

[Worship]

[Baptisms]

Pastor Dave: Jesus made it really clear. He told us, as his followers and his family to go make disciples of all the nations, and one of the steps in doing that is to baptize them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. And so baptism isn't just a formality. It's not just an external observance that we formally do. Being part of God's family and being formed in the image of Jesus Christ and being fruitful -- you see, when you step in this tub, one of the things you do is you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord.

Everyone, every human identifies with something. It's what jerseys are. It's what external looks are. We are identifying with something. In Christianity, we get into the tub and we identify with Jesus Christ and say, I'm on team Jesus. I'm wearing the Jesus jersey. I follow Jesus. I love Jesus. And it's part of being formed in Jesus' image. You see, it is a step of profound humility in this world that is rebellious and acts out.

We follow Jesus in humility and identifying with him in his death, burial and resurrection. And it's a profound step of humility, because in this world, we're told you should be ashamed. You should be ashamed of being a man. You should be ashamed of being a woman. You should be ashamed of being white. You should be ashamed of being black. You should be ashamed of being rich. You should be ashamed to being poor.

When we identify with Jesus Christ, we stand and we say, I'm not ashamed of the gospel. It's the power of God unto

salvation for all who believe. All can come to him, and so, in baptism, we stand up and we say, I'm following Jesus and I'm not ashamed of Jesus. And it's part of being fruitful. You see, again, in this world that tries to shut us up, we stand up and we say, Jesus is worth all that I am, all that I have and all that I'll ever be.

And again, I'm not ashamed to follow and proclaim Jesus Christ as my Lord. I'm not my own. I've been purchased with a price and I want to be identified with Jesus Christ.

So we'll start out with Julian. Julian Smith and Jen is going to come in as well. Mamma bear is going to baptize her. Love it. This is Jen. She pretty much runs Hillside for us.

[Laughter]

So if you've dealt with anything, Jen has helped you out. And this is Julian.

That's okay. That's all right. We're all going to get wet and it's going to be fun. Julian, why do you want to be baptized today?

Julian: Because I want to continue my life through Jesus and follow the plan that God has for me.

Pastor Dave: Beautiful. Julian, do you know that you've sinned and your sin is against God?

Julian: Yes.

Pastor Dave: Do you believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross in your place for your sin?

Julian: Yes.

Pastor Dave: Is it your desire, with this life that he's given you, to give it back to him and follow him with all your heart?

Julian: Yes.

Pastor Dave: Then my little sister, it is our joy and honor, because of your profession of faith in Jesus Christ, to baptize you in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. You're goin' down.

[Laughter]

Whoo!

[applause]

Kimely. Y'all, this is Kimely Rainey and Jeff Cody, who is the facilities manager here, who if Jeff started a church, I'd go to. He has a profound impact on people. It's amazing. Our titles in life mean very little. The influence that Christ gives to us is profound and man, Kimely's story and how the Lord has used Jeff to impact her is just huge. Kimely, why do you want to be baptized today?

Kimely: I would like to be baptized to publicly show that I am a believer in Christ and that I'm not ashamed of it.

Pastor Dave: Beautiful. Kimely, do you know that you've sinned and your sin is against God?

Kimely: Yes, sir.

Pastor Dave: And do you believe that Jesus Christ died in your place for your sin on the cross, that he was buried and rose again?

Kimely: Yes, sir.

Pastor Dave: And sister, it is your desire with this life he's given you to give it back to him and to follow and obey him?

Kimely: Yes, sir.

Pastor Dave: Awesome. Well, because your profession of faith in Jesus Christ, it's our joy and honor to baptize you in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.

[Applause, whoops and hollers]

Love you, bro. Hannah, you want to come on up? Hannah, I'm nervous because they haven't let me do baptisms in like a year. So I might mess up your last name.

Hannah: Well, I've never done it before.

Pastor Dave: Well, beautiful. Hannah Magnussen?

Hannah: Yes.

Pastor Dave: Yeah. Hannah, why do you want to be baptized today?

Hannah: Um, because a year ago, Jesus changed my heart and I want to honor that change today by being obedient.

Pastor Dave: Beautiful. Hannah, do you know you've sinned and your sin's against God?

Hannah: Yes, I do.

Pastor Dave: Have you come to believe that Jesus Christ died on that cross in your place for your sin, that he was buried and rose again for you?

Hannah: Yes, I do.

Pastor Dave: And is it your desire, because of the grace that he's given to you in the gospel, to give your life back to him and follow him with the rest of your days?

Hannah: Yes.

Pastor Dave: Sister, it's my joy and honor, because your profession of faith, --

[Laughter.]

