

### Which event has changed your life the most?

**<sup>25</sup> About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. <sup>26</sup> Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everybody's chains came loose. <sup>27</sup> The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. <sup>28</sup> But Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!"**

**<sup>29</sup> The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. <sup>30</sup> He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"**

**<sup>31</sup> They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household." <sup>32</sup> Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. <sup>33</sup> At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized. <sup>34</sup> The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole family.**

July 4, 1776. December 7, 1941. September 11, 2001. These are days that marked turning points for our nation. Can you think of a single day or event that marked a major turning point in your life? This morning in our story an act of God turned around the life of a jail warden.

The apostle Paul and his travel companion Silas were in the city of Philippi, a city just a few miles from northern coast of the Aegean Sea (modern day Greece). On this particular day they were on their way to the river, where Jewish Christians met for worship. As they passed through city they encountered a slave girl who happened to be demon possessed. Her owners made a great deal of money from her. The demon allowed the slave girl to predict the future. The girl followed Paul and Silas around shouting, "**These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved.**" The demon was not proclaiming the gospel. Rather, he attempted to embarrass and interrupt those who were preaching the good news of Jesus. Luke tells us she kept this up for many days. Finally, one day, Paul became so upset, turned around and said, "**In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!**" Immediately the spirit left her; truly, a turning point in her life. But the owners didn't care that this poor human being had been released from her prison, but that their cash flow had disappeared. They dragged Paul and Silas before the judges of Philippi and made the accusation, "These men are Jews, stirring up trouble in our city and trying to convert people to Judaism." This was a serious accusation. Emperor Claudius had just expelled the Jews from Rome, accusing them of making trouble. Philippi was a Roman colony. The citizens of Philippi wanted to be like Rome in every way. So Paul and Silas were not given a trial, there was no innocent-until-proven-guilty. Instead they were immediately punished. Paul and Silas were flogged and beaten and thrown into maximum security prison. They even had their legs put in stocks. Not only did stocks provide security but also torture. All of

these actions were illegal because Paul and Silas were Roman citizens. Their civil rights were violated. And yet, what do we see from Paul and Silas? **Praying and singing hymns to God.** (Vs25)

How many times have we forgone praying at the dinner table when guests are over for fear of what they might think? When friends from school spend the night for a sleepover or family is in town visiting, how often do we skip singing hymns to God in church the next for fear that we might offend them, and we do not think how this offends our God? We repent and ask our God for forgiveness and follow the example of Paul and Silas.

The sit in prison singing and praying, and the **other prisoners were listening.** How were they able to do this? God gave them strength and they trusted him. God heard and answered their prayers, in the form of a violent earthquake that shook the foundations of that jailhouse. The chains of the prisoners all rattled off, the apostles' legs were released from their stocks. What is more, all the were doors opened. The jailer woke up, saw all doors open, and thought, "This is not good." In those days when a prisoner escaped, the jailer or guard on duty suffered the same punishment that the prisoner was going to receive. Evidently some in that prison were awaiting capital punishment, because the jailer decided he was going to take his own life right then and there, rather than suffer the humiliation and distress of execution by the state.

Paul yelled out, "Don't do it! We're all here!" Guards brought torches in. The jailer ran into the prison, fell flat on his face before Paul and Silas and asked a most important question any human being can ask, "**Sirs, what must I do to be saved?**" When people who have been careless about their spiritual life come to realize that they must face their maker and judge, they often ask the jailer's question. God does not always use an earthquake to shake people up. It may be a stroke, heart attack, tumor, virus, car accident or surgery.

The natural reaction from a sinful human being is to ask, "What must I do to be saved?" According to our sinful human nature, we are convinced that we have to do something to get right with Maker and Judge. We must do good works. We must try and be a better person or do more good things than bad things. This opinion comes from the wretched condition we have had from birth, "**From conception every inclination of thoughts of mankind's heart is only evil all the time.**" (Gen 6:5; 8:21; Psalm 51:5) Because we are not naturally good people the harsh reality we all must face is that – "...**there is no one righteous, no one who does good, not even one.**" (Rom 3:10-12) Because we are all under this curse, Paul explains, in Romans 5:12, "Sin has entered the world through one man (Adam), and death has entered the world through sin, and in this way death has come to all people because all have sinned." Because there's nothing we can do on our own, we are all doomed to death and destruction. What must I do to be saved? The answer is, "Nothing!" There is nothing we can do.

But what answer did Paul give to the frightened jailer? Did he say, "You must think this way, act like this, or feel this in your heart?" No. "**Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved.**" Simply... believe. What does this mean? Many people say they believe in God, but Paul says here, "**Believe in the Lord Jesus.**" He gets specific and for good reason. It is

one thing to know there is a God. It is a completely different thing to know who God is, what he has promised and what he has done for the human race through his Son Jesus. To believe is simply to trust that the Lord is who he says he is and to trust that he will do what he says and to trust that he has done this for you personally.

