
PRAISING GOD IN THE MIDNIGHT HOUR

Acts 16:16-34

1. Paul and Silas **RESISTED** the evil spirit which resided in the slave girl.

Acts 16:16-19—Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling. ¹⁷ This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, “These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation.” ¹⁸ And this she did for many days. But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.” And he came out that very hour. ¹⁹ But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to the authorities.

- A. She was a fortune teller.
- B. She was aware of “the Most HIGH God”.
- C. She was delivered from the evil spirit.

2. Paul and Silas were **IMPRISONED** for causing “trouble” in the city.

Acts 16:20-24—And they brought them to the magistrates, and said, “These men, being Jews, exceedingly trouble our city, ²¹ and they teach customs which are not lawful for us, being Romans, to receive or observe.” ²² Then the multitude rose up together against them; and the magistrates tore off their clothes and commanded them to be beaten with rods. ²³ And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely. ²⁴ Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

- A. They were beaten with rods.
- B. They were thrown into prison.
- C. They were chained.

3. Paul and Silas began to praise God in the **MIDNIGHT** hour.

Acts 16:25-34—But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. ²⁶ Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone’s chains were loosed. ²⁷ And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself. ²⁸ But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, “Do yourself no harm, for we are all here.” ²⁹ Then he called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. ³⁰ And he brought them out and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” ³¹ So they said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.” ³² Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. ³³ And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized. ³⁴ Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household.

Hebrews 13:15—Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.

- A. The prisoners listened to Paul and Silas praising God.
- B. There was an EARTHQUAKE which opened the doors and broke the chains.
- C. The frightened jailer fell on his knees and prayed the sinner’s prayer.
- D. The saved jailer invited Paul and Silas to be guests in his home.

4. Have you ever had a “midnight hour” experience?

A. The midnight hour of spiritual WARFARE:

Ephesians 6:10-13—Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

B. The midnight hour of worry and fear:

Philippians 4:6-7—Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; ⁷ and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

C. The midnight hour of physical and emotional pain:

Ephesians 5:17-20—Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸ And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹ speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, ²⁰ giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ:

D. The midnight hour of UNCERTAINTY:

Proverbs 3:5-6—Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.

5. What to do in your “midnight hour”:

Acts 16:25-34—But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.

In the midnight hour, Paul and Silas chose to:

- A. Praise not sleep
- B. Pray not POUT
- C. Sing hymns..... not the “blues”
- D. Worship God..... not CURSE or question Him
- E. Encourage others not discourage others
- F. Connect with God not run away, turn from, or REJECT Him

QUESTIONS FOR SMALL GROUPS

1. Read Acts 16:16-34 out loud. What are the significant moments in this story?
2. If Paul and Silas were treated this way today (refer to Acts 16:20-24) and it was caught on video, what might have happened to the court officials and police officers?
3. In Acts 16:30, the jailer asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” Scholars have debated whether this was a question of salvation from sin or one of avoiding punishment from the jailer’s overseers. What do you think?
4. Share a “midnight hour” experience that you have had in the past. How did God help you through it?