It's a first. No. That's all right.

It's a joy and honor, because your profession of faith in Jesus Christ, to baptize you in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.

[Applause, whoops and hollers]

[Worship continues]

Pastor Dave: Heavenly Father, that is my prayer this morning, that you'd give us grace that we might be still and

behold what you've done for us through your son Jesus Christ. And on I come, and as we bring in all our baggage and difficulty and all the problems and pain that come with this world, would you give us the grace to still our hearts as we read through your word that you might give us courage, comfort, peace and strength?

And that, Father, as your family, we might be a people of peace in a world of pain and problems that they might see the light and glory of the gospel in and through us and be drawn to you because of the work you're doing in and through us. And so I have nothing. And so as I open up your word, I do so with conviction and confidence that you'll speak to us through your word, through your Spirit. And I pray that you would do that work as I empty myself, that you'd fill me to speak to your children. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Well, welcome. As you're being seated, quite a few first-timers that I've had the honor of meeting today. So I'm so glad you're here. My name's Dave. I'm a new creature in Christ. I'm a recovering addict, alcoholic. There's nothing special about me but that Jesus saved me, changed me, is growing me and has given me the honor of being able to open up the word with my family here at Hillside Fellowship.

So if it's your first time, super duper glad you're here. At Hillside, we believe Jesus changes everything. So historically, we've been looking at how he's done that through the book of Acts. We typically want him to do it on a really grand scale like, do it big, do it now.

But he really does have this tendency of doing it on a very granular scale. He saves us one at a time and changes a

little bit at a time. But the fact that you're here proves that Jesus changes everything. He's been doing this for centuries, for thousands of years and here we are this morning. We're going to open up the word and Jesus will change trajectories for some of us, he'll change attitudes, he'll work in some of us to humbly repent.

And so that's what we've been looking at. I'm going to read one verse out of Acts 16 just to tell you what I'm going to do before I do it. We're going to read the very last verse in chapter 16 and that's where the story ends up. And so I'm going to begin with the end in mind and then walk you through to show you why it's written that way.

So in Acts chapter 16, verse 40, God says and Luke writes, "They (that's Paul and Silas) went out of the prison and they entered the house of Lydia, and when they saw the brethren, they encouraged them and departed." This is the church at Phillippi. When you read in your Bibles the book of Philippians, this is how it got started.

And the amazing thing about verse 40 is it calls them brothers and sisters; brethren. So whatever happened there, all of a sudden they're family. They're called brothers and sisters. And so I want to walk you through and show you how God takes broken people and makes them brethren, how he takes really messed up people like me and he puts us together and makes us family.

So, let me give you a big theological picture before we jump into Acts chapter 16. If you read straight through the Bible, God reveals himself in different ways, different titles. One of the titles gives himself is that of "Father." He's a father and he calls us in Christ, his children and he calls the church a

family. And this is beautiful because we get to see in God's family, there's a family ethic, a family culture. And that culture, that ethic is of selfless service. We serve one another. We give ourselves away because God has served us. In Christ, we now serve and love and give ourselves away to one another.

What happens because of this is the family of Christ is built up. We build one another up. Now this is great news because we have an enemy who is also called the father. Jesus calls him the father of lies. And in his family, there's also a kingdom ethic of hate and murder, lust and greed. And in the enemy's family, he doesn't build the family up, he actually rips the family up. And you can see it, if you study America, what happens when the family system breaks down.

What we're going to see today is, in the gospel, the good news that Christ Jesus lived, Christ Jesus was crucified in our place for our sin, Christ Jesus was buried, Christ Jesus rose again and Christ Jesus now gives salvation to any who would come to him by grace through faith in his finished work.

What happens in that is Christ Jesus adopts us into his family. Acts 16, let me just sum it up with a phrase that will stick. How many of you have every hand Olan Mills family portrait?

[Laughter]

Why do you laugh? Honestly, that was just an honest question. There could be others. For me, it was glam shots in the 80s. You go to the mall and you get all crazy, right?



And we always hide those pictures, don't we. Because some of us are all stiff

[Laughter]

I mean, I don't know what was going on in the 70s, 80s and 90s, or even when they do church photo directories. But we all just look kind of janky. You give it a year or two and you're like, oh, man. What happened there? Acts chapter 16 is an Olan Mills family photo shoot of God's family. Is it janky? Absolutely. Isn't your family? Is it messed up? Absolutely. Isn't your family? Is it different? Do you look at people and think, man, how did they get along? Right?

