

Get music stories for singing

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## MIDNIGHT IN THE PRISON AT PHILIPPI

Acts 16:16-36

### INTRODUCTION:

In our night scenes from the Bible, we look at a situation that took place at midnight. To these men, midnight was not a definite moment at all. Midnight is never a stopping place. It was time transfigured. Praise and prayer were strange sounds to be heard at midnight, in the heathen prison at Philippi. The two men whose voices broke the silence of the hour were in a sad condition to sing. But their song was loud from the deepest and darkest dungeon of the prison - that all who had been confined - as if all were prisoners. They kept on singing. And all the prisoners were awakened to the shrieks and the groans in that dark place. Never before had the unhappy inmates been disturbed at midnight by the sound of praise and prayer. But these two men are traveling and they are traveling in the spirit of the hymn - we are marching through Immanuel's ground, to fairer worlds on high. Midnight, that deadly hour, that most terrible hour - and they were singing while they suffered.

Who were these two men<sup>7</sup> that drew the attention of all the prisoners at that hour of night. How come they are in such a place. The day before they had been down by the river bank, in a quiet place outside the city wall, talking with a company and telling them about Jesus and the way of salvation. They were doing nothing to excite or disturb the peace of the city. They were only ministering to the sorrowing and bringing rest to the weary heart, and answering the solemn questions. That were placed before them.

Zena ~~Q.W.~~<sup>11</sup> once said that if we would take the Lord's work seriously, and preach the Gospel, and get this world back on its feet again, the redeemed will have to first get on their knees.<sup>11</sup> We must match with our sacrifices the suffering that Christians are put through today.

We can outline this story in the following way.

I. A Slave Of Sin - V. 16-19.

II. Stripes - V. 19-24.

III. Singing - V. 25.

IV. Shaking - V. 30-39. 26-

V. Salvation - V. 30-39.

*The Power Bank - in Christ at River side  
- Lydia professor Faith in Christ at River side  
2nd miss journey - enters city  
The crowded streets city of phillipi  
" crowded jail*

I. SLAVE

V, 16 In V. 16 through 19, while these men were thus employed in spreading the Gospel - there was the cry of a poor slave girl who was held in (double) bondage by her human masters and by the demons of darkness.

This maiden who is possessed of an evil spirit, was a fortune teller. And a few men saw an opportunity to make money by using her. So they formed a syndicate and bought her time and talents and made money with them. Yes, men will do anything for

V-17 money. Satan was the one that possessed her. And when he saw Christianity spreading - he decided to hinder these preachers. Therefore, they went to prayer meeting - crying out, these men are servants of the most high God. Which show unto us the way of

salvation. In their minds, Satan wanted the people to associate the preachers with this slave girl - this maid. And with this sort of influence, it would discourage people from listening to these preachers. Now these, Paul put up with this as long as he could and he went to this girl and with God's forgiving power which was his,

V, 18 he spoke to the evil spirit. " I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ, come out of her. Immediately the spirit came out - for no Devil can withstand the powerful name of Jesus. What happened next concerning this slave girl. Her masters saw that they

V, 19 could no longer make money out of the girl, and they were furious. You touch some

*any girl in your life you work to eliminate her name*

V.20 men's pocketbooks and they will almost kill you. So these men rushed out and they caught Paul and Silas and brought them before the rulers. It seems that Timothy and Luke escape.

But Christ delivered the unhappy slave from the spiritual torments. So her masters were no longer able to make gain, no longer could use her for an opportunity for profit, they layed hands on these two peaceful strangers and hurried them back into the city. They gathered a crowd about them in the marketplace and charged them with causing the turmoil which themselves alone had excited.

V.21/ The men said to the rulers - these Jews have caused trouble in the city. They are teaching things that we Romans ought not to observe. They did not say that these men are taking away our income. They did not even mention the slave girl as long as their wicked business was not harmed. They cared nothing about the Roman customs. Now that the money had stopped coming in, they seemed concerned. The Devil works the same way today. If you can't find anything against the preacher, the Devil pumps up some false charge. *Too old - or too young - False Talk -*

And a large crowd had gathered by this time and these wicked men were spreading lies about the preachers. And they created a mob.

