paul and Silas did not base their theology on their circumstance instead they evaluated these circumstances in light in light of what they knew about to be true about God what did they know to be true about God?

what do we tonight know to be true about God? what Paul tells us elsewhere in 2 Corinthians 4 for a light affliction which is but for a moment is working for us a far more exceeding an eternal weight of glory of glory well we do not look at the things which are seen but at the things which are not seen for the things which are seen are temporary but the things which are not seen are eternal now this is not easy so easy for us to allow these scriptures to roll off our tongue this is the idealistic way to be a Christian it's not easy we do allow our light afflictions affect us that's fact but what we see here is this that by faith we can be strong in the Lord even in the darkest of times remember Paul was the one who saw himself as the chiefest of sinners he wasn't without his own struggles he wasn't without his own weaknesses but yet he finds strength in the Lord so where then do we find this fear?

if we don't see it with Paul and Silas where do we find this fear? well we find this fear do we not in this man who asks this question what must I do to be saved?

because as these men are busy praising the Lord God is busy showing his hand of power verse 25 verse 25 about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God and the prisoners were listening to them and suddenly there was a great earthquake so that the foundations of the prison were shaken and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's bonds were unfastened just like that out of nowhere there's this tremor there's this earthquake that causes the very foundation of the prison to shake so that as they shake the very doors of the prison they burst open they burst open the chains that are holding the prisoners in place they're removed just like that that is the power of God and of course not surprisingly that the calamity that's taking place is enough to wake awaken the jailer from his sleep no doubt he's living in quarters with his family attached to the jail and he's awakened verse 27 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 this man had gone to bed that night seemingly in control of his own life only to be woken and he had spoken to see that his whole foundation had been shaken to its core he sees the doors open and surely because the doors of the prison are open the prisoners will have escaped and of course escaped prisoners would almost certainly result in a slow and a painful death for this jailer who had been responsible for keeping them inside the jail and so faced with his fate he's filled with fear he doesn't know where to turn he doesn't know what to do and in his own mind things are so bad for this man that he has no option but to take his own life life there are times in our lives when we feel just at the end of our tether even at the end of the road circumstances get the better of us let's be honest let's be real as a church of Christ as believers let's not put on this outward veneer that all is rosy in the garden it's hard being a Christian we have hard things in our lives let's be honest let's be open let's be prayerful let's be supportive let's be there for one another because at times things can seem so black and so bleak we don't know where to turn and we are so filled with fear maybe that's you tonight you're filled with fear and anxiety you're in depths that you don't know how you're going to get out of maybe they're only known to yourself but can I say this to you friends don't despair please don't despair because there is always a way out as there was for the Philippine jailer because just just as he was about to take his sword to himself what does he hear?

he hears this voice shouting but Paul cried out with a loud voice do not harm yourself for we are all here yes the prison doors are open yes the chains of the prisoners are loosed yet none of them have escaped they're all still there why?