That's why my counseling load during thanksgiving and Christmas goes through the roof. It's like, how am I going to deal with these people? What people? My family. What we'll see is God takes really, really broken people and does something beautiful and gives this Olan Mills family portrait.

The sermon today may not be as cohesive as other sermons because the text seems to jump around. You're going to get the jailer and then you're going to get Paul and Silas and then you're going to get -- so I'm going to try and make it as cohesive as I can. But if I lose you -- man, we're all different and God puts us together in our differences because he seems to delight in our differences. It's amazing. He made us this way.

Watch. I'll jump in. We'll start out with chapter 16 verses 22-24. If you weren't here last week, I'm going to lose you. So Paul goes to Phillippi. He meets this group of gals outside the city and Lydia gets saved. Lydia says, Paul, come to my house. Paul and Luke, Silas, the boys go to her

house. The church is started.

Then Paul runs into this slave gal that's just yelling at him. These are the servants of the most high God. They've come to tell you the way of salvation. Paul casts the demon out of her. She gets saved. Now we're going to get the third person in the Olan Mills family photo shoot.

Watch. I'll read it to you. Luke wants you to know now he's going to highlight this jailer. Verse 22, 23 and 24. And I tell you all this because I want you to know. There is not Christian type. I don't care if you're high class societally and you have a lot of money or if you're low class and have no money. If you're middle class. I don't care if you're black, if you're white. I don't care if you're democrat or republican. There is no Christian type. The gospel of Jesus Christ is for everyone. And I'll prove it to you from the text.

Watch this. 22 "The crowd rose up together against them (Paul and Silas), and the chief magistrates tore their robes off them . . . ." And this is amazing because all they did was cast this demon out of this girl who was being used and abused and hurt and harmed. Now she's free but her masters lost their profit. And so now they're mad so they take it out on Paul and Silas.

" . . . [they] proceeded to order them to be beaten with rods. 23 When they had struck them (Paul and Silas) with many blows, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to guard them securely; . . . ." So here comes the photo shoot of the next person to get saved. This is going to tell you the kind of personality type, the kind of character he was. That's what Luke wants you to see. So he's going to say this:

24 " . . . and he (the jailer), having received such a command (from the magistrates who were over him), threw them into the inner prison . . . " Now this meant something in Phillippi. It would've been like solitary confinement in the very depths of the prison. So they treated Paul and Silas like Hannibal Lector. They put them down in the furthest away place " . . . and they fastened their feet in the stocks."

This was actually a form of torture. So this guy was cruel.

[Beeping.]

[Laughter]

I'll keep going. You never know. I mean, it almost sounded like -- never mind. I can't go there.

[Laughter]

This guy was cruel. Let me give you a little background on him. He would've been in the Roman military for most of his life. He would've gone to war, fought in war. He would've had to suppress emotions because that's what happens in war. He would've had to bury a lot.

What happened in Rome when you were too old to fight in the military was they gave you a civil service job. So this would've been a cruel and brutal guy, who when all he was told was watch the prisoners, he put them in the worst possible place and he tortured them.

Now here's the point I want you to know. Lydia was very gentle, wasn't she? What did it take to get the gospel across to Lydia? A conversation. Paul sat down, she was a God-

fearer, she and Paul talked and she got saved. You know some people are like that? All it takes is a conversation.

The slave girl. What did it take with the slave girl? Day after day being annoyed until finally there's a confrontation. It wasn't a conversation. Paul kind of lost his cool. There was a compassionate confrontation. Anybody come to Christ through a compassionate confrontation? I know I did. It was my friends. "You're not well. You're an addict. You're going to kill yourself and others. Knock it off."

And that's what the Lord uses for some of us. A conversation or a confrontation will not work in this setting, will it? Because this is a prison guard. It's going to take something completely different because this guy is completely different. Did you know, if you look around, all of us are completely different. No amens.

[Laughter]

Okay. Let me walk you through this. If you took a Myers-Briggs test, there's 16 different personalities and most of us would be different personality types. We're different. If you took a Focus on the Family test, they would make it more simple. Some of you are like beavers, otters, retrievers or lions. So pick your animal spirit and have fun.

If you took the enneagram, there's nine different personality types. If you took the Disc test, there's four different -- here's my point. We're all different and we tend to see the world through our own framework and our lenses and we tend to think everybody should think and see and experience life like us. See, it's silent.

Let me prove my point to you. There's this place called Baskin-Robbins. Ever been there? Delicious. We like to go on dollar scoop day. They have 31 flavors. I really think it's overkill because I think we could all admit we only need one flavor, amen? Everybody say your favorite Baskin-Robbins flavor on three. 1, 2, 3. Birthday cake.