II. THE STRIPES - V. 22 -

V.22 Now the magistrates listened to these idol men as they cried with many voices. These two men were given no opportunity to defend themselves or to speak and explain what they had done.

The magistrates were drawn into the brawl - they were great sticklers for order and they wanted to restore quiet in a hasty process.

V. 23 Paul and Silas were there upon denounced without any delay or without any inquiry or questioning. They were guilty of the disturbance. And they accordingly commanded them to be taken from the hands of the rebels and striped and scourged by the public executioner in the market places. Their garments were torn off. They were thrown violently upon their faces on the ground. Their hands and feet were held down by strong and cruel men. While others beat with blow after blow upon the naked backs with tough and flexible rods of elm. That tore the flesh and drew blood at every stroke.

If they had tried to speak or ask for a hearing of the magistrates, they would have been ~~seized~~ by the hair of their head and their faces ground into the dust. The heartless men looked on with eager eyes. And shouted savage applause while the blows fell thick and fast upon the quivering flesh. The sight of blood, the suffering of the victims, roused the passions of the crowd with pitch excitement. Such exhibitions were always witnessed with delight, in the Roman towns. And the magistrates by condemning these had pleased the people. With the sight of torture and with blood.

Their backs were soon a bloody mass. They were so weak they could not stand up. And from this point, they were thrown into prison and jail, in order to keep them safe. He took them into the inner prison. Their feet and hands were put in the stocks. And left them there to suffer through the night.

These executioners were weary. With giving many blows. Their rods were dripping with blood. And the poor men had to be lifted to their feet and escorted off to jail. V. 23.

V. 24 - The magistrates sent a solemn charge to the jailer. At the peril of his life to keep his captives safely. Being taken in at the main gate, they were led

through the crowd of prisoners in the outer court, they were seen by all - bruised, bleeding, and lacerated, and their bodies covered with dust.

This was a horrible place, common criminals. And they took them into the deepest recesses of the prison. And let them down into a damp, cold dungeon. The jailer descended after them and layed them on their inflamed and tortured backs, on the stone floor. Stretched out their feet and hands - and fastened them down between strong blocks of wood or timbers. So that they could not rise or relieve themselves by changing their position. Thus bound and secured, the jailer left them. He neither gave them water to help the burning thirst, nor did he give them any medication for their painful wounds. He climbed up out of the dungeon and the iron covering crashed down behind him upon the stone floor over their heads - like the fall of a millstone on the pavement.

They were there for the night - suffering hunger, thirst, cold, and torture in the darkness that was so deep - that they could not tell whether it was day or night.

Such was the reception given the first missionaries Who crossed over to Europe from Asia - to proclaim glad tidings of salvation. They came to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, comfort the sorrowing, and they were striped of their garments. And scourged in the market place.

They came to proclaim liberty to the enslaved millions. Who were bound in the dungeon of sin. They came to bring light into the hearts and homes of all men. And they were imprisoned in utter darkness. They brought a message from Heaven - which has been for ages the source of power to the mightiest and the most enlightened nations of the earth. But now they are treated as if they are robbers and deceivers of mankind.

So today the world crowns its worst enemies - and crucifies its greatest benefactors.

So hard it is even now for men to accept the richest blessings from Heaven as a free gift. There are millions who are so slow to believe and humble themselves that they deny the religion of Jesus Christ. They think that man can improve his own conditions in this world.

It is getting late at night - the excitement of the day was over. The Lictors had bound up their bloody rods, and layed them aside for the next victim. The magistrates had gone to their homes. Flattering themselves, that by promptness and energy they had surpressed a popular mob and vindicated the Roman law. The jailer had fulfilled his charge by putting the prisoners beyond the possibility of rescue or escape. The other inmates of the prison congratulated themselves that they at least had not been tortured that day by the cruel rods. Or buried alive in that deep inner dungeon. The angry mob, the master's of the girl, had gone to their wretched homes. However deep in that dungeon, there were two men who lived in a constant state of enthusiasm for God - they were still in high gear. Just as when they visited by the riverside - and as they confronted this girl possessed with a spirit of evil.

