

The Midnight Hour

Introduction

1. What I would like to do today is not give you a travelogue of Paul and his companions' journey into Europe but rather look at specific instances and issues he encountered on his first foray into Europe.
2. And so, I want to start with two women from Philippi whom he ministered to, and then we will go from there and see how far we get.
3. God uses Paul to deliver two women of Philippi: Lydia, from eternal death to eternal life; the other, from demon possession to eternal life
4. So, turn in your Bible to **Acts chapter 16:11-18**.
5. As I think about history, I think about great moments in history.
6. I think about the situation in Europe on June 5th, 1944, where for four years, Europe had lain under the Nazi boot under dark tyranny.
7. But the next day, June 6th, came the greatest military invasion of all time: 175,000 troops assaulted five beaches in Normandy and dislodged the evil empire of Nazism and changed history in Europe.
8. It was a significant moment in history, but I believe that the event 19 centuries earlier, involving a wooden ship hugging the coastline and coming to the little port of Neapolis, is even more significant
9. Paul was on his second missionary journey, with Silas, and they're working overland through the modern state of Turkey
10. They've come to Derbe and Lystra, where Timothy joins them.
11. As they're moving westward through modern Turkey, they are blocked by the Holy Spirit from going this direction or that direction.
12. Last week, in response to Paul's vision of a man of Macedonia, they went westward to Europe. **Verse 11: "From Troas, we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace. And the next day on to Neapolis."**
13. Paul's mission team did not stay in Neapolis but made their way out to Philippi. **Verse 12, "From there we traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district of Macedonia."**
14. Philippi had the same legal rights as the city of Rome.
15. **1 John 5:19, "The whole world lies in the power, the grip of the evil one."**
16. We're used to a world with commerce, government, and events that dominate the headlines, but the true story is ultimately spiritual,
17. Satan boasted to Jesus, **"All their authority and splendor has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want. It'll all be yours if you bow down and worship me."**
18. **Verse 13, "On the Sabbath, we went outside the city gate to the river where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there."**
19. Paul doesn't question that whole Macedonian call,
20. **Verse 14 about Lydia, "One of those listening was a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira who was a worshiper of God."**
21. I pray that, like Lydia's heart, which was given a new direction, you too will discover your God-ordained purpose as you open yourself to Him

22. **1 John 5:19, "The whole world lies in the power, the grip of the evil one."** (Satan)
23. Jesus said that sin is an enslaving power. **John 8:34, "Everyone who sins is a slave to sin."**
24. Jesus Christ came to break those invisible, spiritual chains and to set prisoners free from Satan's dark dominion.
25. **Philippians 2, "For as I have often told you before, and now say again, even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things."**
26. Juxtaposed to Lydia's story is the deliverance of a slave girl through the power of the name of Jesus Christ.
27. Europe would dominate the history of Christianity for the next 19 centuries.

The Midnight Hour:

1. There is something about the midnight hour, is there not?
2. For instance, as of January 27, 2026, the Doomsday Clock is set at 85 seconds to midnight, marking the closest point to disaster in its history.
3. The Doomsday Clock serves as a reminder of the times we live in, and countless people are on their way to a Christless grave
4. And so, back to the subject at hand - **Acts 16:25: "About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them"**
5. They've been unjustly, publicly beaten for ministering to a demon-possessed slave girl, sitting in darkness in prison, their backs are bleeding, and their wounds are untreated.
6. **"About Midnight"** for Paul and Silas, everything changed
7. So let me ask you this - when everything around you feels dark, and the pressure threatens to crush you, many wonder how a simple song of praise could shift the outcome.
8. At midnight, when pain blocks your view of God, worship can become the weapon that changes perspective and invites divine intervention.
9. Some of you are in the midnight hour right now
10. Yet in the midnight hour, worship becomes the weapon that changes perspective and invites divine intervention.
11. In the midnight hour, the most important thing to understand is that God is present there
12. God entered a world that was falling apart, a world broken down and lost on a dead-end street with no hope. God spoke.
13. If you want God to enter your midnight hour, build Him a throne of praise.
14. They chose not to allow the prison to define their view of God.
15. **Acts 16** highlights that Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and that the other prisoners were listening.
16. If you are in the midnight hour today, what should you do?
17. Start by getting on your face and surrendering before God.
18. The world is full of injustice. Paul and Silas put a Christian response to injustice on radiant display here, a light shining in a dark place.
19. **Verses 22 and following: "The magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten. And after they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. Upon receiving such orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks."**
20. Let's just step back and sum up the catalog of miseries.

