

Human nature is so created that we cant help getting excited abt. certain events. I can think of many such events that have down through the years have excited me and I am sure you have simular situations in mind. And since human nuture has not changed much in 2000 yrs I am quite sure suce was the case in the first century. As a matter of fact many such accounts are described in the Book of Acts and one such event is the center of our scriputre this mosrning. The account is recorded in Acts 16.....

When Paul and silas entered into this city they entered into a historic place. There great battle of Phillippi had been fought ~~in~~ the yr 42 Bc This battle pited the forces of (Brutus) and (Cacassus) aganist the forces of (Octavain) and (Mark anthony) and I dare say its out come was still being felt in the days of Paul Philippiin visit. But these men as facmous as they were in Roman History were eclips ~~in~~ Christian history with the name of (Lydia.) She of course was a wealthy progressive business minded woman who recieved gladly the good news of jesus christ and recieve him as her Lord and Savior Then there was a ^{2.} (diminted little girl) who followed them all ~~88288~~ over town shouting out degrorotor statemtnts. It seemed that several ^{3.} (wealthy business) had exploted this littles girls gift of fortune telling and They were using her tallents to make certain investment which of course netted large profits.

Well, Paul grew tired of the insutls and ~~88288~~ turned and heled the girl of here malidity and becasue of this she recieved jesus christ but in the healing she alos lost her unsual talent therefore this girl was no longer of use to the business men. So according to scritpure these men retaliated by stirring up the crowd and falsely accusing Paul and silas of distrubing the pease. They were placed in a philippian jail cell. Its at this point that my story begins.

I would like to tell you excatly what happened to me during ~~those~~ my encouter with the Apostle Paul. Its a magnificate story of how a common jaile keeper ~~880~~ discovered to his utter amazement that he wasx the biggest prisoner of all and how he obtained his freedom....

It all began when the one called the Apostle to the Gentiles came to visit our town. He brought with him a fantastic story of one that had been put to death for the sins of the world and then rose again on the 3 day in order that he might save men from their sins. (Whatever that meant) I know about their story because people were saying things all over town and these two religious fanatics were telling people about an unbelievable story. You at first these men were not really causing too big of a stir in our town. As a matter of fact they were not reaching any large number of people and if it were not for the healing of the deminted little girl I probably would never have met them.

I remember the night well, for I was just about ready to close down and head for home to spend a quiet evening with my family when all of a sudden I hear the clink and clamor of soldiers feet. Of course the soldiers were not an uncommon sound to me because we were located on the fringe areas of his majestic empire and he kept plenty of soldiers around in order to deter any foreign attacks but mixed in with those familiar sounds were sounds of an angry mob. The soldiers and crowd turned the corner and as they came in closer I saw two men being ~~777777888~~ literally pushed and shoved by the crowd and soldiers. The men had been beaten and it looked to me on first examination that they might be near death.

The centurion in charge told me to put them under maximum confinement and to guard them with my life. ⁴ So with that order I took these men down into the ~~enter~~ dungeon which was a low and wet slimy kind of place I took each man and chained him myself so as to make sure they were well secured and to ensure ~~88~~ safety and to let them know who was boss I put a few whip marks on them myself. Then to reassure my dominance I cried out if you men tire to escape from this cell I'll have your heads

It was then that the one called Paul caught my eye and to my utter amazement he showed no trace of fear or hatred. He simply said, Its not

my sword into my body I heard the one that was called Paul cry out...
 DO THY SELF NO HARM FOR WE ARE ALL HERE...and it was at that moment in
 my heart that one terror was exchanged for another. I realized that the
 Lord who shook the earth was now shaking me. I wondered what was going
 on I was bewildered and I returned to the word saved.. It was the word they
 had used in their prayers and it meant to heal or restore..

You know even before this event I had thought about the creator behind
 this designed universe I looked up at the stars and like the philosopher
 knew there had to be more behind this life than mere death....
 Why I had looked into the eyes of men no longer in this world alive one
 minute and dead the next and I wondered if that was really all there was to
 this life. I wondered many times what it would be like to face up to a
 God with all my unconfessed sins riding on my back. I really felt there was
 more to life than all this trouble pain and agony that we experience in this
 life.

The Christians were saying man was created in God's image and he is important
 to God. If a man is created in God's image I thought would he not become more
 like his God each day. Would he not begin to conform to his God and leave
 the world behind as he matured in the faith. I would see a difference in these
 They able to demonstrate a faith that I've never seen before and in my jail
 cell they were talking to their God as if he really cared and was listening
 to their every word. And in their prayers that had used the word save to be
 saved or healed. and I wondered then if it could be that God was not only
 creator of all this but also its physical... Could it be that he could really
 heal me of all my sinfulness....Could it be that God really wanted me to
 find the answers to life...Could it be that God really loved me that much..
 Could it really be that in a common jail could find salvation.

As these thoughts were rushing through my mind my anxious hands
 grabbed hold of a light and I ran down into that inter-dungeon fell on my knees

and cried our OH, WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED....

You know I can still remember there answer... It seemed so simple even then... I guess I had expected some type of good works program beginning with there escape but they said simply believe in the Lord jessu christ and thou shalt be saved...

Well, I didnt understand it all and I gess i still dont all I know is that I traded a lost bewildered confused life for the security in the Lord jeus christ. I was accepting one that had paid the price for my sins and I was getting a new life in return. so I gave him my life as I confessed my sins to him. Jesus christ came into my heart that nite and it was the greatest moment of my life. In fact my entiere house whole became crhsitian and....becasue of my experience.

But the greatest change took place within my own life.. The first thing I really noticed was that I began to care abt other people. I had seen men beaten, cut and toughted and even killed and didnt make much difference..you kinda get use to that after you have been around it so much...but all of a sudden I noticed that these men were hurt so I began to bath their wonds and praing with every ounce of my being that God would heal their phyiscial wounds...

But you kknow the apostle paul was always pround of those scard He called them the marks of the lord jesus christ and I wuldered if these mars were placed on his body by some body just like me. I learned that this was a man so possed ~~88888888~~ so possessed by jesus christ that he could love ~~888888~~ even those that ~~8888~~ had hurt him. When paul wrote to us a phillippi later he said i thankl God for ever remembrance of you and i convinced he could look on his body and see some of those scars I put there with my whip....But i thank God that he took the time to show a jailer how to be set free... I came to know csrist as my lord and savior that nithe and the fact of my story simply says that anybody can be free when they place their life in jesus hands.. You know this might be your time...God may have arranged this whole thing for your benifit... It just meigh be your will be fee this eveing as you come to know more abt jesus.