These two missionaries had left their home church and were on their second missionary journey. But in this heathen city of Philippi, they had met this young slave girl who had made money for her masters day after day. And when she had been made whole, and they no longer received money at her fortune telling, these two men find themselves in the inner most part of the prison in torture. It would have been easy for them to have complained against God. And said, Lord, is this the way you treat your servants. After all, we have done what we could in preaching the Gospel. What is this that is happening to us?

III. SINGING -

V. 25  
Midnight has come down with its deep shadows upon the sleeping city. Silence in the deserted streets. Silence in the outer wards of the prison. Silence in the cells where wretched men were shivering on the stone floors and silence in the inner prison.

But when the dungeon, deep and dark, where the two tortured men had been down and bound - where their inflamed flesh on the hard stone, there comes a sound. Is it a cry of pain. Is it a wail of torture. It is a bid letting people know of agony. Is it some supplication for death.

No far from it! It is the voice of singing. It is the strain of joy and triumph. A song of victory and of thanksgiving.

Just before midnight - Paul nudged Silas. Are you asleep. No, well, I can't sleep either. These stocks are so uncomfortable. And the flies keep lighting on my sore back. And they suggested that a hymn of praise might be good. How wonderful it is to be a Christian. If you had been in that prison that night - what would you have done. Would you have said, well, I'll spend my time writing letters to influential friends.

Now I am not sure precisely what they sang. But we may be sure that it was in that ancient and inspired Hebrew strain which describes the glory of God and declares their unshaken trust in Him. Oh sing praises unto Jehovah for He heareth the poor when they cry. He despiseth not his prisoners. He bringeth them out that are bound with chains. He breaketh the gates of brass. And smiteth the bars of iron in sunder. Oh sing praises unto Jehovah for he is good. For his mercy endureth forever.

I don't know - Paul and Silas may have began to sing - I have a Father in the  
promise land. Come thou fount of every blessing. I am bound for the promise land.  
Safe in the arms of Jesus. Or, there is a fountain filled with blood.

The blood was dried upon their backs. The intense pain shot through their  
bodies. Their feet and hands were in the stocks. They were hungry and cold.

Do you think Paul and Silas said to each other - aren't you ashamed or sorry that  
you were so out-spoken for Christ? Don't you wish that we had stayed in Antioch where  
we could have been in a comfortable home? Don't you think that God has forgotten  
about us? No, instead, they were saying - all things work together for good to them  
that love God. For our light affliction <sup>which</sup> is but a moment - worketh for us a far more  
exceeding and eternal way to Glory. 2 Cor. 4:19.

*They were not singing to sell Tapes - Doubt they had Records!*

And this song could be heard rising out of the prison. Paul and Silas were  
singing praises to God. Thank God for this song at midnight.

Anybody can sing when the skies are clear. And life is full of laughter. But it  
takes a strong Christian to sing and rejoice and praise God in the midst of troubles.  
After all, this is the time when the world judges a Christian.

People are so often wrecked by fair weather Christians. The kind who sing when  
everything is coming their way. We grumble and complain when trouble comes. If when  
we have trouble, we say, why did all of this come to me. I don't see how I can stand  
it. Then the world says, his religion does not bear him up, in the time of trouble  
- but however, in the time of trouble - I look for God and his good purposes and I  
trust him and say there is something in religion after all.

Many Christians will tell the pastor, I have had such a hard time. It is so bad.



It is so hard.

But often we rejoice when someone says, I am having a hard time, but I know Jesus and I know that he will work it out all right. Praise the Lord.

Now you can glorify God in your suffering. Or we can deny him. We are to be careful how we suffer.

That glorious song -

Never mind what they are singing. I can imagine God saying to an angel - go down there quickly and help them.

*A Woman Called Me one Day, heard me preach, said she was at the sink washing dishes & started to sing, she was saved, converted, (Sandra went to Prof. Ch. & Baptized - Washing supper dishes - Praise song) Jesus changed her life, Moved by Power Word -*

IV. SHAKING

V. 26 - The Bible says the old jail began to rock like a ship at sea. The windows fell out. The doors flew open. The jailer thinks all the prisoners have fled. Sprang and drawn a sword to kill himself.

