

# OPEN BIBLE CHURCH

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**SERMON TITLE** Midnight Miracle

**SERIES**

**DATE** 10/16/2022

**KEY SCRIPTURE** Acts 16:16-34

**SYNOPSIS** God can suddenly change your situation so that you can fulfill his calling in your life.

**HIGHLIGHTS**



## ☞ Midnight Miracle

### Acts 16:16-34

**16** Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling. **17** This girl followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, "These men are servants of the Most-High God, who are telling you the way to be saved." **18** She kept this up for many days. Finally, Paul became so troubled that he turned around and said to the spirit, "In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!" At that moment the spirit left her. **19** When the owners of the slave girl realized that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities. **20** They brought them before the magistrates and said, "These men are Jews, and are throwing our city into an uproar **21** by advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice." **22** The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten. **23** After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. **24** Upon receiving such orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

Paul and Silas were just being obedient to God. Earlier in the chapter you can see that they were carefully following the leading of the Holy Spirit. They started a new church in Philippi when Lydia got saved and everyone in her household was baptized. It seems they were simply going about the business the Lord had called them to when trouble erupted. Paul even delivered this slave girl from a demon. God was working, good things were happening, and then boom, trouble.

This is becoming more of the norm in today's world – there is antagonism just for being a Christian and following the Lord. There are some listening today that feel a bit "beaten up" by the enemy. Others feel as though they have been bound and locked up with no means of escape. It seems as though the enemy has the upper hand and is holding you down. Here's an ☞ important reminder: **The enemy often attacks right after a spiritual victory.** Paul and Silas were making a dent in the enemy's territory and advancing the kingdom of God, and the enemy didn't like it, so he attacked. So, here they are bruised from a good beating, locked up in the dingy, dirty, dark dungeon. How would you respond? How did they respond?

**25** About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. **26** ***Suddenly*** there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. ***At once*** all the prison doors flew open, and everybody's chains came loose. **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. **28** But Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!" **29** The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas.

Paul and Silas were **courageous** – preaching the gospel in hostile territory. We are called to be courageous as well and even more so in our modern world. When the world is abandoning all



that is right and holy, calling right wrong and wrong right, we need to **be courageous and keep**  
☞ **on proclaiming the truth.**

Deuteronomy 31:6

Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.

Paul and Silas were **consistent** – preached the gospel in prison and after. We also need to **be**  
☞ **consistent, trusting the Lord in all circumstances.**

1 Corinthians 15:58

Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

When we are in troubling situations, attacked by the enemy, we often complain and doubt the Lord, but not Paul and Silas. Their depressing situation didn't keep them from praying and praising.

Habakkuk 3:17-18

17 Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, 18 yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior.

When you are in a situation which feels hopeless – trapped, with nowhere to go; at the last hour; zero visibility; you can't see a way out – praise the Lord. **The best time to praise is when**  
☞ **you don't feel like it.** There is power in praise.

Psalms 8:2

From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise because of your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger.

It was when David played his harp that the evil spirit which tormented Saul would leave. Some of you know what I'm talking about. When everything is caving in, but you decide to worship the Lord anyway, there is a sense of peace which comes. **When you choose to praise and**  
☞ **worship the Lord, the enemy has to shut up.**

So, Paul and Silas were consistent in honoring the Lord. But not only were they consistent in that, they never forgot their mission. They shared the gospel with the jailer, even though he was probably the very one who beat them just a few hours earlier. **Sharing the Good News is our commission** as well. Matthew 28:19 says, "go and make disciples of all nations..."

In spite of their circumstances, Paul and Silas were showing their love and commitment to the Lord. And it made an impact.

Matthew 5:14-16



14 "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

The jailer was **concerned** – he was accountable for the prisoners and afraid of the consequences of an escape.

The jailer was **contrite** – he fell trembling before Paul and Silas. This all happened because Paul and Silas were courageous and consistent. They followed the Lord and continued to honor the Lord despite their circumstances, and God intervened, not just so they would be delivered, but also so that the jailer would be saved.

☞ **In spite of troubles, we should continue to honor God. He can suddenly change the situation. Suddenly = immediately; quickly; unexpectedly; without warning.**

**Notice the details of this situation:**

- They were stripped and beaten – harassed and humiliated.
- They were thrown in prison and their feet were locked up – no forward movement.
- About midnight – the darkest hour. When time seems to have run out.

Perhaps you can relate to this: troubles have been all too familiar for you; you feel like a personal punching bag for the enemy; maybe there's even been a measure of humiliation. Things have come to a grinding halt and you've lost forward momentum. If so, you're in good company. "Misery loves company." But the story doesn't end there...

- Violent earthquake
- Foundations shaken – the prison was shaken to the core. Not just rattled, but broken.
- Prison doors flew open – God delivers.
- Chains come loose – no more bondage.
- Jailer woke up – even adversaries come around.
- Jailer called for lights – darkness gives in to light.

God can suddenly change the situation, so much so that the very foundation of the opposition is shaken to the core. Whatever has been holding you back and keeping you down can suddenly be shaken loose and you can be free. God can do such a work that even those who have opposed you can come around to the truth and see the light. That's who God is and what God can do.

**30 He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" 31 They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved — you and your household." 32 Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. 33 At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family**



were baptized. **34 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.**

The jailer was **converted** – he came to believe in the Lord.

Paul and Silas were **cleared** – released from prison and appeased.

The shaking and breaking that happened with Paul and Silas was not just about their release from bondage. It was about spreading the Good News in even more dark places. Whatever is holding you captive, whether it be a sinful habit or a difficult circumstance, God wants to ☞ deliver you, not just so you can **be free**, but **so you can fulfill the Great Commission**. The earthquake wasn't just about letting them out of jail, it was about getting the jailer into the Kingdom.

We need to be courageous and consistent, praying and praising the Lord no matter comes ☞ along. **When we are faithful, we set the stage for God to do a “suddenly.”** We look around and see the condition of the world out there as well as the church in here. It may seem like a dark time with loss of momentum and lack of forward motion. It may seem like a hopeless situation with no escape in sight, but God can still do a “suddenly” with us.

Naomi and I have seen a few “suddenlies” in our life recently. A project at home that looked to be a long way off came to together all at once to be finished in no time at all. An opportunity which had been blocked for a long time, suddenly became a possibility again all at once. Several things we had been waiting on for months, just suddenly came to resolution. God is giving us tokens of what is to come. He is working a “suddenly” for OBC.

We need a shaking of our situation, a holy commotion to shake things up. We need doors to be opened - doors of opportunity and doors of blessing. We need chains to fall off.

☞ **Start audio** If any of these relate to you, you should come to the altar for the Lord's deliverance and we will pray with you – if you've been struggling with chains of addiction and ungodly attitudes; chains of bitterness, backbiting, and spiritual blindness; chains of deception, division, distraction, doubt, depression, and discouragement; chains of failure, fear, and faulty thinking; chains of sinful habits, hate and haughtiness; chains of lethargy and lukewarmness. These all need to be broken so that we can freely present Christ to those around us. Do you need a breakthrough? A deliverance? An open door? Then come. Let's pray.

☞ Jesus is the earth-shaker, chain-breaker and way maker. **He has the recipe for the delivery which can set you free.** Be courageous and consistent; come to the Lord and see what he will do. Nothing is impossible with God.