[43 : 26] because God didn't allow them to escape now we might think well this is entirely ridiculous this isn't real this isn't real life if prison doors were opened prisoners would be out of there there's no way they would hold back and stay and remain and it's so easy for us not just in this narrative but in any narrative in scripture to impose our own reason and our own rationale upon what God does strange things happen in Providence we know that we've seen it in our own experience things that we can't explain and we know that behind that is the hand of God himself God will do whatever it takes to fulfill his plan even if it is contrary to our expectations of what appears to be reasonable and that's encouraging that's exciting and so the prisoners remain the prisoners remain because they're part of that jigsaw of the picture that is this man's spiritual journey it's wonderful to think that sometimes what happens to us isn't about us it's actually about someone else and what's happening in our life might be for the benefit of someone else's salvation and we might not even know it but that's the rich tapestry of life we are just tiny pieces of such a big picture and always remember that because we're so prone to ask why is this happening to me it might be for someone else so the prisoners remain and we see that this journey that had appeared this day that had appeared so bleak, so dark, so hopeless was about to change but it had to be this is important as well this had to be why did this have to be why did this have to be for this man because it was this very experience that would bring this man to his senses to bring him to that place whereby at long last he could see how his own finite self needed an infinite God and sometimes we don't wish or will for this but sometimes God is trying to get our attention and we're just not listening and he keeps trying to get our attention and we're still not listening we hold back we pull back we're trying to come to the Lord in our own terms in our own way in our own time and we pull back and we pull back and then the Lord has to do something just be aware of that if he's speaking if he's calling to you tonight in your heart listen to that call don't put it off don't let tragedy come into your life before you will listen to your voice don't be reactive be proactive come and seek him today maybe he's trying to get your attention maybe there's someone in here tonight that he's speaking to listen to his voice and so what seemed to be a course of events that would bring about the end of this man's life on earth would in fact prove to be the lifeline that he needed which brings us to our second point freedom of course it may appear that Paul and Silas are free here their chains are loosed they're wrongly imprisoned yet in the deepest sense what we see here is not that they needed to be set free but that there was a Philippian jailer that needed to be set free and so it is with every non-believer as it was for the Philippian jailer he himself although he had the keys for the prison it was he himself that was imprisoned he was held captive he was motivated by the things

of this world living only for there's nothing wrong with enjoying the things of this world in their place that's a blessing for the Lord but when we live only for them when we're unable to see past them we are imprisoned we might think we have the keys to freedom we look upon Christians and we think their lives are miserable they're in bondage they're enslaved they have no joy or life they have no freedom or friends and that is the voice of the devil telling you that deceiving you thinking that that you have freedom that you have the keys to do whatever you want however you want in this world I wonder if there's a picture of you tonight answered honestly in your heart are you only living for the things of this world what motivates you what excites you does the things of the Lord fill your heart with something that brings you to that place whereby you can see Jesus or is this all just routine we go to church we come home we go to church we tick the books week after week after week is that you it's good that you come keep coming friends there is so much more to knowing the Lord than that there is freedom and for the jailer freedom is on its way as he acknowledges his need as he humbly verbalizes that something is missing in his life verse 29 the jailer called for lights and rushed in and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas just picture the scene this jailer falling before the prisoner trembling this is the work of the Lord

Serge what must I do to be saved saved from what is he worried that he's going to be imprisoned himself from the released prisoners no they're still there what we have here friends is this a deep longing within the heart of the jailer to be right with his creator God no doubt he's heard the testimony you've heard people being converted did you hear so and so is being converted and so and so news gets round no doubt the jailer would have heard the testimony of the slave girl the very reason for Paul and Silas being in prison in the first place and now what he's doing is he's applying the reality of the power of God to heal this slave girl to heal himself maybe you need to do the same apply the reality of the power of God healing your husband or your wife your son your daughter your mother your father whoever it is you know and love in this world who has been saved by grace don't just leave it for them but apply that to yourself by faith by coming to the

Lord what must I do to be saved have you asked that question are you asking it tonight what must I do to be saved have you humbly fallen to your knees and cried out this prayer what must I do to be saved I wonder do you see your need of being released from the power of sin of course we love and we we find great joy in speaking and preaching of the love of God and Christ but that love is a love that takes us from a place from that fearful pit from hell itself and so have you cried out to be saved from a lost eternity do you see your need of being released from the power of sin over your life I wonder is it that you just carry on regardless as if tomorrow is yours to see maybe tonight's the night you need to ask this question what must I do to be saved because if you do what will happen is this you will find that you are on that path to true freedom don't we long for freedom verse 31 and they said believe in the

Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved and your household a profound but simple question is met with a profound but simple answer believe in the Lord Jesus Christ this is his ticket to freedom and tonight this is your ticket to freedom also believe in the Lord Jesus Christ it's not difficult is it it's not as it were rocket science yet why is it so difficult for you to believe why well I wonder is it this do you misunderstand what it is to believe maybe you look at Christianity merely on the outward and that's your assessment and analysis of what it is to be a Christian going through certain routines and rituals not really for me I'm not attracted to that or maybe you think that believing maybe you you think that believing in