21. Is your situation worse than theirs?
22. It could be their last night on earth.
23. A human life was cheap to such a tyrannical empire.

Suffering:

1. **Verse 25, “About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God.”**
2. I can hardly express how significant that statement is
3. Do you have a sense that these men have zero fear for their own lives?
4. Paul will write later to the same Philippian church in **Philippians 1:21-24, “For me to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I’m torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you (Philippians) that I remain in the body.”**
5. So really there are just two good options for me.
6. It’s a beautiful way to look at life and a beautiful way to look at death.
7. **Philippians 3:10-11: “I want to know Christ, and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow to attain to the resurrection from the dead.”**
8. I want to know Him - I want to feel His closeness through His Spirit when I’m suffering for His name’s sake. I want that.
9. I want to have a fruitful life, not a wasted life of chaff that burns up on Judgment Day.
10. A fruitful life, more opportunities to win lost people to faith in Christ and then to take existing Christians and build them up in their faith.
11. Adoniram Judson, a missionary to Burma with tremendous suffering in his life.
12. Toward the end of his life, he said, *“I’m not weary of this world, and I’m not weary of the work, but when God calls me home, I’ll be like a schoolboy on the final day of school.”*
13. So, there they are, and they’re praying and praising and worshiping and singing to God at midnight. Can I just ask, don’t you want to be like this?
14. Don’t you want, the next time you go through something you consider very painful, to do this well during it, and to worship God in it, and not charge God with wrongdoing, or murmur against him or complain in any way, but just trust him and praise.
15. The bible says, **“let your light shine before others that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”**
16. They were in a situation where they had the choice to bemoan their fate or to worship God during their suffering
17. So here is the question: *“Has Jesus Christ crucified and resurrected done enough for you to be happy today? Or does he have to do more?”*
18. **Verse 26, “Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, everybody’s chains came loose.”**
19. It’s not a mere trembling; the prison doors flew open, and everyone’s chains came loose.
20. **Verse 27. “The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped.”**
21. There is no other moment like this in the New Testament of how much an eternal soul was dangling over hell at that moment.

The Evangelistic Power:

1. Paul and Silas were weak, arrested, condemned without a trial, beaten, bloodied, imprisoned, and still they were messengers of the Lord
2. But Paul's voice rang out and saved him. ***"Don't harm yourself! We're all here!"***
3. ***The jailer, verse 29, "Called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. He then brought them out and asked, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' They replied, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved – you and your household.'"***
4. I believe that the Philippian jailer must have heard Paul and Silas preaching and singing. He's heard the facts of the gospel; he knows who they are and asks, ***"Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"***
5. It's one of the two most vital questions in the New Testament.
6. The other one's related to it. It was what Jesus asked his apostles on the mountain in Caesarea Philippi. ***"What about you?" He asked, "Who do you say that I am?"***
7. The salvation the Philippian jailer asks for is not just physical; it's eternal and spiritual.
8. They give a timeless answer to the entire human race. ***"Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved – you and your household" (Acts 16:31)***
9. Do you have any concern for your soul?
10. ***Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. But how can they call on one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in someone of whom they've never heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they're sent? How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news.***
11. ***Verse 32, "Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his household."***
12. ***Verse 33 and 34, "At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized. The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them. He was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God – he and his whole family."***
13. ***Verse 35 to 40, "When it was daylight, the magistrates sent their officers to the jailer with the order: 'Release those men.' The jailer told Paul, 'The magistrates have ordered that you and Silas be released. Now you can leave. Go in peace.' But Paul said to the officers: 'They beat us publicly without a trial, even though we are Roman citizens, and threw us into prison. And now do they want to get rid of us quietly? No! Let them come themselves and escort us out.' The officers reported this to the magistrates, and when they heard that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens, they were alarmed. They came to appease them and escorted them from the prison, requesting them to leave the city. After Paul and Silas came out of the prison, they went to Lydia's house, where they met with the brothers and encouraged them. Then they left."***

Finally:

1. A takeaway for you is to attack murmuring and complaining in your life.
2. It is quite possible that sometime today, even this week, you may be tempted to complain a
3. We just have this tendency to murmur and complain and chafe and whine.
4. But realize God is worthy of worship and praise.
5. Jesus has done enough by his crucifixion and resurrection for you to be happy today, and you can suffer well.