Congregation: [Answers]

Pastor Dave: What's wrong with you people? I don't even feel like I have anything in common with you. Kevin, what did you say?

Kevin: Cookies and cream.

Pastor Dave: Cookies and cream? Sorry, man. We're going to have to start a new church. The cookies and cream church because you're not going to fit here. You see, all of us are different. And what God does is he takes -- this is just 1 Corinthians chapter 12. Some are feet, some are eyes, some are hands, some are a nose, some are different parts of the body a little harder to deal with.

God puts us all together and he puts us all together differently. God knows how he made you and he knows how to reach you. For some of you, it won't be a conversation. For some of you it won't be a confrontation. For some of us here today, it will take concrete action. You'll have to see the gospel in order to believe the gospel.

There's no other way God could've gotten this guy. So he puts Paul and Silas into prison to be right around this guy. Here's what I love about Paul's heart. And this is what I'd write under the first point. Lost people, people who don't

know Jesus, lost people are not the problem. They are the point. I'm going to say it again and I'll keep saying it, because in America, we make divisions and we divide color over race over socioeconomic standing, social standing, political standing and we call the other side of the aisle "the problem."

Let me tell you this. Lost people are not the problem that we hide from. They are the point that we pursue. There is no other organization that exists for those who are not yet here. And that means God is going to have to put us in places to be around them and some people it will be a conversation, some people it will be a confrontation and others it will be concrete action; like we see here.

Watch what Paul and Silas do. 25 and 26. Even in the worse case scenario, God's going to give you direction. Verse 25, "But about midnight . . ." Because they couldn't sleep. They were in the stocks. Their feet were bound. Their hands were bound. It's the worst possible position after having broken ribs from being beaten with rods. So at midnight, watch what Paul and Silas were doing.

It says they were " . . . praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them; 26 and suddenly there came a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison house were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were unfastened."

You see, Paul and Silas understood something that most of us don't understand because the philosophy of thought in America is that we exist to be happy and feel good. It's actually written into our core paperwork. We're pursuing

happiness. So when circumstances don't make us happy, we tend to blow up at others and at God.

Paul and Silas knew something and I'll put it in this phrase. I am where I am, but God has a plan. I am where I am. Most days there's difficulty. Most days there's a problem. Most days there's pain. And if you lose sight of this truth that "I am where I am, but God has a plan," you will end up missing sight of what God wants to do.

Paul and Silas were there. They couldn't have a conversation with the guard. They couldn't have a confrontation with the guard. So they're just waiting. God, how do you want to show up here? How do you want to show up? We can't have a conversation with the dude. He won't listen to us. The power dynamic is off. He has all the power. We can't confront him and say, be nice. God how are you going to work?

I don't care where you are in life, whatever circumstances, the pain, the difficulty. Here's what you need to know. In American Christianity, most of us just want to know, God, where do you want me? You want me to take this job or that job? You want me to move here to that house or this house? You want me to marry this person or that person? Where do you want me?

The Bible doesn't give you a lot of specifics on that. But it gives you a lot of specifics on who you're to be wherever you find yourself. God cares about who you are. You know he gives profound direction for us so that we know who we are to be wherever we are, so that even if you find yourself in prison, in the stocks, everything bad, God says, I want you to be a people who rejoice and give thanks. That's what I want

for you.

But God, what am I doing here? I am where I am, but God has a plan. But God, we have been here a long time. Yeah, sometimes discipleship takes decades, not days. Give me time to work. I am where I am, but God has a plan. You see, it makes it very clear for us. These are Jesus' words. Matthew chapter 5, verse 16. "Let your light so shine among men that they may see your . . . ?"

See there's a lot of us who are concrete. We need to see it. I don't even have time to go through the data. Do you know how many advertisements and manipulations that people hear every day in America? So now when they come hear a pastor, they're like, well, I don't know that he's the same dude here as he is at home as he is around his friends. We can't trust anything. We can't trust information in America anymore.

So what God often does is he'll allow us to be in very difficult, problematic, painful situations so that people can see the light of the glory of the gospel shining through us. I am where I am, but God has a plan. He's got a purpose for you to be where you are. I just call it the Tom Beaudet principle. You remember it? I'm Tom Beaudet for Motel 6. We'll leave the . . . light on for you.

We live in a world that's totally surface and they're wondering is there anything in this universe that can impact me beneath the surface? And that's what the gospel of Jesus Christ does. Watch. I'll show you. Watch what comes next. Here comes the despair. And this is going to make some of us uncomfortable. Especially those struggling with codependency. If you need people to be happy, this is going



to make you really uncomfortable. Watch this.