V. 26 - While many listened to this music, suddenly and mysteriously this awful sound and shaking - as if the solid earth were rent asunder - beneath the whole city. The foundation of the prison is shaken.

The bolts of the doors are all thrown open. The chains and the fetters of every prisoner are loose and all are free.

The jailer who had slept through all the singing is awake, now by the shaking of the earthquake. He sees the prison doors open - he supposes the prisoners have

gone, and he knows according to Roman law his life will have to be paid as the forfeit for their escape. In despair he determines to anticipate the shame of public execution by plunging his sword into his own body.

V.27  
V.28  
V. 27 - The jailer's hand is upon the sword. And he is just about to give himself the fatal blow. When the voice comes up from the dungeon of the inner prison. Saying, "do thyself no harm, for we are all here!"

A man has no right to harm himself. Others may harm him but he must not do it. Others may bring shame and disgrace to his name, but he must not do it. He must not kill himself. Let the world be what it will - man must do right. The man who harms himself - harms others. And (if) the jailer had killed himself that night, his family would have awakened to find themselves without a father.

There are some men who say I'll get out of it all and they commit suicide. They never stop to think of the grief and trouble which they bring upon others.

I wonder (if) I am speaking to someone like the jailer tonight - who has come to the end of his rope. The circumstances of life have so hemmed you in that there seems to be no way but to take the back door out of life through suicide. Or maybe there is someone giving up in despair saying, oh, what is the use of going on. Maybe you have lost your health, your money, possibly friends have deserted you. Or your family life has fallen in ruin. Have you come to the point of feeling that you are dying a slow death. By seeking refuge in alcohol. Or an endless round of pleasure. Your life is in shambles tonight. Let us eat, drink, and be merry - for tomorrow we die.

When the jailer called for a light - V. 28, in the very moment of his great problem God had a word - Do thyself no harm! Things are not as bad as they seem.

You may have exhausted your strength but your extremity is God's opportunity.

V. 29

Now the jailer had great respect for Paul and Silas. And this woman's soldier perhaps lived in an age that was much conscious of a need for salvation. There were so many religions that they failed to satisfy. He called for a light - some one had to hold it for him, he was trembling like a leaf. He brought the preacher's out and he fell down before them crying with the world's supreme universal question. What must I do to be saved? The jailer himself had to speak. His voice is loud and clear - and in earnest, as he drops the sword and reaches for the light and leaps in. And falls before these men with a strange fear and inquiry.

V. SALVATION

V. 30

V. 30 - Sirs, what must I do to be saved? Saved, not simply from the terrors of the earthquake. That had already passed and had done it's damage but it had not harmed the jailer. Saved, not simply from punishment under the Roman law for the escape of the prisoners. For every prisoner was accounted for.

But saved from the awful infinite peril of an accusing conscience. Saved from the wretchedness of living (without God). And (without hope). And saved without everlasting salvation which had been preached by these prisoners who were in jail.

This is the grandest question which is to be first asked - and first answered for himself by every considerate conscientious man. This is not a question to be deferred until a time of trouble and alarm. It is not the question to wait until the pleasures of the earth cease and the terrors of death take hold. It is not the question to ask when you get ready to cross the grave. The poor jailer indeed was

driven by terror to acknowledge himself and inquire of the way of salvation.

No man should be ashamed to confess himself afraid of what he fears. Afraid to live a life of sin and die a death of despair. Afraid of the pleadings of infinite love and to reject the offer of eternal salvation.

Now the good soldier who is least afraid of the terrors of death, is most afraid to disobey the orders of his commander. He is ready to face the storm of battle. And he is ready to give his life in the hour of peril. But there is no man that should be ashamed and afraid to disobey God's infinite love. When it comes to his call - what must I do to be saved from making my life a failure, myself a wreck. A state of opposition to God. Perpetual conflict with my conscience. What must I do to cast off the chains of evil habits and the passions of my life.

The question is not riches, or sickness, health, poverty, or prosperity, or adversity - but it is the (soul's eternal salvation.) The worth of a man's immortal life and soul. It is no wonder that it excited this man at Philippi. And was a great concern.

This question was (still) the question of the age, for every man.

