

SERIES: **THE MOVEMENT- A journey through the astonishing book of Acts**

TEXT: **Acts 16:19-40 // The God of noon is the God of midnight**

HOOK- I'm at a stage in life, with 3 little girls, that includes: animated movies, makeovers, horse rides, and the question that I'm not always ready for: **WHY?** (*Dad, why is Simba sad? Dad, why isn't Mufasa waking up? Dad, why did the dodgers lose so bad to the padres in the playoffs after a record-breaking regular season?*)

I understand the world in a way in which she is not capable of yet.

Follow with me- **God understands the world in a way in which we are not capable of**

When we are left asking "WHY?" pay careful attention to what your soul does next, because-

THE TENSION- Our "why's" will either turn into whining or worship

RECAP- Paul cast a demon/spirit out of a slave girl. 2 Reasons I think she got not only delivered, but saved:

1. Compare to the demoniac in Mark 5, wanted to follow Jesus after his deliverance

2. She can't fortune tell anymore, meaning that spirit can't enter her anymore

Mathew 12:43-45 NLT "When an evil spirit leaves a person, it goes into the desert, seeking rest but finding none. ⁴⁴Then it says, 'I will return to the person I came from.' So it returns and finds its former home empty, swept, and in order. ⁴⁵Then the spirit finds seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they all enter the person and live there. And so that person is worse off than before..."

What happens when someone is saved? The very Spirit of God comes and lives in this "home" and evicts any evil spirits that used to call me theirs.

¹⁹When her owners saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to the authorities.

Why only Paul and Silas? Remember Timothy & Dr Luke are there also

Paul & Silas are both Jews (Timothy is only half, and Luke is likely gentile)-

Jews weren't in great standing with Rome at this time (Jews had been expelled from Rome, the city)

²⁰Bringing them before the chief magistrates, they said, "These men are seriously disturbing our city. They are Jews

Sidenote: as Christians we must do our best to live at peace with all- if we offend anyone it must only be with the gospel

That's the right fight- too many Christians are charging to the wrong fights

²¹and are promoting customs that are not legal for us as Romans to adopt or practice."

²²Then the mob joined in the attack against them, and the chief magistrates stripped off their clothes and ordered them to be beaten with rods.

²³After they had inflicted many blows on them, they threw them in jail, ordering the jailer to keep them securely guarded.

The owners missed out on Jesus because they were upset on what it cost them to miss out on

That's the dilemma some of you here are facing- **Is Jesus worth following?**

The real reason for the internal struggle: **Is Jesus worth more than what I know I'll have to give up?**

Paul & Barnabas got beat worse than my dodgers in the post season- they still think Jesus is worth it.

²⁴Receiving such an order, he put them into the inner prison and secured their feet in the stocks.

This is the condition of everyone before the Lord rescues them, this is what the devil wants for you and your family- to keep you **beatdown, bound and not found**

²⁵ About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.

Situations change; God doesn't. **He's the God of the noon & the God of the midnight.**

When you and I face the fury of a fallen world, we can whine, or we can worship.

Some of you are in the prison of a bad relationship, financial strain, health problems, mental torment, etc.

I'm not saying don't do what you can to address and remedy the issues (at the end of the chapter Paul would protest all this) I'm saying as you do that... never lose the joy available to you in Christ!

Prayer and praise may or may not change our problem- but they will definitely change our perspective

Remember God is the God of the noon- but He's also still Lord in the midnight

Hardships, pain, and tragedy, are God's opportunities to you, to put on display for others what you say you believe!

Did you catch what it said at the end of V25? *and the prisoners were listening to them.*

Others are listening, watching you go through "the night"... and you *WILL* answer this question for them-

What difference does Jesus make?

There are people in this very room, looking at you, how you worship, how you fellowship, how you face hardship!

So you don't like the songs or so you don't like the preacher- there's more to this than YOU!