Verse 27. "When the jailer awoke and saw the prison doors opened, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped." See this is a military guy. He's practical, concrete. Mission failed. It's a shamed society. I'm going to be shamed, my family's going to be shamed, I'll just cut the shame off at the pass and I'll kill myself. Very concrete, practical thinker.

Now watch what happens. 28 "But Paul cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Do not harm yourself, (we're all here, bro)!" Nobody left. Don't kill yourself. 29 "And he (the jail guard) called for the lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas, . . . "

Let me tell you what just happened. I'll do it in the framework of a story with an illustration. Do you know life is difficult and painful? Do you know that life is difficult and painful for everybody? We don't tend to talk about it openly, but life is difficult and painful for all of us. Do you know why life is difficult and painful for all of us? Because God's really good.

You see, the purpose of life is to bring me to the end of myself so that I might cry out for help. The purpose of pain, central nervous system, is to tell me something's wrong. See, I have people call me all day. Dave, why is life hard? And I say, because God is good and he is absolutely -- he is not going let me go to hell and be happy about it. He allows for pain, he allows for difficulty, he allows for suffering so that I might open my eyes, humble myself and cry out to him for help.

Because when I humble myself, he gives grace. Do you know that? So people ask me, Dave, what's the greatest gift God's ever given you? I think it's my propensity towards addiction and alcoholism. You see, because without that, I never would have reached rock bottom; the end of my rope. And without that, I never would have cried out for help. And without that, I never would have received and known the grace of God in Jesus Christ. So now I thank God for my afflictions. I thank God for my adversity because he gives me grace in the midst of that. And it is *that* that turned me to Jesus Christ.

See the world is longing right now for an organic, authentic, genuine, crunchy people. That may not have landed on South Texas people.

[Laughter]

I get that. The world's longing for that because everything is fake around us. It's all synthesized. And the world longs to see something that actually makes change inside of us. And every time it happens, the world gets exposed for their insufficiency. You don't believe me? There was a book written in 2015 called *Forgiven*. It struck me because it was a book written by the mom of a son who was the active mass murderer, the shooter, at the Amish school shooting. Terry Roberts.

Anybody see the book, read the book, hear about the book? See, it's amazing. When a mass murder happens it's all over the news. But if any good comes from it, the news is nowhere to be found. See what happened that day at that Amish school was, Charles, the young man who did this shooting, Charles Roberts, went into that school and he

preyed on the weakest who were there. Young gals from 13 down. 10 of them were shot.

That day, something amazing happened because the Amish community, within two hours of that horrific, horrific mass murder and tragedy, within two hours, the Amish community got together and went over to Terry Roberts' house -- that's the mom of the young man who did the shooting. Can you imagine being that mom?

Your son, who you prayed and longed that he would just do good, all of a sudden it's all over the news, as having done the worst, most horrific things. Her shame was overwhelming. She found herself where this jailer was. I'm done! It's over!

So when the book came out in 2015, it was astounding to me because it was called *Forgiven*. The Amish school shooting, a mother's love and the amazing story of grace. She tells the story of how these families of this Amish community, within two hours of the shooting, showed up at her front door and said, you've lost a son because he took his own life and we've lost children because they were shot. You're going to need help working through this and we're going to need help and we want you to know that you're forgiven.

Two days later, the Amish community was there at Charles' funeral, consoling his mom. And his mom, in the book, tells the story. When her inadequacy, insufficiency and shame was met with the love and the goodness and kindness of grace that comes through Christ in us, that light shining, it shattered her walls and invited her in. And Hillside Fellowship, this is what I love about you. It's what I love

about what Jesus is doing in your life.

Every single week I get emails of how Jesus has used you. When you face evil, you meet it with kindness. You don't return evil for evil. When you face hate, you meet it with love. When you face relentless anger, you meet it with mercy and grace and compassion. And Jesus is using you to tear down walls. There's people here today that are here in church today, hearing the gospel because you've done that. And I love how Jesus Christ uses you to shine as a light in the midst of a dark world.

You see, this world is about bringing us to the end of ourselves. I love how Matthew 5:3 says it in the NASB and the New King James. "Blessed are the poor in spirit . . ." Matthew 5:3 " . . . for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." I like how the message puts it. "Blessed are those who are at the end of their rope because when there's less of you, there's more room for God to rule."

You see, if you're here today and there's a lot of pain, a lot of difficulty in your life, you just need to know that God's allowed that because he's good. He's allowed that because he wants you to call out to him. Because when we humble ourselves, he gives you all the grace you need. This is what makes Christianity different than every other religion. It's not about you trying harder, it's about you simply being humble and asking for help. God loves to give grace to the humble if you'd humble yourself today.