[53 : 10] Jesus is just believing in a man that lived 2000 years ago and died on a cross a historical character you like his teachings you enjoy the stories you even enjoy coming to church but you know friends Satan himself believes Satan himself believes the devils believe and tremble and so that's not enough at all Jesus has so much to offer to us tonight and merely being a fact and this is essential for us to grasp because it doesn't say here believe about the Lord Jesus Christ it says believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and there is a world of there's an eternity of difference between the two because believing in Jesus is not just subscribing to biblical facts and concepts it's believing in Jesus as the one who has saved you from your sins the one with whom you are in a relationship with the one who you dialogue with each and every day the one who you could not live without in this world in your life you believe in him not just about him we hear about many different people on the news in the media we feel like we know them but we don't know them we've never met them we have no relationship with them and so you can see the difference we need to believe in the

Lord Jesus Christ you know when we do so when we enter into that personal relationship with him our lives are transformed what do we read in Romans 10 9-10 because if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord maybe you do that tonight and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead you will be saved see the difference we can confess with our mouth yes I believe that Jesus is Lord but what does your heart say what does your heart say tonight does it say as we said this morning really I won't have this man to rule over me I'm not going to humble myself I'm not going to submit I'm not going to give my life to Jesus believe in your heart in the sacrificial work of Christ believe that he has died for a sinner like you believe in the fullness of such a salvation and such a saviour we've got nothing to bring to the table absolutely nothing but to come and to believe in him

I wonder do you believe in him maybe you don't want to believe in your heart of hearts you don't want to believe and I know what this is like there's a fear there's a fear of the unknown when it comes to coming to know the Lord there's a fear of this what this transformation might mean in your life to use that term that we have in our culture that so and so has got the curmudgeon it's a derogatory term and we don't want to have that label attached to us and so we're fearful we'll lose our friends we'll lose this that and the next you this friend you should have far more fear of the known of that which you are comfortable with in this life of that which defines your life if it is in any way keeping you from believing in the Lord Jesus that's what you should fear that which is holding you back and slowing you down that's worth fearing tonight you need to fear that it's so subtle the devil so subtle he masks all these things with a cloak of that which looks so attractive to our eyes but we need to fear if we are living a life separate from

Christ in the end the jailer doesn't find it difficult to believe he couldn't but believe how do we know he believed this brings us just briefly to our final point because we see fruit we see fruit from this freedom and of course this is so important scripture tells us that by their fruit you shall know them as Christians as believers we're not to show forth dull lifeless joyless religion and if we do that shame on us that is not our saviour that is not who we worship here tonight that's not whose death and resurrection we remembered today instead scripture calls us to do what to show forth the fruit of the spirit if there is no root there will be no fruit I often say to my own congregation we should all have the fruit of the spirit up at the door so that on our way out we look at it each and every day to remind us this is who we're to be in

Christ what is the fruit of the spirit love joy peace long suffering kindness goodness faithfulness gentleness does that characterize us as God's people as God's church as his bride is that us the challenge yet we see this with this jailer he shows love to Paul and Silas we read in verse 33 he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds this hardened jailer he's here washing the wounds of these prisoners in a spirit of Christ like love isn't that amazing grace who does this remind you of Jesus Jesus who washed the feet of his disciples that is our example he is our example he is our example as to what it is to be a Christian a Christ one we are here to serve and not to be served let's remember that let's grasp that afresh as we seek to faithfully mirror something of who we profess to be he washes their he washes their wounds of course we read in