Some in here don't know Jesus like you do, and they are watching you.

If you can't worship Him in church, you sure as heck won't worship Him in bad times,
and if you don't worship in bad times, it's unlikely you do in good times

I understand we're all wired different, and express ourselves different, but please Christians remember,
other people are watching how you live

Instead of asking, *God why am I going through this?*- **God for who's sake am I going through this?**

Your pain is part of how Jesus is overcoming the world, because He's using it to help someone else see the hope and joy you have in God

²⁶ Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the jail were shaken, and immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's chains came loose.

²⁷ When the jailer woke up and saw the doors of the prison open, he drew his sword and was going to kill himself, since he thought the prisoners had escaped.

If you lost prisoners, you paid with your own life—kind of a motivation to not lose them

²⁸ But Paul called out in a loud voice, "Don't harm yourself, because all of us are here!"

Why didn't they leave?? Hadn't this just happened to Peter in Acts 12, and didn't Peter just walk out?

Paul recognizes this is part of the plan of God to reach Philippi.

I may not be where I want to be, but God has me where I need to be

As you think of your own life & situation & season- do you believe that?

²⁹ Then the jailer called for lights, rushed in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas.

Who is this jailor? They were often highly decorated Roman soldiers who, as a retirement gift, were given jails to run.

He is Older, he is **Hardened** by his past

This guy has seen some stuff, romans were a brutal force- maybe ptsd, trauma, or just bitter & mean

But because of what he saw in Paul & Silas & how they handled this ordeal, watch this, V30-

³⁰ Then he escorted them out and (in one of the most important questions ever spoken) said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”

Do? There’s nothing you can do! Redemption is beyond our ability

Salvation is not what I need to do. Salvation is what Jesus has done.

Stairs analogy- kids must reach the top, but can’t touch the stairs wall or railing-
only way is to acknowledge their inability and ask Dad to carry them up

in V29 the jailer called for lights, but God is about to shine His light in the darkness of his heart

³¹ So they said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.”

Keep in mind, this guy is likely the one who beat Paul & Silas to a pulp;

they don’t respond “screw you man!”

those who deserve grace the least, need it the most.

³² Then they spoke the message of the Lord to him along with everyone in his house.

³³ He took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds. Right away he and all his family were baptized.

³⁴ He brought them into his house, set a meal before them, and rejoiced because he had believed God with his entire household.

No longer does he view them as prisoners, but as brothers in Christ- the one who likely caused their wounds is the one binding them- **that’s what the gospel does!** Jesus reconciles

The faith of one family member cannot save another (v32 they all heard the gospel)

But the faith of one individual can place the gospel message before their family (he took them to his house)

³⁵ When daylight came, the chief magistrates sent the police to say, “Release those men!”

³⁶ The jailer reported these words to Paul: “The magistrates have sent orders for you to be released. So come out now and go in peace.”

³⁷ But Paul said to them, “They beat us in public without a trial, although we are Roman citizens, and threw us in jail. And now are they going to smuggle us out secretly? Certainly not! On the contrary, let them come themselves and escort us out!”

³⁸ Then the police reported these words to the magistrates. They were afraid when they heard that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens.

³⁹ So they came and apologized to them, and escorting them out, they urged them to leave town.

⁴⁰ After leaving the jail, they came to Lydia’s house where they saw and encouraged the brothers, and departed.

The chapter ends, they go on, but they leave in Philippi a church, a community of believers. The 1st church in Europe!

An unlikely bunch: among others,

a rich businesswoman and her employees, a slave girl, roman jailer and his family

surely lots of people trusted Christ during Paul’s time in Philippi. Why include the stories of these three?

To show, **we ALL have the same problem-sin.**

And **we all have only one hope-Believe Jesus.**

In the ancient Jewish prayer book, *the Siddur*, it is recorded that every morning a Jewish man would pray

“Lord, I thank God I am not a woman, a slave, or a Gentile.”

