TEXT:  Acts 16 : 16 – 34

(#16) Paul & Silas went to prayer, but a young girl possessed with a demon spirit of soothsaying, was noticed by them. Satan will do anything he can to distract and interrupt us from prayer. Anything! Be on guard! Satan knows how powerful prayer is. (James 5:16 - ...”effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”)

(#17) She was saying some truth by telling what Paul & Silas were doing, pointing people to salvation. She was annoying, though. Some sinners in this world have heard & know the truth, but are too bound by satan’s grip to pull loose from the demon spirits. They need the power of God, by the blood of Jesus and the cross. (satan will mix truth with lies)

(#18) Paul was grieved & spoke to the demon (spirit) & commanded the spirit to come out of her. If we have a relationship with Jesus, we’ll have the power to set people
free. (Matt. 16:19 / Matt. 18:18 ) The girl was completely set free! (John 8:36)

(#19-#22) The girl’s bosses (or masters) were angry the girl was free & could no longer give them money for her soothsaying. So, the angry men lied about Paul & Silas. The multitude heard the lies, tore off Paul & Silas clothes and the guard was ordered to keep watch over the 2 new prisoners,
Paul & Silas. (The love of $ is the root of all evil. I Tim. 6:10)

(#24) Paul & Silas were also bound by their feet. No matter how “bound” our circumstances become, we are ALWAYS “free” on the inside (spirit – part of us), cause of our deep & devoted relationship with Christ.

(#25) IMPORTANT VERSE HERE !!!!!!! At midnight.....
What situation in your life has turned out to be a hopeless situation? At the last opportunity or even a dead – end scenerio, God CAN turn it around. (Matt. 19:26) Paul & Silas
SANG PRAISES TO GOD. Can you praise God at your worst news or when your day is going in the wrong direction? Someone IS watching & listening to you. The other prisoners heard these 2 godly men pray & praise God in spite of their back sores & pain.

The praises were beneficial to Paul & Silas, and also to the heathen who were listening.

NOTE: The way we react under hot, intense pressure, is the real us. It only comes to the surface when the going gets rough. When the going gets rough – the rough get going!

OUR ATTITUDE WILL AFFECT HOW OUR LIFE GOES & HOW WE INFLUENCE OTHERS.

It’s not just our words of witnessing to the lost, it’s our attitude in the storms of life. If we display the kind of faith that is strong, the world will notice & want to listen to us &
find out why Jesus makes a difference. Christians don’t need drugs or drinking or other “fixes” to get through the storms. Jesus is our Anchor & Refuge. (Psalms 46:1)

(#26) God changed the circumstances because of the praises to Him. God sent an earthquake to loose the doors & shake the foundations of the prison. God can always do the impossible that no one else can do!

KEEP PRAISING HIM IN THE STORMS.

(#27 - #29) The guard was scared & thought all the prisoners had escaped. He was ready to kill himself & spare the possibility of worse punishment for neglecting to guard the prisoners. He knew his sleeping was unacceptable, but God allowed it so He could bypass man’s authority & rulership to produce a greater cause – the miracle of freeing Paul & Silas. All the prisoners were still there & had not escaped. The guard realized something miraculous had taken place & wanted to know how to be saved!!!! You see, that guard also
had heard & remembered Paul & Silas praying & praising God. Now, it was producing eternal dividends for Paul & Silas to lead people to Christ.

(#31 & #32) The message of salvation was told. The guard accepted the Lord.

(#33 & #34) The guard & his family were saved & baptized. Paul & Silas were fed & were soothed by having their wounds (stripes) bathed. Kindness was exchanged for anger.

Only God can change us from the inside out. Only God can transform us into what He has called us to become. He knew us when we were being formed in the womb. (Psalms 139:14 & 15) Praise God, no matter what you are going through, watch God turn your situations around in your life. Even if the circumstances don’t change like you prayed, you will have a better attitude going through the negative & please God so He cannot be hindered to elevate you more & more to be anointed & called to fulfill the purpose & plan
He has designed & destined for your life.

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