

=BIBLE DOCTRINES=

Lesson 10

Baptism

Objects to have:

Some seeds

Flowers or pictures of flowers

A picture of our baptistery

A glass of water

Your Bible, with a marker at Acts 16:25.

Introducing the lesson:

Mary was putting on her favorite dress. She was getting ready to go to Sunday school. Mother looked at Mary after Mary was dressed. Mother said, "Mary, you have gotten taller. Your dress is getting short. One of these days, very soon, we will have to buy a new dress for you." Mary was excited at the thought of a new dress. She couldn't think about it very long, however. It was time to go to Sunday school.

One day during the week Mother said, "Mary, put on your coat; we are going to buy a new dress for you." Mary ran to put on her coat. She went out the door with Mother. They went to a store and found a very pretty dress for Mary. The next Sunday morning Mary put on her new dress; then it was time to go to Sunday school. Mary felt so dressed up in her new dress! Then she put on her coat. She looked in the mirror at herself. She could see her dress hanging below her coat. Mother said, "Mary, you need a new coat, too, don't you? As soon as we can, we will get a new coat for you, also." Mary did not feel quite so dressed up now. She was wearing her old coat over her new dress. When she got to Sunday school, she took off her coat right away. She wanted everyone to see her new dress and not to look at her old coat.

(Hold your seeds in your hand so that the class can see them.) Look at us seeds; we are dry and drab; there is nothing pretty about us. Inside us is something that could become pretty. Not until we are buried in the ground will that something pretty be seen. We have some seed-friends who have been buried in the ground—from them have grown beautiful flowers. (Describe the flowers that would have grown from the seeds to match the flowers or the picture of flowers that you have brought.)

Our story today tells us about something new and wonderful which happened to a man and his family. We will see how they tell about this new and wonderful thing which happened to them.

Telling the story:

Maybe the man was a great big man. Maybe he was tall. Maybe he was big around. Maybe he was strong. Maybe his face had a fierce look on it. The Bible tells us about this man. The Bible does not tell us what he looked like; we can only imagine how he looked. I do know one thing about him, however; I know that he was a sinner because everybody is a sinner. Unless sinners ask Jesus to be their Saviour, they will go to Hell when they die. I know from the story in the Bible that this man had never heard the wonderful news that Jesus could be His Saviour.

You would never guess where this man worked. When he left his home to go to work, he went to the jail. That's right; this man was a jailer. Whenever the judge said to someone, "You need to go to jail; you have been bad," this man, the jailer, would put that person in jail. He would shut the door and lock it. He would assign guards to watch the jail to be sure that the person would not get out. In Bible times if anybody got out of jail and escaped, the jailer himself was supposed to be killed by a policeman for not keeping the bad person in the jail; that was the law.

One day the jailer was at his jail. The policeman was bringing new prisoners to him. The new prisoners were two men. Their names were Paul and Silas. The policeman who brought the two prisoners to the jailer said, "These two men are to be put in the dungeon." The jailer took hold of Paul and Silas; he threw them down through a hole in the floor into the room that was under all the other rooms. He jumped down after them. He put their feet into some round things called "stocks" so that Paul and Silas could not walk around while in jail. Then the jailer locked the stocks so that Paul and Silas could not get out of them. The jailer turned and left the dungeon through an outside door. It was nighttime. The jailer went upstairs. He was sure that all the doors were locked in the jail. Because it was nighttime, he was tired. He fell asleep.

Do you think that Paul and Silas sat in the dungeon and cried? Let me look at my Bible and see. (Look at Acts 16:25.) No, they did not. It says right here in my Bible that they prayed. Paul and Silas had not done anything wrong. The reason they were in jail was that somebody did not like it that they were telling about Jesus. That is the only reason they were in jail. Paul and Silas prayed. Maybe they asked Jesus to watch over them. We can pray and ask Jesus to watch over us. Jesus watches over everybody who loves Him. Maybe Paul and Silas thanked Jesus that many people had been saved. After they prayed, do you think they cried and said, "We want out of this jail"? No, the Bible says that then they sang some songs. (Put down your Bible.)

After they sang, the earth started to shake. People felt like somebody was shaking them. There was no one there to shake them. The earth was shaking anyway. It was shaking so hard that the doors to the jail all opened. It was shaking so hard that Paul and Silas' feet were freed from the stocks. The jailer woke up suddenly! He had felt the earth shake. He heard the doors to the jail clanging open. He thought, "All the prisoners had escaped; I will be killed. Instead of waiting for someone to come to kill me, I will kill myself." The jailer drew his sword out of his sword belt. He started to plunge the sword into his chest. Just then Paul called out, "Do not hurt yourself, Mr. Jailer. Everybody who was in jail is still here."

