

Yet have regard to the
prayer of Your servant and
to his supplication, O LORD
my God, ... **1Kings 8:28**

Store In My Heart John 1:14

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

From beginning to end, John's gospel gives focus to the Son of God. As he states near the end of the book, John wrote to instill belief in Jesus as the Son of God. This belief is central to our salvation. Thus, the gospel as recorded by the apostle John is one that we need to give close attention in our study. Slow down and soak in the words John recorded. Consider the context in this useful message.

The miracles, the teaching, even the interaction with Jewish leaders, will help us strengthen our faith in Jesus as Savior. The events of Jesus' final week are very strong proofs that God sent His Son to die for us. God dwelt among us and demonstrated grace while revealing Truth. Keep John's Gospel in your study list.



Prison Break

Bubba Garner

Today is San Jacinto Day! (actually in April, DLH) If you are a transplant to Texas, that may not mean much to you. But to my fellow natives, it is the commemoration of a battle fought 188 years ago today, not far from where you are reading these words. The San Jacinto Monument marks the spot of a conflict that lasted just 18 minutes but secured the independence of Texas from Mexico.

The Bible also speaks about freedom. The Israelites were freed from Egyptian bondage, the exiles returned after 70 years of captivity in Babylon, and people in the First Century were set free from demons and disease. Of course, Jesus came to release the captives from sin and death.

But sometimes our prisons are self-inflicted: either by past or present circumstances, or by the people around us, or by things we don't understand. Where do we find freedom then? Consider Paul and Silas' response from a jail cell in Philippi: *"But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them"* (Acts 16:25).

When the spirit is free, the body cannot be bound. Declare your independence today!

Break free from the prison of worry. *"But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying."* What is prayer but an expression of faith in God? A faith that God hears and can do something about our situation. Think how easily they could have blamed God for where they were. But He brought them there and was not going to abandon them in their hour of need. Their prayer was heard.

Do you have faith in God, no matter how what happens to you? In the Parable of the Sower, the seed on rocky ground believes for a while, but when temptation or persecution or affliction arises, it withers away. Even in things you don't know, understand, or can't explain, put your faith in God. He alone can give you the strength to endure.

Break free from the prison of misery. They were *"singing hymns of praise to God."* Not just singing. Not just hymns. Hymns of praise. They

were just carrying out the command of Jesus to *“rejoice and be glad”* when *“persecuted for the sake of righteousness”* (**Matthew 5:10-12**). And because they did, the jailer himself later *“rejoiced greatly”* (**Acts 16:34**).

Do you have joy in the Lord, no matter your environment? That's what Paul wrote from another prison cell. We can rejoice *“in the Lord”* (**Philippians 4:4**). That doesn't mean there won't be legitimate occasions for grief and mourning and sadness. But none of the losses that produce these feelings can take away what we have in Jesus Christ. How can we be redeemed and so happy in Jesus? Because He *“lovingly guardeth my footsteps and giveth me songs in the night”* (cf. **Job 35:10**).

Break free from the prison of self pity. *“And the prisoners were listening to them.”* Remember, God had called them to preach the gospel in this city (**Acts 16:9-10**). Whatever the consequences, they were going to keep preaching and proclaiming. Their legs may have been hindered by the stocks, but their lips could still pray and sing hymns of praise to God. When the jailer awoke, he fell down before Paul and Silas and asked what he needed to do to be saved. Apparently, he had been listening too. And this prison became the place of new birth and new life.

Can you be an influence, even in temptation, to be self-absorbed? The passages that talk about the importance of our conduct also speak of its impact and influence on others: *“that they may see”* (**Matthew 5:16**), *“as they observe them”* (**1Peter 2:12**), *“anyone who asks you”* (**1Peter 3:15**). People need to see that we do not fall apart when things around us do. Even without words, we can proclaim our hope in something greater than ourselves.

A case of conversion came about because Paul and Silas refused to be imprisoned. Would you be freed? Make today your day of independence. Remember the Lord!

(Bubba Garner works with the Southside Church of Christ in Pasadena, TX. I received this article in a bulletin from a preacher friend, David Cox, in AL. Yes, many congregations still print and mail monthly bulletins, though I get most via email now. I also subscribe to several devotion and encouragement emails from brethren. There is an endless supply of sound Bible teaching from knowledgeable men (and women) to help us in our study of God's Word. What if I left the worldly news feed for an hour each week and used that time to read some of this Bible teaching. Our time is precious, and we need to be God close lest we follow the ways of Jeroboam to our own destruction. **1Kings 12:25-33** DLH)

Contact Us

We like opportunities to speak with others about the Lord.

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For Our Information

John LaValla is still dealing with respiratory issues.

Sue Soliday is still doing physical therapy regularly.

Vickie McNees has been dealing with migraines.

Shannon Soliday went to Indiana last Friday to retrieve their vehicle that was being repaired.

Sunday Evening – **Isaiah 10:20** Wednesday – **John 21**

This is graduation season and it seems many of our families have a relative getting a diploma. Travel season is also coming up, so be careful and pray for one another.



The CHURCH OF CHRIST
MEETS HERE

10:20 AM • Sunday Worship Service
5:00 PM • Sunday Night Bible Study
7:00 PM • Wednesday Bible Study