Watch this. Watch what happens next. Because this is a classic doer. Classic A-type. Where are my A-types? Yeah. Give me my list. What do I need to do? Let's nail this down. Let's get it done. He falls before Paul and Silas trembling,

and here's what he says. Verse 30 "and after he brought them out (Paul and Silas), he said, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?'" Pretty good question, huh?

And this is what many of us ask most days. Hey, I'm pretty awesome and I've done a lot and I've made it this far and I'm pretty good and I survived battle and I've fought and I'm capable. I'm able. What must I do to be saved? It's very interesting because most of us, when we find ourselves in a problem, like him, he was exposed, he was inadequate. He was exposed as being inadequate. Paul and Silas had something he didn't.

He was exposed. He's like, what do I need to do next? What do I do? What do I do to be saved? Watch Paul's response. "And they said, believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved; you and your household." You can't save yourself. No, there's got to be something I can do. Paul says, no. It's not about you.

Did you know, this is why when people come in and there's many of you here today. Dave, I've got problems in my marriage. What do I need to do? My first response will be, stop whatever you've been doing. Well, what do I need to do? Stop. Stop what? Whatever you're doing. It's got you where you are. So more of the same will make it worse. So just stop.

Well, Dave, what do I need to do? I don't know. Your wisdom has gotten you here and you want to do more of your wisdom because you love you some you. You're really pleased with you and you think that you can fix it. Same with parenting. You go across the board. You see, when you put self at the center of the equation, nothing will work out. I'm

going to say it again. When you put you at the center of the equation, guess what? Nothing will work out because life is not about you and what you can do. Life is actually about getting out of the center and allowing Jesus to take his rightful spot.

Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. See, we're all dependent on something or someone. I'll just make it simple. Every single human being alive is. We depend on something or someone. We believe something or someone can save us. For most of us, we depend on ourselves. That's why our life is such a mess.

What the scriptures say is it's not about you; it's about Jesus. Jesus lived the life you couldn't. Jesus was crucified and paid for the sin you couldn't pay for. Jesus was buried and conquered the enemy you couldn't conquer. Jesus rose again and Jesus will now freely give you eternal life by grace through faith in him that you can't earn and you don't deserve. He's that good. But all of us depend on something.

This is a principle I learned at 3:30 one morning at CVS. When you're raising kids, I don't know why it happens, but it does happen a lot. You go through a lot of diapers. And when you run out of diapers and it's 3:30, you've gotta find a store open. And so, praise the Lord for CVS. It's 3:30. I drive down. I'm getting diapers at CVS. Stumbling around and it dawns on me.

There's baby diapers and adult diapers right here. I feel like I missed something in my life. Like I feel like I've been ripped off. I feel like in health class, my senior or junior year, I feel like somebody should have said, listen, bro. You begin

and end in diapers. Live accordingly in the middle. Right?

We don't talk about it because apparently it's inappropriate or maybe it's rude. You began in diapers, totally dependent and apparently you're going to end in Depends totally dependent. But for some reason in this middle 30 years, you have this, we have this grand notion. I can control my bladder and bowels so I am supreme.

[Laughter]

I can control my functions so somehow I can control the world. And we live this delusion. It's truly a delusion. And because of that delusion, we tend to depend on ourselves. Let me tell you this in love, in grace, in mercy. Life is short. You begin and end in diapers. The middle is about recognizing your creator in the days of your youth before the evil days come. We all depend on something.

There is no gospel type. There is no Christian type. The gospel is for everyone. And Paul, lovingly, tells this jail guard, you can't save yourself. You need a savior. His name is Jesus. But if you'll come to him and humble yourself, he'll save you and change you.

So watch what happens next. Because what typically happens here, and I saw some nods so I know this is going on. What's happened in America, and I've even got emails this week from Catholic friends who are here and I love. You know I love you. There's this argument of, Dave, you're preaching cheap grace. Salvation by grace through faith in Christ alone. You're just encouraging people to go sin and go live their lives without Jesus.

That's not true. And to my Catholic friends who are here, I would say this. Please don't mess up justification and sanctification. Please don't misunderstand justification which is by grace through faith in Christ alone. It happens in a heartbeat. You can't save yourself, but God can save you. Doctrinally, we all this justification or being declared not guilty.

We all need that because we all know we've sinned. We have that guilt and we carry that shame. Jesus takes that and that's called justification. Then there is the rest of your life which is called sanctification. Sanctification takes decades upon decades, not days. It is a lifelong process. When you mess up justification and sanctification, the whole picture gets cloudy.