Can you imagine how surprised the jailer was? I think he could hardly believe his ears. He looked into the jail to be sure that all the prisoners were there. Then he jumped to where Paul and Silas were, and he fell down on his knees in front of Paul and Silas. He said, "Sirs, what do you think I ought to do to escape punishment? These doors have all opened. I did not open them, but my boss won't believe me."

Paul and Silas said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house." The jailer looked at Paul and Silas; he did not understand what they meant.

The jailer said, "I did not understand what you meant. Will you come to my house and talk to me?" Paul and Silas were glad to agree to go to the jailer's house. They loved to tell people about Jesus.

When they got to the jailer's house, the jailer must have called out, "I'm home." His wife and children ran to the door to greet him. He said, "Dear wife and children, sit down; listen to what these men have to say. They are going to tell us something very important, I believe. After a while, I will tell you the strange things that just happened at the jail." The jailer, the mommy of the house, and the children all listened to Paul. Paul told them that they were sinners. Paul told them that all sinners have to go to one place when they die—they can go only to Hell. Paul told them that Jesus does not want anyone to go to Hell. That's why Jesus died on the cross. Everybody who trusts Jesus can go to Heaven when he dies.

The jailer, the mommy, and all the children listened very carefully. When Paul was finished telling the Gospel story, the jailer said, "I want to trust Jesus. Dear wife, do you want to trust Jesus, too? Children, do you want to trust Jesus? The jailer, the mommy, and all the children trusted Jesus as their Saviour that night. Something new had happened to them! Something wonderful had happened to them! Now they were not held by the power of their sins. God would not see their sin anymore. Now they should live a new kind of life. They should live to please Jesus. There was a new nature in them. Just like Mary had a new dress, the jailer and his family had something new—their Saviour. How excited Mary was over her new dress. How excited the jailer and his family were over knowing Jesus as their Saviour. They wanted to tell other people about it.

The first thing anybody should do after getting saved is to want to tell other people what happened to them. You can tell it in many different ways. You could cup your hands around your mouth and go out into the streets and call out, "Everyone, listen to me; now I am saved." You could write letters to your friends and relatives to tell them that you got saved. You could call people on the telephone and tell them that now Jesus is your Saviour. There is one way in which everybody should tell people that Jesus is his Saviour. That one way is to get baptized. The jailer and his family knew about getting baptized. Maybe Paul told them about getting baptized. Maybe Paul said, "Mr. Jailer, the first thing you must do after getting saved is to get baptized." The jailer, the mommy, and all the children said, "We want to be baptized. We want people to know that now we are like new people. We are not like the old people that we were before we asked Jesus to be our Saviour."

Paul said, "Come on now; let me baptize you."

The jailer looked at Paul. He said, "Your back needs to be taken care of first; Silas' back needs help, too. Somebody beat you with a whip before you were put into jail. You both need to have your backs washed and some medicine put on them." The jailer helped Paul and Silas take off their shirts. He washed their backs very carefully. He put medicine on their backs. Then he said, "Now I would like to be baptized."

Paul and Silas and the jailer and his family all went down to the river, I think. They went some place where there was plenty of water. One by one, they went down into the water. Paul dipped them backwards into the water and brought them back up again (demonstrate how a person is baptized). An old, drab, ugly seed is put into the ground; new life comes from it after it is buried. When we are baptized, we are showing everybody that we are like new. Jesus has washed away our sins. We are saved. It is just like we are putting the old "us" into a grave. We do not want to live like we did before—thinking only of ourselves, not being kind, not obeying, not knowing Jesus. We want everybody to know that now we are like new. We get baptized after we ask Jesus to be our Saviour. The jailer and his family were so happy! They were rejoicing that Paul and Silas told them about Jesus and how He could be their Saviour.

Well, the jailer did not put Paul and Silas back into jail. The very next day they were told they did not have to go back to jail. They could leave that city and go on to other places to tell other people about Jesus.

(Show the picture of our baptistery.) This is the pool of water in our church auditorium where people get baptized. The ladies and the girls come out into the baptistery this way; the boys and the men come out into the baptistery this way.

They have changed into robes so that their regular clothes won't get wet. After they go down into the water, one of the preachers puts them under the water—baptizing them. Then they go back to the room where they can take off the wet robe, get dry, and put on their own clothes again.

(Tell about your getting baptized—where you were and when it was. Emphasize again to the children that getting baptized does not help a person to go to Heaven; asking Jesus to be our Saviour is how we get to go to Heaven. We get baptized only after we have asked Jesus to be our Saviour. Pick up the glass of water; with your finger tips sprinkle a little water on someone's head, then ask the class if having water sprinkled on one's head means that he is really getting baptized. No, it does not. That could never show that a person who has asked Jesus to be His Saviour has buried the old life and now wants to live a new kind of life—he wants to get rid of the old ways.)

LET'S LEARN OUR BIBLE VERSE: Acts 16:31 and 33, "*And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house....And he...was baptized, he and all his, straightway.*"