Now what shall I do to be rich, or to be honored, - to be free from toil, and pain. Or to live a long life, Or to be successful. But what shall I do to be (blessed forever) And have the wants of my soul supplied. What must I do to prepare for my place in Heaven. To be in the city of the builder and the maker who is God. This is the thing worth a test.

All men have many fears, anxiety about safety, success in the world. But at midnight, this man had this question about eternal salvation. After he had double-

checked his prisoners, the jailer is not the only man that ever asked that question. Men of all times, of all cultures, have come to ask that question. And these strange prisoners who had been ~~Singing~~ maybe the 23rd Psalm. Or "I will bless the Lord at all times. His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make her boast in the Lord. The humble shall hear thereof, and be glad. Or the 46th Psalm, God is our refuge and strength. A very pleasant help in trouble. Therefore, we will not be feared although the earth be removed, though the mountains be carried in the midst of the sea. This indeed, had brought this man to say sirs, what must I do to be saved. Now I do not know how this man learned about this big question. But it is the biggest question that ever fell from human lips - there is no greater. The question for you - it's the greatest question for you and for me. He did not ask what can I do to be respectable. ~~He did not ask~~ what can I do to get rich. There are millions who ask this. What can I do to be beautiful. The thing that is implied in this questions is, first of all - there was a feeling and a difference between being (saved and lost). There are (two classes) of people. There are the saved and there are the lost. And I am perfectly aware today that we do not like this division. People do not like the divisions of the New Testament. It puts folks into two classes. There were two gates - there was a broad way and a narrow way. There were two foundations. A man either built on the sand or else he built on the rock. And the New Testament says, he that hath the son hath life. And he that hath not the son, hath not life.

Another thing, this man was (conscious) of being lost. He asked this question. He was uncertain as to how to be saved. But he was dead sure that he was lost. He did not dodge the fact - he did not shut his eyes to it.

Now if you are without God, I hope you will not deny it. Because the first step in the right direction is to realize that you are lost. A man doesn't send for a doctor or a physician unless he believes that he is sick.

Another thing about this man - he (knew) there was a (possibility) of being saved. He

believed that even though he was lost - there must be some hope, somewhere, and help for him. He believed that somehow when he was weak, he could become strong.

Another thing in the question is - there is the (willingness) to be saved. He was not just speculating about it. But he was willing - he says, what must I do, he says. I am willing to do whatever it requires. And of course this is the possibility for you to do something in order to obtain it.

What so ever - would you expect to a question like that. What would Paul say. Did Paul say, do nothing. Let the matter alone - forget it. No, he told the man what to do.

And it was not an accident that he told him what to do.

V. 31 - Paul said believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.

Now the indication to be saved here indicates that the jailer then had a personal sense of guilt. And he expresses his desire for immediate, instantaneous action. He realized his helplessness and the uncertainty that was in his heart. He wanted to turn to hope.

Now if the man received the answer and he does not complicate it - he says believe. Now every one of your lives are founded upon faith. Faith in your family, faith in the food you eat, faith in the government, faith in money.

And the word believe here - you must believe for yourself. This is the nature of faith. You can trust in an instant, and the result is final.

The jailer was trembling, and he knew he was lost. And the evidence of his need was that he asked how to be saved. Someone will say tonight - I am unworthy. Now that is a hopeful sign. All of us need to cry out to God - be merciful to me. Because I am a sinner.

The Bible says the jailer fell down before Paul. And you cannot come to God without a sorrow on your part. And fall down and think about your wrong. Here is a watch. It does not run. You say, give it new surroundings. No, give it a new mainspring and it will run. If you tried to recall all the sins that you have committed - they would pile up like a mountain. And then you ask who will pay the price for my sins. Jesus paid it all. All to him I owe. Sin had left a crimson stain. He washed it white as snow.

V, 33  
V, 34  
The jailer was converted - he was changed. V. 34 - It says that he brought these men to his own house. V. 43 - He washed their stripes and his whole house believed on God. Now the church may be full of hypocrites - so is politics, so are lodges. So are every organization that you can name in this world. Why don't you give credit to those who are true. Now if you want to be saved, then you must confess and become obedient unto him. A man, a skeptic, went up Pikes Peak on a cloudless day - looked toward the sky. Shook his fist. If there is a God, let him strike me dead. With a flash of lightning out of a clear sky. Just then a nat flew down his throat and he choked to death. There is little hope for a man who does not have enough sense to look up in faith and trust. You can be saved if you will give up your sins. You must chose between sin and salvation.

This man shows evidence of his salvation. By first wiping the stripes of Paul and Silas - when a man comes to Christ he ought to go back and straighten up the past just as far as possible. If he holds any grudges, if he owes any money, if he

Biblical Miracles - In Day in India, Roy Allen, 1st of 400 - Prisoner Tre Vandrum  
Preached - King on crown - invited Prisoner - one 501 - today Dept. preacher on parole &  
Warden "SENINBAW M." Behind, Today feeds - 17 - Prisoner Fellowship. visits prison as  
servant of Christ

has done anything wrong he ought to straighten everything out.  
Tower of Babel - story Gen 11:1-9 worked discovered not communicate with each other  
They forgot how? Fail to believe God & Cl - probably communicate

Another evidence - the jailer had these men sit at his table and eat his food.

His salvation showed in his service. When we have been saved, surely we will want to do something for the Lord - we will want to serve him and others. And the jailer was saved - he had been lost. And not out of the circumstances of this experience of the midnight - he has become a Christian.

Word Has Come, Emmanuel Noregen - Dictator Fernando - In Prison - Dade Co. Fla.  
Converted May 1990 - Evan. Branson friend of Richard Jackson visited Jail.  
"catholic" - had experience of Jesus - personal relationship - wrote it out!  
What is it to believe on Jesus Christ. It is to believe that Jesus Christ can

do what he claims to do. For he has promised that he can do it, and we can depend upon him. Do you want to be saved. If you do, you can. It is the surest thing

in all the world. Music in Heaven - letter Telley 1869 Boston. Staged Celebration end civil war - 10,000 voice choir 1,000 piece orchestra violin section 200 (cele. Paul) soloist "The Star Spangled Banner" - clear - look forward Heaven - 10,000 x 10,000. Red 5, I want to add my voice -

Mr. Moody tells us how he was in the cellar one day and he looked up and he saw his little girl making an effort to see him. She could not because it was dark in the cellar. Jump, said Mr. Moody, Daddy will catch you. And instantly the little girl jumped. Now that was faith. That was believing in her father." The jailer believed on the Lord Jesus. He depended upon him and there was salvation.

One day I think the Philippian jailer will thank Paul for coming to Philippi and for telling them about Jesus Christ. And then I am sure, that somehow, the jailer will join in with Paul and Silas in remembrance of that midnight in the prison at Philippi. They will begin to sing - when we've been there 10,000 years - bright shining as the sun - we have no less days to sing God's praise - than when we first begun.

Amazing God  
jailer & Paul & Silas singing  
together in Heaven -



The condition of salvation was not optional. Now you cannot accept salvation. Or you can refuse it. But it is not optional that you can do what you want to do. And be saved.

You cannot decide upon the terms of which you will surrender. You are saved - it is going to be in this way. God's made it and you dare not change it.

It is a personal, individual matter. What must I do. And I emphasize "I do".

You cannot now depend upon your goodness, your righteousness, is as like filthy rags. You cannot depend upon the other man's badness. A lot of people say I would be a Christian but there are so many hypocrites in that church. Well, that is somebody's reason. Well, I never knew one man to be saved by the hypocrites that are in the church. And that is a mighty poor thing to depend upon for your personal salvation.

You will not be saved by seeking the easy way. It must be God's way - the way he has ordained it for you to follow.

Paul didn't say to him - you get a corner on the stock market and you'll be saved. He didn't say, get elected to Congress and you'll be saved. He didn't say turn over a new leaf and you'll be saved. Be confirmed in a church and you'll be saved. Subscribe to the Community Chest and you'll be saved. Keep some of the Commandments. No, Paul says believe. Salvation means to be brought from a state of condition that is not favorable. And sin is a transgression of God's law. And so you believe on the Lord Jesus.

Now first of all was the conviction on this man's heart that he was a sinner.