

Acts 16:11-40 Songs at Midnight

Intro: How open are you to being led by the Lord?

A) How do you do with change – midstream?

B) When you Get direction – You go – asking God to bless as you charge

1) How do you respond when God throws you a curve ball or When God puts up a road block?

C) When those sort of things happen to us – they can be rather challenging – discouraging.

Paul the Apostle knew all too well what that was like.

A) We saw in our study last time from there Paul desired to go to Ephesus – it was a good plan.

B) He is forbidden by the HS – not once but Twice – God said no – Not Yet { **Kept Knocking Plodding**

Well with Paul God finally said – Go! {New Direction

A) Came in the form of a vision a man from Macedonia – come and help us

B) Paul's response **V.10 Immediately** – Best response

1) God calling you to Ministry or deal with an area of compromise or respond to a need

C) Respond immediately – Longer you wait the greater the chance – talked out of it

RD V.11-12

Philippi was a Roman colony which meant that it was ROME AWAY FROM ROME.

A) Roman colonies were usually strategic centers.

B) In these colonies Rome planted little groups of **army veterans** who had completed their military service.

C) They wore the Roman dress, spoke the Roman language

1) and though they lived on foreign soil they were expected to be loyal to Rome,

2) to obey the laws of Rome and give honor to the Roman emperor.

D) In return they were given certain political advantages, one of which was exemption from taxes.

1) This was their reward for leaving their homes in Italy and settling in a distant land.

2) Philippi was that Kind of Place!

13 And on the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made; and we sat down and spoke to the women who met there. 14 Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. Purple dye had to be gathered drop by drop from a certain shell fish was so costly that to dye a pound of wool with it would take the equivalent of about \$300.00

Lydia was a wealthy lady {Business woman

The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul. 15 And when she and her household were baptized, she begged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." So she persuaded us.

A) Sabbath day – No Synagogue – 10 men

B) Meetings were held outside by the sea or a river

1) Paul and his companions head down to the river and they find a group meeting.

C) Finds Women's Prayer group -

D) I don't know about you but I probably would have been prone to say **this isn't it – looking for a man. 1) This was a Divine Appointment**

E) HOW MANY OF US WOULD HAVE MISSED IT!

Paul's flexibility challenges me!

A) I have personally found -God moves one way and get us to the place where he wants us.

B) Oregon, Courson, Corvallis, Silverton, Salem – Corvallis

16 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.

She was demon possessed and the demon empowered her to tell peoples fortunes.

Kent Hughes “ She was a clairvoyant owned by spiritual pimps who sold her metaphysical powers.”

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.

Interesting that What this girl was saying was absolutely true.

A) They were servants of the most high God – they were proclaiming the

way of Salvation.

B)Wherever they went, she attracted attention to their work.

1))The missionary team could easily have reasoned,
“•She’s telling the truth. Why not let her speak? We would never get crowds like this on our own. Besides, maybe as she associates with us, she will see the light.•”

C)So what was the problem?

1)Ungodly alliance – Mixing Christianity with the World.

This was clearly Satan’s strategy:

A)To derail the gospel by infiltrating it, by forming an apparent alliance with Christ’s work.

B)He loves to distort the gospel just enough to twist it into a deadly heresy.

1)Or to weaken it enough as to create – Christians who’s lives are so cluttered by the world –

C)Their witness and impact is weakened greatly.

Paul understood the danger of being linked with her and finally – rebuked the Demon to come out of her.

A)In doing so – Paul created a major Problem with her Masters – **cutting off their income.**

B)Paul was hitting their Pocket book

RD V.19-24

Richard Collier, the historian of the Salvation Army,

“Persecution was great from the beginning.... Gangs frequently hurled mud and stones through the windows at the preaching and the crowd. Belise
The liquor dealers worked hard to have Booth kicked out of East London.

Wouldn't that be something!

The police were no help; in fact, they often broke up outdoor meetings and accused Booth's followers of being the cause of all the trouble.... Beatings were not uncommon: in 1889, at least 669 Salvation Army members were assaulted—some were killed and many were maimed.

So they were brutally beaten for their faith - Again!

A)When was the last time you were... I remember a time

B)I have been laughed at – few parties I wasn't invited to. A few funerals were people looked at me like they wanted to kill me.

