

Title: **Midnight Melodies (Part 1)**  
Text: **Acts 16:16-25**  
Date: **August 24, 2025**

Find the sermon manuscript to follow along with online at [mercyhillchurch.org](http://mercyhillchurch.org).



## Big Idea

When we leave Christ to pursue gain in the here and now, we lose in the end. When we count all as loss for the sake of Christ, we gain more than we could have ever imagined, both now and forever, in him. One of the things we gain is invincible joy. These missionaries are singing praise to God from a prison cell. Nothing can touch what they have in Jesus.

### 1. We Gain . . . But Lose

A lot of times, when people are objecting to or rejecting Jesus, the dynamic in play is actually very similar to what we see here with these “owners” (v. 16). We are often what I’d call “smokescreen skeptics.” What I mean is: we say we can’t believe in Jesus for all of these intellectual, rational reasons, and we sound all smart and sophisticated as we make our case against him. But underneath these reasons of the mind, lurk some very different reasons in the heart. At the bottom, it’s really quite simple: the reason I don’t believe is that I don’t want to. I want something else, and I fear Jesus is a threat to that. I don’t want to surrender control. I don’t want to let go of the reins. I want gain in the here and now, and following Christ seems like taking a loss to me. I’d have to give up this way of life, these secret pleasures, those pursuits, and so forth. And I don’t want to. So I put forward a whole set of other reasons as to why faith in Jesus is illogical or whatever. We point to this or that fact and make this or that argument against him. But it’s all just a smokescreen, covering and clouding over the deeper issue.

These slave-owners don’t want the claims of Christianity to be true because they think Jesus is going to keep them from what they want. They have no idea that truly Jesus desires to give them, and us, even more . . . if we’d let him. The real threat to your “gain” isn’t receiving Jesus, it’s rejecting him.

### 2. We Lose . . . But Gain!

After all these guys had been through, who would’ve blamed them if they wanted to spend their night grumbling and complaining and whining. But that’s not what they’re doing. Instead . . . they’re singing (v. 25). Though they just got fists and rods, bars and shackles—though their teeth are busted and their lips are bloodied, it doesn’t stop them from opening their mouths and making midnight melodies to the Lord their God.

I think one of the keys to having joy in suffering like this is knowing what God is doing in suffering for you. When you get a sense of what he’s up to in it—how he’s working for your good even in the hard—it makes it more palatable. You’re able to rejoice and praise him, even though it hurts, sometimes terribly so.

#### #1: He Is Taking Us Deeper into His Heart (Phil. 3:7-10)

In suffering, a door is opening for deeper fellowship with Jesus.

#### #2: He Is Conforming Us More into His Image (Rom. 5:3-5)

The fruit of the Spirit can only really be known and developed on the vines of trial and tribulation.

#### #3: He Is Preparing Us Further for Glory (2 Cor. 4:16-18)

*“The legs feel nothing in the stocks when the heart is in heaven”* (Tertullian).

This verse could be literally rendered: “About midnight Paul and Silas, while praying, were singing hymns to God . . .” That means the praying and the singing, the petitioning and the praising are happening simultaneously. My song is simultaneously a prayer. My praise is simultaneously a petition. Sometimes songs of praise are just an overflow of what’s already on my heart. Other times, these songs or more like a prayer than anything else. “God, ‘I believe; help my unbelief!’ (Mark 9:24).



### Reflection Questions

- When suffering comes for you, how do you typically respond? Which of the three things identified that God is up to in suffering means most to you personally and why? How might awareness of that help when things get hard?

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## Our Mission & Values

*Mercy Hill Church exists to help restore us to God, neighbor, and city through the good news of Jesus Christ.*

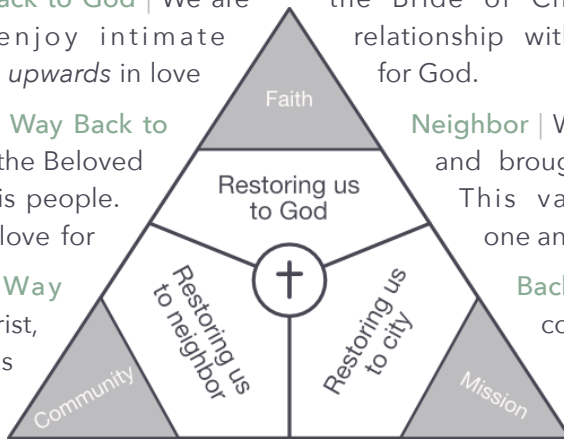
**FAITH:** The Way Back to God | We are redeemed to enjoy intimate presses our church *upwards* in love

the Bride of Christ, created and relationship with him. This value for God.

**COMMUNITY:** The Way Back to Christ, adopted in the Beloved relationship with his people. church *inwards* in love for

**Neighbor** | We are the Family of and brought into covenantal This value presses our one another.

**MISSION:** The Way the Embassy of Christ, Savior to be his value presses our in love for the



**Back to City** | We are commissioned by the ambassadors. This church *outwards* unbelieving.

## Your Next Steps

When approaching the Christian faith and life, it can be confusing to know where to even begin. Come find us at the Next Steps Table after the service—it would be our joy to help you along in the journey! And if you're a visitor, we have a special gift bag for you. Don't miss it!



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Welcome to Mercy Hill Church.  
We are so glad you've joined us today!

## Announcement Spotlight

### Sunday Prayer Walk - Today!

We will be gathering after service today at 1:00pm to do a prayer walk in the local neighborhood! So grab lunch after the service, and consider joining us to pray for our neighboring community, as we hope to have the opportunity to share the gospel with those who are open and ready to engage. We'll have a brief time before the prayer walk to discuss what to pray for, so we invite anyone regardless of experience to join and learn.

**If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to Chris Keener at [cmkeener2@gmail.com](mailto:cmkeener2@gmail.com).**

### Covenant Membership Class - September 21st!

#### Join a Home Group!

**Scan the QR code below for more info!**

For clickable content and more announcements,



scan this code to head to our Communications Hub!

Or find it online at [mercyhillchurch.org/communications-hub](https://mercyhillchurch.org/communications-hub).