Here's how it gets cloudy. You begin to work FOR God's approval. The prepositions matter here so much they led me to rehab. If you get these prepositions messed up, you won't understand the text, you won't understand the gospel and you'll end up destroying relationships behind bars or in rehab. When you're working for God's approval it's all about guilt. Go, go, go, go go. Do, do, do, do, do. More, more, more, more, more.

My Catholic friends who are honest with me who are here and who I know, you know I love you. You've told me in honest times. This is what your life has been like. Do, do, do, go, go, go, more, more, more. It's because justification and sanctification have gotten confused. Justification is what God does *for* you, in you and begins to do through you. He declares you not guilty.

Then he changes your behavior, slowly. This is called



sanctification, but on this side I work *from* God's approval, not *for* God's approval. He's given me everything in Christ. This is what makes Christianity so profound. In Christ, you have all the riches of God. He is as pleased with me as he is with his Son, because Jesus took all of my sin and gave me all of his righteousness. And in Christ, he's done that for you, too.

So many Christians feel guilt and shame that they need not feel, because of justification Jesus said, not guilty. Now, as you walk it out, yeah, there will be days you stumble and fall and Jesus comes alongside and says, stand up. Let's do it. But here's the difference it makes. Please watch this. I'm going to show you in the text. The man was saved, he was justified. Now watch what flows out of his heart. You'll see it. Verse 33.

Watch this. "And he took them (Paul and Silas) . . ." This guy's brutal. Remember, this guy's a soldier. This guy's a brutal cat, put them in the inner prison and tortured them. 33 "And he took them that very hour of the night and . . ." He did what? He washed their wounds. Cruelty had turned to compassion. This is what Jesus, only Jesus, can do. He takes cruelty and turns it into compassion.

Watch what happens next. ". . . he took them that very hour of the night and washed their wounds, and immediately he was baptized, . . ." All of a sudden, he confesses Christ. He's in community. What was isolation is now community. Not only that, ". . . he and all his household." So he shared Christ with his household. Apparently, he took Paul and Silas home with him. Apparently, this is what Christians do. Because lost people aren't the problem. They're the point.

Community is beautiful. And so we begin inviting people over. Then we're sharing Christ together. Watch what he does. 34 "And he brought them into his house and set food before them, . . ." A selfish dude becomes a servant. This is so amazing. I'll land the plane for you here in a minute. ". . . and he rejoiced greatly, having believed in God with his whole household."

Let me tell you what's happened in American Christianity from my perspective in what I've observed. We watched in the 60s as the sexual revolution happened, as the moral decay declined in America. We decided to build bunkers as Christians, instead of bridges. And that happens all the time. I like being at church. I like the songs. I like everything being the way I like it.

We built bunkers instead of bridges. We saw lost people as the problem not the point. And what happened in that process was we lost focus of the mission. Lost people aren't the problem, they are the point. So what we see is this man -- we tend to focus on people's behaviors alone.

That is, we'll look at democrats or we'll look at people who are different than us or we'll look at white people, we'll look at black people, we'll look at people who are different than us and we just look at behaviors. This happens in our marriages too. If I could only change my spouse, then I'd be happy. Because they do things. There's behaviors I don't like.

We do it with our kids. They're doing things we don't like. We need to change their behaviors. So we'll focus on behaviors and we'll miss the belief system behind the behaviors. Do you know people behave the way they

behave because they believe what they believe. You do what you do because you believe what you believe.

This is astounding to me. I went to rehab and the first question they ask is, Dave, why do you drink? What? Why do you drink? I just drink. I just wake up and drink. No, why do you drink? You see, there's a belief system behind your behaviors. Until that belief system is changed, the behaviors won't change. And the problem is, you don't have the power without Christ in you to change those behaviors. You don't!

It's my Christmas morning principle. You know I spend a good amount of Christmas morning, as my kids open presents, I'll look at the present and I'll see this thing printed on it. "Batteries not . . ."

Congregation: Included.

Pastor Dave: And then I've got to have a whole set of screwdrivers. I have a whole tub of batteries. How many different kinds of batteries do you need? There's a lot of them. I'll spend upwards, some Christmas mornings, six to eight hours putting batteries in and assembling it.

Do you know when you were born, you came -- man I wish we all came with a tattoo or an imprint -- batteries not included. Because of the fall, we were separated from God. You were made *by* God, *for* God to be indwelt by the Spirit of God, and without that power, you can't change behaviors. You see what lost people need is the power that comes from the gospel of Jesus Christ. Christ in you. That Christ has come to live in you.

But once he comes to live in you, he changes everything,

because here's what he does. Do you notice, Paul never once said, dude, you need to be less mean. You were super duper mean to us and you should be less mean. You were cruel to us and you should be kind. You should cuss less. You should do less brutal things. Paul never said that.

What Paul did was share the light of the glory of the gospel. Do you know that God loves you? Because people who know they're loved, guess what they do? They love. Do you know that Christ has forgiven you much? Because people who have been forgiven much, guess what? They forgive much. People who have peace with God, tend to have peace with peaceable people.

See, once that belief system is changed, your behaviors will change. Watch what comes next. I'll just sum it up with this. Verse 35 through 40. It's brilliant because Paul had a get out of jail free card. He was a Roman citizen. He didn't have to be beaten with rods. He didn't have to suffer. But in order to care for the church and put the government on warning, Paul does something amazing here. Beautiful leadership.

It says this. 35 "Now when day came, the chief magistrates sent their policemen, saying, 'Release those men.' 36 And the jailer reported these words to Paul, saying, 'The chief magistrates have sent to release you. Therefore come out now and go in peace.' 37 But Paul said to them, 'They have beat us in public without trial, men who are Romans, and have thrown us into prison; and now are they sending us away secretly? No indeed! But let them come themselves and bring us out.'

38 The policemen reported these words to the chief magistrates. They were afraid when they heard that they

were Romans, 39 and they came and appealed to them, and when they had brought them out, they kept begging them to leave the city."

So Paul suffered so that they might be safe. Paul was beaten so that they might be free to worship Jesus there at Phillippi. And it was beautiful. Because from this day on, nobody in the government messed with the church there and the church was established. In chapter 14, this picture of God's family ends with this.

40 "They went out of the prison and entered the house of Lydia, and when they saw the brethren, they encouraged them and departed." See it's beautiful. It's the beginning of the church at Phillippi. And I don't know if you can see it. He uses the words brethren or brothers and sisters. He went and the church was there. The family of God was there. Who'd have been in that family? It's all in chapter 16. That's all that happened.

We had Lydia and her family and there was meeting in her house. You had is slave girl who had been set free by the power of Jesus. She was probably a little odd, probably a little weird. She had a spirit of divination for all that time. Everybody looked at her weird. Then you had a jailer and his family. Do you see the beautiful diversity that's in this first church?

I don't care which angle you look at it. I don't care. Socioeconomically you had an upper class. Lydia. She was a business owner. Dealt with fine fabrics. The slave girl, lower class. She would have been from the south side, impoverished, needing help. And the jailer, a middle class, blue-collar worker. If you want a personality type them, you

had somebody who was very gentle, somebody who was very brutal and somebody very mental. And they were all together.

If you want to look at their ethnicities or their races, you had an Asian, you had a Greek, you had a Roman and Paul and Silas. You had Jews. Do you see what the gospel of Jesus Christ does for us? This is why the church is the hope of the world, because the church preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ is proclaiming the greatest unifying power this world has ever seen.

That Jesus Christ is able to remove all of our sin past to secure us in the present and to absolutely forgive us for all eternity. So we come in and it doesn't matter. Rich or poor or middle class, red or black or yellow or white, it doesn't matter. The gospel of Jesus Christ removes all those barriers of hostility.

Friends, what the world needs, what America needs, what you need is the gospel. There is no Christian type. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the for everybody because in Christ we can truly be made one and shine that light that the world needs to see. We can actually get along. We can actually love each other in our differences. We actually delight in those differences because Jesus Christ is greater than everything that divides us. Amen?

Let's pray. Father, thank you that you haven't called us to push harder, to try more, to do more, but you've actually called us to simply humble ourselves and believe in Jesus Christ. And that belief system changes our behavior structure. So I pray for those here who don't know you. I know some of my friends don't know you. They've been

fighting against those behavior structures for a long time.

I pray you'd open their eyes to the fact that our belief system has to change and that the gospel is for everybody. There is no Christian type. It doesn't matter if it's Lydia or the slave girl or the jailer. Jesus Christ is for everybody. Jesus Christ can forgive anybody who will come to him and Jesus Christ can give new life.

And so I pray you would allow us, as your body, to rejoice in that fact and you'd allow our light to shine brightly. I pray for those who are in pain today and in suffering, that you would give grace that even though I am where I am, but you have a plan. That you would give grace through that pain that they might see your plan.

Father, would you use Hillside Fellowship to draw many into your kingdom for your glory? In Jesus' name. Amen.

[Ending song]