Beaten and thrown into Prison.

A)These prisons were rotten places not like some of the country club prisons we have today - **tennis courts – gyms- cable tv**

B)Rat infested, germ infested; stinky places - stench was unbearable

C)The fact that their wounds had not been washed put them at great danger in that germ infested dungeon

1)So there they were : Backs beaten, blood dried; clothes stuck,, far away from home, family, friends, -

D)What happens next is astounding

RDV.25-26

Incredible thing singing in the midnight hour!

A)Question: What were they doing before that?

B)I don't want to read too much into the text but it seems to me that there is **a gap between –the time arrested beaten, imprisoned , SINGING!**

C)What was going on during that time?

1) Me – complaining – how come God / Depressed / Doubting – maybe that vision wasn't from God. – Bad Pizza

D)Silas – Paul look at the mess you got us into – couldn't leave the girl alone

Am I trying to make Paul seem less Spiritual? Yes and No

A)Trying to make him seem human

B)See often our hero's are not human – we read a passage like this - think – I am a Loser!

1)L on my forehead – My problems are nothing like Paul's I am not singing!

C)This is the point: **Maybe they didn't start singing right away- But it is never too late to start!**

1)Maybe in your prison cell – been depressed, complaining – confused –

D)You can Start singing – Start Praising – today!

David the man after God's own heart – Psalms – Crying out – Hear my complaint – Lord overwhelmed – Lord Kill my enemies

This is what has to happen – there has to come a moment of truth

A)When you don't understand what is happening it is good to fall back

on what you do know – what you do understand –

B) Worship is a great reinforcement of that

V.25 Says the Prisoners listened to

A) Word "*listened to*" in Greek = listened intently - listening to lyrics no doubt wondering about this man Jesus these guys were singing about

B) They were used to hearing cursing, complaining, pain staken cries - they are used to hearing that - but singing?

C) I'm sure the other prisoners hearing this wondered - who are these guys –

1) What kind of men would sing in such conditions?

I want to answer that question this morning? What kind of men/ women sing in such conditions?

Three ideas

#1 Men who still believe that God is still on the throne.

A) Paul and Silas Knew their lives were being ordered by the Lord.

B) Even in those adverse conditions they had a confidence that their king was ruling over the whole situation of their lives.

C) Since he was allowing this there had to be a reason.

In the Hard times the Believer in God has to fall back on what He knows – That God is faithful.

A) That Jesus promised – “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”

Hebrews 13:5

B) That God says “He causes all things to work together for Good to those who love Him and are called according to His purposes.” Romans 8:28

C) Sometimes the greatest thing that we can do in those situations for our faith is to declare those truths – Verbalize it – Power in the spoken word

D) One of the greatest ways to Verbalize those truths is in Praise!

What kind of men sing under such circumstances?

#1 Men who still believe that God is still on the throne.

#2 Men who realize their trial is producing something of eternal value.

Paul & Silas singing in the Jail was a sign of their maturity in the Lord !

A) You will never know how far along in the maturity process you are until you get beaten up

B) Trials neither make us nor break us - They reveal what is on the inside of us

1) it gives an opportunity to see how much the Lord has accomplished in your life

C) It's not the expected trial that reveals where you're at.

1) “It's the one that sneaks up behind you that shows what's really going on inside.”

D) Been rightfully said - *Christians are like tea bags - we'll never know our flavor until we are in hot water*

James 1:2,3

“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.”

E.) Note he is not saying to rejoice for sufferings - that would be insane!

1) But to rejoice in our sufferings/ produces something

And it is in those times of suffering/ in those times when we are really going thru the fire that the world watches us the closest

A) Lets see what they are really made of now!

In those times when we have the greatest opportunity to shine for the Lord !

B) In fact the very reason why the Lord allowed Paul & Silas to be thrown into prison was because of the affect they would have on the Jailer & prisoner

C.S. Lewis says, "*Most frequently spoken word in heaven will be **oh** - oh, now I understand reason oh, now see God' s plan*"

Living above our circumstances means that we have learned to look beyond that which is seen to that which is unseen !