I don't know about you, but I wish I could have been there, to listen to Paul and Silas as they sat down with that jail warden, and tell him what a wretched sinner he was, how he was doomed to death, and then to hear them share the good news of Jesus, and how he died to save that jailer from his sins. I would have loved to see the Holy Spirit work on that man's heart, to move him to belief through the Word of God, and to hear that jailer confess, "I believe!"

Talk about life changing event! This man, not just a few minutes ago had put his eternal fate in own hands. He was about to take own life. He had no hope. His life was full of despair. Now, he knew his life was in his Jesus' hands. His life had meaning and purpose. He had hope; a sure certainty of heaven. He believed that he was saved not by works, but by faith in Christ alone.

But there was more. Not only was this free gift for the jailer but Paul says, "...you and your whole household." Luke tells us in vs33, "Immediately, he and all his family were baptized." Even at that late hour of the night, it was so important for that jailer to have his family hear this good news and be baptized. The Greek word that Luke uses here for household includes everyone in that home; his wife, children, his slaves and their children. This coincides with Jesus' command, "Go and make disciples of all nations, by baptizing them and teaching them." (Matthew 28:19,20) The Holy Spirit does not discriminate in baptism. Regardless of age, sex, race or language, he pours out the gift of faith to all who are baptized. A life changing event for that family!

Which event has changed your life the most? Perhaps you were like the jailer. All your life you knew that there was a God, but did not believe in him. But then God sent an "earthquake" in your life and you were faced with the reality, "I must stand before my Maker and Judge." A Paul or a Silas sat down with you, explained the way of salvation through Christ alone. They explained from the Scriptures that baptism makes you right with God. And you were baptized and the Holy Spirit worked saving faith in your heart. Or maybe parents believed. They trusted Jesus' promise that the "kingdom of heaven belongs to these little ones, even infants. (Mt 18, Lk18) They trusted Jesus' promise that the promise of forgiveness through baptism is even for little children (Acts 2:38). They trusted Jesus' words that no one can inherit kingdom of God unless born of water and the Spirit (John 3:5). They brought you to be baptized, and the Holy Spirit gave you the gift of faith, and you believed, even though you were just a little baby.

You, my brothers and sisters, have been baptized into Christ. Listen now to the promises he gives to his baptized children. Because you have been baptized you have been reborn and given new birth (Titus 3:5-7). Baptized, you have been clothed with Christ (Rom 6:4). Everything that Christ has done; his sin-free life, his death that paid for your sins, his resurrection that guarantees your victory over the grave...all of this has covered over you at

baptism. Baptized, your sins have been washed away (Acts 22:16). Baptized, you have been saved (1Pet 3:21) from Satan's accusations, from your sins, from death and from hell. Baptized, you have been forgiven (Acts 2:38-39). What a great comfort! Rejoice in your baptism!

See the grateful response from the jailer. He took Paul and Silas into his own home (how many wardens would do that today?). He washed their wounds and set a celebration meal before them. He **rejoiced, because he and his whole household had come to believe**. Did baptism change that family's life? You bet it did! Do you think that jailer never had a bad day in his life after that night? Probably not. As long as sin in world, sinful flesh to contend with, still have hardships and struggles. But baptism still changes your life everyday.

To our young people here today: I know that you face temptations daily... on the internet, on your TV screens, struggles at school, peer pressure from friends to do things that go against God's Word. I know that sometimes you fall into those temptations. Take comfort in your baptism. You have been cleansed through Christ's blood. When you lay your head on your pillow at night, and your sins bother you, whisper the words of the hymn we just sang, "Sin disturb my soul no longer, I am baptized into Christ."

When you fall into sin, use your baptism for repentance. Drown that sinful self of yours in the waters of your baptism, when you were crucified with Christ. Allow your new person to rise to live before God in righteousness and purity. Find strength in your baptism to live as a child of God.

My friends, when you are assailed by doubt; struggles in relationships in the family, when you wonder about the economy, your job, or retirement, find comfort in baptism. God has conveyed his grace to you through baptism. He showed his love to you by giving his Son's death to you through baptism. Doubt no more. Trust that same God, who promised life through the sprinkling of water and the spoken word, trust him to give you strength to get through those difficult times in your life. When you lay your head on your pillow and toss and turn thinking about the troubles in your life, whisper the words of the hymn we just sang, "God's own child, I gladly say it, I am baptized into Christ."

When you lay your head on your bed for the final time, and your eyes are about to close in death, whisper the words of the hymn, "Death you cannot end my gladness, I am baptized into Christ." Has baptism changed your life? You bet it has!