Look who gets saved in this chapter!

Jesus the savior of Lydia, of slave girl, of the jailer-

Our community also has these 3 types of people:

spiritually interested (some may be in here today)

spiritually captive (we have to go to them, they will never get saved by coming in here)

spiritual skeptics (show them Jesus with your life & pray that you might share)

Jesus is the only hope for the Rich/poor, man/woman, young/old, liberal/conservative, black/white, those from good families/those from broken ones, etc.

**MAIN TAKEAWAY- Because God answered my sin with grace,
I can answer pain with praise**

Paul will later write this little church full of all people from all backgrounds, a letter:

Philippians 1:3-6 NLT Every time I think of you, I give thanks to my God. ⁴ Whenever I pray, I make my requests for all of you with joy, ⁵ for you have been my partners in spreading the Good News about Christ from the time you first heard it until now. ⁶ And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.

God's not done with you- but He works through the dark nights of the soul to bring about His light

**CHALLENGE- When I am tempted to
whine instead of worship,
pout instead of pray & praise,
meditate on Psalm 34**

Psalm 34 (CSB)

**¹ I will bless the Lord at all times;
his praise will always be on my lips.**

**² I will boast in the Lord;
the humble will hear and be glad.**

**³ Proclaim the Lord's greatness with me;
let us exalt his name together.**

**⁴ I sought the Lord, and he answered me
and rescued me from all my fears.**

**⁵ Those who look to him are radiant with joy;
their faces will never be ashamed.**

**⁶ This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him
and saved him from all his troubles.**

**⁷ The angel of the Lord encamps
around those who fear him, and rescues them.**

⁸ Taste and see that the Lord is good.

How happy is the person who takes refuge in him!

**⁹ You who are his holy ones, fear the Lord,
for those who fear him lack nothing.**

**¹⁰ Young lions lack food and go hungry,
but those who seek the Lord
will not lack any good thing.**

**¹¹ Come, children, listen to me;
I will teach you the fear of the Lord.**

**¹² Who is someone who desires life,
loving a long life to enjoy what is good?**

**¹³ Keep your tongue from evil
and your lips from deceitful speech.**

**¹⁴ Turn away from evil and do what is good;
seek peace and pursue it.**

**¹⁵ The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous,
and his ears are open to their cry for help.**

**¹⁶ The face of the Lord is set
against those who do what is evil,
to remove all memory of them from the earth.**

**¹⁷ The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears,
and rescues them from all their troubles.**

**¹⁸ The Lord is near the brokenhearted;
he saves those crushed in spirit.**

**¹⁹ One who is righteous has many adversities,
but the Lord rescues him from them all.**

**²⁰ He protects all his bones;
not one of them is broken.**

**²¹ Evil brings death to the wicked,
and those who hate the righteous will be punished.**

**²² The Lord redeems the life of his servants,
and all who take refuge in him will not be punished.**

BULLPEN:

We could be following Jesus, doing all the right things, and still have everything go wrong

In exorcising the demon, Paul has also cast out the slave owners' means of income. Luke points this out in a literary way by using the same Greek verb for both the "leaving" of the demon and the slave owners' profit-making business.

If God ever takes anything away, trust that He knows better

Peter slept in jail (12:6); Paul and Silas sing. Faith in God=peace with God (Psalm 23:4)

Psalm 112:7-8 NLT They do not fear bad news; they confidently trust the Lord to care for them.

⁸They are confident and fearless and can face their foes triumphantly.

Face pain as if you're the example upon which they'll write the book on of what it looks like to **know God yet know pain**

You are that example to someone

Jesus was the ultimate example: He is God, yet experienced pain- our pain

Pain, hardships- see it coming (John 16:33), see it through

Psalm 103 do not forget His benefits- bless Him

The owners- prefer their profit

the jailer- saved at midnight

Paul & Silas- prayer & praise in difficulty

What is your response to pain? Praise