A) Paul writing in 2 Corinthians ch. 4 – a chapter where he speaks about his suffering –times of affliction

B) This was definitely one of those times – Paul closed the chapter with these words

2 Corinthians. 4:17, 18 “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, we do not

look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen **are temporary**, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

Men who have learned to live above their circumstances are those who are fully aware – that there is a difference between that which is temporary & that which is eternal.

A) Before we look at the third trait of men who can sing under such circumstances let's note what Happened to the Jailer.

V.27-31

Earthquake - We are all here!

What must I do to be saved? Great question

John Taylor Smith, was the honorary chaplain to Queen Victoria and the chaplain general of the British Army during World War I, Chaplain Smith used to ask all the candidates for the chaplaincy one question:

“•Now, I want you to show me how you would deal with a situation -. We will suppose I am a soldier who has been wounded on the field of battle. I have three minutes to live and I am afraid to die, because I do not know Christ. Tell me, how may I be saved and die with the assurance that all is well?•” 3 minutes or less

If the applicant began to beat about the bush and talk about the true Church and ordinances and so on, the good Chaplain would say, “•**That will not do. I have only three minutes to live. Tell me what I must do.**•”

And as long as Chaplain Smith was Chaplain-General, unless a candidate could answer that question, he could not become a chaplain in the Army. •

Chaplain Smith was right—a gospel that cannot save a dying man is no gospel. A gospel that initially requires more than faith alone is no gospel.

The Philippian jailer was saved that night by faith.

As He grew He learned what it meant to live for Jesus
- He actually caught on quick

RD Acts 16:31-34 Note v.31 again

A)There are many who say that this passage tells us that if the parents in a home are saved then it automatically means that their whole household will be saved.

B)But in fact if read carefully this passage REFUTES such an argument.

1)Children cannot be saved simply because their parents are saved, nor are infants or unbelieving children to be baptized.

B)Note this “Household Salvation” has NO basis in the Word of God.

The **promise** of salvation was to all of the jailer’s household (v. 31);

the preaching was heard by all the household (v. 32);

all the household **were baptized** (v. 33);

but it was because all the household **believed** (v. 34)!

Now Perhaps you are hear today & as you are listening to this you are thinking I am not beaten up / but I have been beaten down! / by my family

A)Beaten down by the world/ on the Job/ in my marriage /

E)Listen there is hope for you today ! This jailer was beaten down just like you !

1) Roman law decreed that prison guards were to serve the sentence of any prisoner who escaped

So when this jailer was awakened by the earthquake and saw all the prison doors open he thought all the prisoners had escaped

A) He was about to do himself in when Paul yelled *we are all still here !*

B) **Responded** *What must I do to be saved*

C) That night He believed along with his whole family – they were all saved!

1) I Love this the Lord couldn't get his attention by the worship of Paul & Silas so He sends an earthquake !

D) The lengths the Lord will go to bring someone into the Kingdom!

What will it take for you – to believe – Earthquake ?

A tragedy? – Believe the word spoken today.

Know this if you are beaten up like Paul & Silas God will work thru you to bring others to Himself !

A) If you are beaten down like the Philipian Jailer God will work **for you** to bring you to Himself !

B) Whether you are beaten up or beaten down you can rejoice because **Satan has been beaten back !**

What kind of men can sing in such circumstances ? #3 Men who remember their king was beaten for them and why ?

A) We need to remember this ! –

B) Paul spoke of the privilege of being a partaker of the fellowship of Christ suffering.

C) Paul was willing to suffer for Christ because he was acutely aware that Jesus suffered for Him.

Isaiah 53:4-6

Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted.

*5 But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the **LORD** has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.*

**C) Satan has been beaten back because the back of Jesus was beaten !
By whom? By the Father !** But why ? Isaiah tells us

Isaiah 53:10

**“Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him;
He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin,
He shall see His seed.”**

D) Because of what His beating accomplished – Seed – offspring – Life – fruit

Said of Jesus Hebrews 12:2

**.....who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross,
despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of
God.**

**So if you are beaten down today by your Job / by a relationship that
isn't working out / money that is not coming in**

We can rejoice today because:

God is on the Throne!

The trial is producing something in us and in eternity.

Because Jesus was beaten for us.

Pray: