

## **You And Your Household Will Be Saved**

“Men, what must I do to be saved?” And they answered, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved; you and your household. And they declared the Word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house” (Acts 16:30 to 32).

We see that in these verses, the jailer asked about salvation only for himself. He hadn't asked for his household, but Paul promised him, that if he would believe, not only would he be saved, but all his family as well. This sermon is for those Christians who have members of their family that are not yet saved and serving the Lord. We are all concerned for our families, but we should not become discouraged. We need to be careful to hold on to our own faith, so we can lead them into heaven. If we become discouraged and lose our faith, then we can't help them. Never allow this situation to rob you of your joy found in salvation. As long as we continue to radiate the joy and peace of our salvation, our lives are an ever-present testimony and challenge to other members of our families. The Holy Spirit is the Comforter and Encourager; He does not discourage the children of God. If we have the Holy Spirit within us, then we can call on Him to help us not to feel discouraged about our unsaved kin.

God can impart encouragement to us through the scriptures. ‘For whatever was written in former days [the Old Testament], was written for our instruction, that by endurance and the encouragement drawn from the scriptures, we might have hope. Now may the God Who gives the power of patient endurance and Who gives encouragement, grant you to live in mutual harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus’ (Romans 15:4 & 5).

God promised all the families on the earth would be blessed by Abraham's dynasty (Genesis 12:3; 18:18; Galatians 3:8). The Lord also chose Abraham, firstly because he was righteous, and also because He knew Abraham would teach his family; his children and his household about the Lord, His righteousness and justice (Genesis 18:18 & 19). That teaching by Abraham to his sons and his household, has reached down through hundreds of generations, to us today (Romans 4:13).

Paul wrote this prayer; ‘For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, for Whom every family [dynasty] in heaven and on earth is named’. (Ephesians 3:14 & 15). This verse shows us that there are whole families already in heaven. We humans are not ‘islands’, therefore God likes to place us into families. He said it is not good for us to be alone (Genesis 2:18). It is God's desire for us to be joined to a family, whether biological or spiritual. ‘God places the solitary in families’ (Psalm 68:6). In this instance it could be by marrying into a family, or by joining oneself up into the church family.

When God saved Noah, He also saved his family. ‘And the Lord said to Noah, “Come with all your household into the ark”’ (Genesis 7:1). It was Noah's righteousness before the Lord that made the Lord spare him and his family (Genesis 6:8 & 9). Through the water of the flood, Noah and his family were ‘baptised’ into salvation (1 Peter 3:20). Noah decided to be a righteous father, and his decision saved his family. Joshua was also a righteous father who made the decision to serve the Lord. Joshua also made the decision for his family and his whole household to serve the Lord. ‘As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord’ (Joshua 24:15).

Job was blameless and shunned evil. In other words, he was righteous. He was a real intercessory father to his children. ‘Job sent for them (his seven sons and three daughters) to purify them, for Job said, “It may be that my children have sinned.” Thus did Job at all

times' (Job 1:2 & 5). Job was totally faithful to the Lord in his responsibility to his children. Job had not failed in any way to be the father God expected him to be. Job had done all he could do, as a father for his children. We must not wrongly judge a person if calamity strikes. Job had not failed. He was righteous; he prayed for his children and at the end of the book of Job, we see that the Lord gave him seven more sons and three more daughters (Job 42:10 to 17). In James 5:11, we are told to look at God's purpose in Job's life, and we are reminded of God's compassion and mercy. Job's first ten children simply went ahead of Job to heaven, and the whole family, on Job's death, would have been reunited. Job was a righteous man who decided to serve the Lord.

In the verses we have looked at, it was always the choice of the father of the household to save his family; the jailer, Noah, Abraham, Joshua and Job. They were all fathers and therefore the head of their respective households. The father has the privilege and the responsibility to choose salvation for himself and his family. When fathers refuse to teach their children in the ways of the Lord, they are shirking their God-given responsibility. 'Therefore, you shall lay up My words in your hearts ... and you shall teach them to your children' (Deuteronomy 11:18 & 19).

The responsibility of teaching the children about the Lord lies primarily with the father. The privileges are that the man will be able to bring his children into the Kingdom of God and his home will be full of blessings. He should also live long enough to see his grandchildren. (Psalm 128). God is the Father behind all fathers. God instituted families and makes it clear that the father is the head of the household, but he must not abuse that position (Ephesians 5:23 & 25; 6:4). The family prototype is in heaven, not on earth. The family is the expression of the Fatherhood of God; consequently, God desires to preserve the integrity of the family. That is why the salvation God offers, is a household salvation. The scriptural key to the household salvation, is the father. If the father faithfully fulfils his God-given responsibilities, then he has the privilege of leading his whole family to God's way of salvation.

Righteous fathers must teach their children way of the Lord (Proverbs 22:6; 29:15 & 17). Fathers must teach them, discipline them and pray for them faithfully, and set a Godly example. If fathers are faithful in those things, then no matter what happens, continue to trust God in His mercy and in His faithfulness. We may not see the end of His purposes in this life, but He will be just as faithful to us as He was to Job.

In the case of a widow, the Lord is just as faithful to her in regards to her children and her household, and she can claim the same promises as can the fathers. Single women can also claim salvation for her parents, grandparents, siblings, nieces and nephews etc. If we read the whole story of Rahab (from Joshua 2:1 to 6:25), we see that she was a single woman who ended up becoming part of the dynasty that brought forth our Messiah. That shows the complete forgiveness and mercy with God's blessing upon those who turn to Him. Rahab became an ancestress to David and Jesus (Matthew 1:5). She was not Jewish; she was a Hittite (Joshua 1:4), and she lived out her days in the blessing of the promised land. When the family left Jericho, they took all they had; that is, all their belongings (Joshua 6:22 & 25).

There were just three conditions given to Rahab in regards to salvation of her family; she had to tie the scarlet cord in the window; all of her family had to be in her house at the time of the raid; and she had to remain silent about what the Jews were about to do, or in other words, she had to serve the Lord (Joshua 2: 18 to 21). The scarlet cord was symbolic of the blood of Jesus; just as the children of Israel had to put the blood of a lamb on their

doorposts and lintels (Exodus 12:7). Gathering the whole family together for their sudden departure with everything they owned, was the same as the night the children of Israel all gathered together and left Egypt together with their belongings (Exodus 12:34 to 36 & 38). Rahab had to be silent about what the Jews were doing – she had to serve the Lord – just as the Jews were called to serve the Lord (Exodus 23:25; Deuteronomy 6:13).

By her courage, although Rahab was not married, she brought salvation to her entire family by her faith. She believed in God, she put action into her faith, she made a confession of her faith. God rewarded her abundantly. She married a Jewish man named Salmon and had a son named Boaz. Boaz was the great-grandfather of King David (Matthew 1:5 & 6), and the forefather of Jesus. Rahab's extraordinary faith was given special mention in Hebrews 11:31. In James 2:25 & 26, her righteousness, faith and good works were mentioned again as an example to show us, that faith without good works of obedience is dead faith. See how God's acceptance of this woman, once branded a sinner, was complete. That is how it is with us too. Once we repent and live for God, like Rahab, we and our family can be blessed. She was not content to save only herself, she helped save her entire household. We can also believe for the same thing. The responsibility of bringing the family into salvation rests on the shoulders of the father. Where there is no father, it rests on the mother, or another person who works by faith and love. God sets no limits on what a praying, faithful person can achieve. Even when things are not in the scriptural order that they should be, God has set no limits to faith which works by love.

If you have unsaved family members, keep believing for their salvation. Don't be discouraged; don't give up on them. A wonderful testimony was given to us recently. A woman was faithfully praying for her adult son Ian, who was about 30'ish, single and living in the world. He had no time for the Lord and refused to listen to the Gospel. Ian was stung by several poisonous jellyfish and died later in hospital. His mother continued praying. After Ian died, he met God face to face, repented, returned to earth, was completely healed of the effects of the stings and continues to live to spread the Gospel of salvation. His mother never ceased to pray for her son, even after his death. How amazing is that? Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved, you and your household! Praise the Lord!

Amen and God bless you.

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