[60 : 08] John 13 35 by this all will know that you are my disciples how if you love one another that's our mandate that's our mission statement that's what true Christian love does it doesn't throw its weight about it considers the needs of others and seeks in whatever way it takes to meet those needs time is going but we read following this exhortation that the jailer and his family they're baptized no doubt after having had this revelation he rushes in to get them from the house and they come and they hear the word of God preached and he's baptized at once he and all his family he's professing his faith he's showing his faithfulness to God in obedience straight away there's no waiting for a year or two years or three years he goes and he professes straight away and then in verse 34 then he brought them into his house and set food before them he's shown love he's shown faithfulness by professing and now he shows kindness in such a short space of time he's showing forth the fruit of the spirit what do we read in

James 2 verse 14 what good is it my brothers if someone says he has faith but does not have works can faith save him if a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food and one of you says to them go in peace be warmed and filled there's a danger that we do that we can say oh well I'll pray for you and we don't really invest ourselves in helping that person of course prayer is powerful but we're to come alongside people if a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food and one of you says to them go in peace be warmed and filled without giving them the things needed for the body what good is that so also faith by itself if it does not have works is dead faith needs to manifest itself in works and that includes showing hospitality that's what the jailer does he feeds

Paul and Silas there's no word of a wife feeding them he feeds them he feeds them he gives them what they need and so already in a very short time we see love faithfulness kindness but we also see joy do we not and he rejoiced along with his entire house soul that he had believed in God you know friends a joyless religion is a christless religion a religion that's void of the spirit of the Lord if we are in Christ we ought to be the happiest people alive that doesn't mean we go around with smiles on our faces 24 7 but this is a deep seed to joy a joy that's within the marrow of our being it doesn't mean we're not moved in times of sorrow and times of anguish but still we have that joy that joy that deep seated joy and we see that with this man he rejoices that he's believed in God and I hope we're rejoicing this weekend rejoicing afresh as we're reminded of what we have in

Christ Jesus our Lord this is a man who was on the verge of committing suicide and now he's rejoicing why because he believed in God because he believed in the Lord Jesus Christ and was saved that is a miracle of grace you might be asking tonight what must I do to be saved you might be wanting to be saved from all kinds of different things economic ruin death ill health all good and important things but what about your soul how high on your priority list is the salvation of your soul tonight friend it ought to be the most pressing question in your life what must I do to be saved and here we have the answer and I hope you will know this answer in your heart even tonight believe believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved and that dear friends is a promise let us pray we thank you

Lord for this promise and we pray that this promise might be known in a real way by someone gathered in here tonight that they would believe not about the Lord Jesus Christ but in the Lord Jesus Christ the one who death and resurrection is sufficient for us who in this act of love on Calvary's hill shows forth that we have all that we need in him help us then to believe in him we pray oh Lord that your word would have gone out with power this evening accompanied by your Holy Spirit we know that your Spirit is able to do wonderful things so that those who are in bondage to this world tonight might have these chains loosed and that they might cry out in their hearts

[65 : 58] I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ from the youngest to the oldest that they would all come to know you go with us then we pray into the fellowship following this service this evening we pray that you would bless the food to our body's use that your spirit would be with us there also as we eat and drink not only physical food but spiritual food also as we share one with another the wonders of what you have done in our lives go with us then we pray and forgive us for Jesus sake Amen we're going to conclude friends and apologize for keeping you a little late than I hoped we're going to sing from psalm 16 and sing psalms Jane mentioned this psalm last evening as being one of our favorites it's one of my favorites also a psalm that's so full of hope and of life before me constantly

I set the Lord alone because he is at my right hand I'll not be overthrown we'll sing verses 8 to 11 to the praise of God standing to sing before me constantly before me constantly I set the Lord alone because he is at my right hand I'll not be overthrown therefore my heart is glad my tongue with joy will sing my body too will rest secure in hope on with her thing for you will not allow my soul and death to stay nor will you leave your holy one to see the tombs decay you have made known to me the path of life divine divine bliss shall

I know at your right hand joy from your face will shine now may the grace of the Lord
Jesus Christ the love of God the Father and the communion of the Holy Spirit rest on and
abide with you now and always Amen