January 20, 2009, will be a turning point in our nation's history. You too will have events in the future that will be turning points for you. Today, you reflect back on turning points in your life. The most important? September 3, 1978, at Christ Lutheran, in Beatrice, Nebraska, Jesus saved me from Satan. He rescued me from my sins and my grave and made me a child of God for all eternity. Baptism turned my life around, and still does everyday. So does your baptism. Cherish your baptism. Because it is your eternal life changing event. Amen.

**Christian Worship Supplement: Hymn 737 God's Own Child, I Gladly Say It**

**1 God's own child, I gladly say it:  
I am baptized into Christ!  
He, because I could not pay it,  
Gave my full redemption price.  
Do I need earth's treasures many?  
I have one worth more than any  
That brought me salvation free,  
Lasting to eternity!**

**2 Sin, disturb my soul no longer:  
I am baptized into Christ!  
I have comfort even stronger:  
Jesus' cleansing sacrifice.  
Should a guilty conscience seize me  
Since my baptism did release me  
In a dear forgiving flood,  
Sprinkling me with Jesus' blood?**

**3 Satan, hear this proclamation:  
I am baptized into Christ!  
Drop your ugly accusation;  
I am not so soon enticed.  
Now that to the font I've traveled,  
All your might has come unraveled,  
And, against your tyranny,  
God, my Lord, unites with me!**

**4 Death, you cannot end my gladness:  
I am baptized into Christ!  
When I die, I leave all sadness  
To inherit paradise!  
Though I lie in dust and ashes  
Faith's assurance brightly flashes:  
Baptism has the strength divine  
To make life immortal mine.**

**5 There is nothing worth comparing  
To this lifelong comfort sure!  
Open-eyed my grave is staring:  
Even there I'll sleep secure.  
Though my flesh awaits its raising,  
Still my soul continues praising:  
I am baptized into Christ;  
I'm a child of paradise!**

**Text: Erdmann Neumeister, 1671–1756; tr. Robert E. Voelker, b. 1957 © 1991 Robert E. Voelker. All rights reserved. Used by permission.**



Keep in your prayers this week.... All the unchurched who do not know Jesus as their Savior that we may bring them the saving message of Jesus; National Pastors Edel Akpakpan, Anthony Akpan, Nse Akpan, and Joseph Asuquo of Christ the King Lutheran Church of Nigeria and their families; Pastor Phil Schupmann as he serves Resurrection Lutheran Church, in and around Aurora, Illinois; Jared Sundahl and Michael Hefti who are serving in the military overseas; our members who continue to invite their friends to our mission congregation to hear God’s saving Word; Sherry Jensen who is at Pewee Valley; that the Lord will bless our outreach efforts and lead many unchurched people to seek Him at this congregation; **Kay Reynolds’ mother who fell and broke her hip**; those who have not been with us for some time.

Thank you to.... our guests who came to worship the Lord Jesus with us (join us again soon!); our organist and all who served this week.

**This Week at Faith...**

- Today Council and Women of Faith meetings
- Monday Bible Information Class.....6:30 pm
- Tuesday Building Committee meeting.....5pm
- Wednesday Women’s Bible Study:.....10am
- Youth Catechism.....5 pm
- Outreach calls.....6:30 pm
- Saturday Women’s craft get together.....9am
- Next Sunday Worship.....10 am
- Sunday School & Bible Study.....11:20 am
- Voters’ meeting after Bible study

**Last week’s numbers in response to God’s amazing grace**

- Sunday worship: 58**
- Adult Bible Class: 21**
- Sunday school: 11**
- Bible Information Class: 2**

**Serving our Lord next week (Jan 18)**

- Food: no one is signed up**
- Flowers: no one is signed up**
- Cleaning: Eichbrecht**
- Usher/offering counters: Virgil Oakes and Mark Ebersole**

**Acolyte schedule**

Yes, we finally did it! If you have a child that likes to light candles, there is probably a new acolyte schedule in your mailbox. If your child would like to participate as an acolyte, speak to Pastor Horn.

**Usher/offering counter schedule**

If you would like to serve our Lord as an usher or offering counter on Sunday mornings, please speak to Earl Enevold. Both men and women are invited to inquire. Training will be given.

**Women's Craft Get Together**

**Saturday, January 17<sup>th</sup> at 10 am Sandra Wittmeier's home  
Call for directions 502-942-8036**

**We will be making a potholder.**

**You will need: ¼ yard of fabric of your choice**

**1/3 yard of a coordinating fabric**

**1/3 yard of another coordinating fabric or you may use the top fabric again**

**Pattern calls for ¼ yard of heavy duty stabilizer and ¼ yard of cotton (not polyester) batting. I find that three or four layers of cotton flannel does a nice job in lieu of the stabilizer and batting.**

**¾ yard of bias tape or you may cut a bias piece from one of your fabrics.**

**If you absolutely don't have any of this I will have some available for you to use.**

**All are invited – bring a friend!**

***In His Service,***

***Pastor Paul Horn***

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*"The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory forever and ever. Amen!" 2Timothy 4:18*