

8-1-21 But Midnight

Acts 16:25-40.

Paul and Silas were in a place that they did not deserve. They arrived in Philippi, joined up with a prayer service, witnessed about Jesus Christ, which led to Lydia and her household becoming born-again. Sometime after that they were off to prayer and the attack of Satan began. A slave girl that was demon possessed came against them. Paul set her free from this demon in the name of Jesus Christ. The men that were making profits off her took Paul and Silas before the leaders in the town. They were accused and beaten without trial or even allowed to give a statement. After they were beaten, they were put into the inner part of the prison and their feet were placed in stocks.

That is the definition of a bad day. Anyone ever have a day like that? If you were Paul and Silas, where would you head be at? What if you were in a foreign country and something like his happened, what would be your response? As Americans we would want to be put into contact with someone from the embassy to help us, right? Many of us would be telling others that we are Americans.

Well let's look at Paul and Silas' response and what we can learn from them. Currently, we are seeing a shift in mob rule mentality. If you say something that goes against the program or they find something you said, you get canceled. That's one of the statements that one of the teenagers said on our way back from camp. I wonder who did something and has gotten canceled for it.

Read Acts 16:25.

All that was done to them, and God's Word says, **"But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God...."**

I. How will/do you respond when the bottom falls out?

- Do you have someone with you today that knows you well. Look at them, and say, "how do I respond when the bottom falls out?" Now don't answer each other, just ask, and allow a moment of awkward silence.
- How will/do you respond when trouble comes, or unfair treatment happens? What about persecution?
- What does **verse 25** say the Paul and Silas did? Prayed, Sang And worshipped...who did they do this for or to? (God)
- One thing is Pho-Sho, we will ALL experience midnight times of life. There will be plenty of times in this life when we will not experience fair treatment. You, maybe lucky enough to be misrepresented, misunderstood, talked about, and assigned intent by others.
- If that happens you are in good company, the same things were done to Jesus and His followers.
- Scriptures are given to us to bring us comfort, but also give us insight on what we are to do when things do happen.
- Today, lets make a stand, when the bottom falls out, let's keep God as our focal point.

II. How you/we respond will get the attention of others.

- **Read verse 25b-26**
- Who was listening to them? (Prisoners)
- We can either draw people in or turn them away.
- God was also listening and in His perfect timing sends in a what? (earthquake)
- An earthquake that either the walls or roof fall in?
- An earthquake that only opens prison doors and loosens chains?
- This was a Hallelujah earthquake. Can you imagine the scene?
- **Read verse 27. "...supposing the prisoners fled..."** Umm hello?! I would have been gone! He would have supposed right!
- But they didn't, why was that, because of the power of God, that was ushered in by two of God's servants humble and faith response to what had happened.

III. When unmerited grace is given, miracles happen.

- **Read verses 27-31.**
- The jailer woke up and believed everyone had escaped and planned to take his own life. Commentaries said that when a jailer lost someone from prison, they were given the punishment that the prisoners were charge with. I am sure there were some charged with murder in there.
- What was Paul's response in **verse 28**?
- How many were still in the prison with the doors open and chains off? (ALL)
- How many prisoners would have stayed, let alone would be concerned with the jailer's wellbeing? He wasn't innocent. He was part of the corruption.
- He didn't even realize that Paul and Silas weren't the prisoners, it was him. They were right with God and nothing in this life could take that away.
- God allowed/ or placed them to be placed in prison for him...what is or could be happening in your life right now or in the future, that God allowed or placed in it, to reach someone else?
- The Jailer didn't deserve grace! He deserved death and punishment.
- **Read verse 29.** What was his response to unmerited grace given to him?
- It led to him asking the most important question that man can ask.
- **Read verse 30. "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"** Notice he called them, "Sirs" they were from being rebellious, troublemakers, to being called "master."

- He asked the very question that all of God's followers train and look for. Imagine, what would you do if someone asked you today or this week that very question?
- Many are searching for the answer to this very question. They might act like they aren't, but they are. Guess what? Some of them might be enemies of yours. Like the jailer, they don't deserve grace. Guess who else didn't deserve unmerited grace? You!
- That is why we must be careful of our holy roller soap boxes, how we can get caught up in hating, I am sorry, we don't hate, we strongly dislike, others, and their lifestyles...i.e., sins.
- What was Paul's answer, **verse 31? "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household"**
- Everyone is still in the prison hearing the truth of the gospel. The irony of it all. Doors wide open, chains loosened, jailer is preoccupied, and they are all sitting still, hearing the gospel.
- **Read verses 32-35.**
- Notice the change in the Jailer, he took them out of the prison, into his home, Paul and Silas spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. The jailer washed out their wounds, were baptized, fed from the jailers table, and rejoiced in the new life he had.
- What a picture of repentance!

Conclusion

I don't know what you are facing but I know that God allowed it or sent it. He is Sovereign, nothing happens without Him knowing and permitting it.

Could He be trying to reach you, build your faith in Him, instead of yourself?

Could He be reading you for what lies ahead?

Will you be found in a crisis praying, singing, worshipping God?

Will you be able to be used to answer the greatest question anyone can ask? "What must I do to be saved?" Nothing, there is nothing you can physically do, Jesus did it all, trust in Him.

Have you placed your faith and trust in Jesus? Just like the jailer, God wants you too. He could be working in your life or someone else's to grab your attention.