

"About Midnight"

Acts 16:22-25

"But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them" (Acts 16:25).

What do you do when you have been arrested, beaten, imprisoned, placed under guard, with your feet bound in stocks, for nothing more than preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ? In that lonely moment, you discover your theology. You find out what's real and what's purely theoretical.

I. Go Where You're Sent.

If you believe in the sovereignty of God, then you know that nothing can happen to you by accident. In that case, you pray and sing hymns at midnight. That's the true meaning of "Go where you are sent." You go even though it probably wasn't in your plan, and you go singing and praying and testifying to the goodness of the Lord.

II. Stay Where You're Put.

"Stay where you're put" doesn't mean passively accepting all the bad circumstances of life, and it certainly doesn't mean that you shouldn't try to change things if you can. But it does mean that you believe down deep in your soul that you are where you are because God wants you there, and that when He wants you somewhere else, you'll be somewhere else.

III. Give What You've Got.

Evidently Paul and Silas weren't trying to be quiet in the jail. Evidently they prayed and sang loud enough that a crowd of prisoners listened to them, amazed that two men in stocks, having been beaten and roughed up, no doubt a sight to behold, would seem so cheerful and full of faith.

In the worst moments of life, when tragedy strikes, when life caves in, when your plans are dashed on the jagged rocks of reality, when you find yourself in a place you never wanted to be, that's when you discover what you really believe. As long as things are going good, you don't really know what you believe. It's all theoretical. *You discover your theology at midnight.*

Not only will you discover what you believe in times of trouble, that's also when the world discovers what you believe. The truth comes out, always. And in those moments, when you rest your weary soul on the God of the universe, when you cry out to Jesus and discover that He really is there after all, then you discover He was there all along, everything He said turns out to be true, and the people who watch you know that you really believe what you say you believe. And having seen the difference that Jesus makes in the worst moments of life, that's when they want what you have.