

# Prison Songs at Midnight

Paul and Silas are beaten and imprisoned in Philippi, but their midnight worship leads to miraculous deliverance and the conversion of the jailer and his household.

Acts 16:16-40

CHARACTERS: Paul, Silas, The slave girl, The jailer

THEMES: Worship through suffering, God's power, Salvation, Joy in trials, Miracles

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IN PHILIPPI, PAUL and Silas encountered a slave girl with a spirit of divination who followed them, crying out, 'These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation!' Though her words were true, the spirit behind them was not. After many days, Paul turned and commanded the spirit, 'I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.' It came out that very hour.

But when her owners saw their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them to the marketplace before the rulers. 'These men are Jews and they are disturbing our city,' they accused. The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates had them stripped and beaten with rods. After many blows, they threw them into prison, charging the jailer to keep them safely. He put them in the inner prison and fastened their feet in stocks.

About midnight—backs bleeding, feet in stocks, in the innermost cell—Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God. The other prisoners were listening. Suddenly there was a great earthquake that shook the foundations of the prison. All the doors flew open and everyone's bonds were unfastened.

When the jailer woke and saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword to kill himself, assuming the prisoners had fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice, 'Do not harm yourself, for we are all here!' The jailer called for lights and rushed in, trembling with fear. He fell down before Paul and Silas and brought them out, asking, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?'

They said, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.'

That very night, at that very hour, the jailer washed their wounds and was baptized with all his family. He brought them into his house, set food before them, and rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God.

What began with beatings ended with baptism. What started with imprisonment concluded with joy. Paul and Silas's midnight worship had turned a prison into a place of salvation.