

Acts 16:25-26

But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed.

“Oh man, did you hear about Paul and Silas. Well, they were thrown in prison, then a earthquake happened, and the jail doors were opened up, so then they started to singing to the Lord.”

Actually that's not how it happen. Sure, there was an earthquake, and the prison doors were opened, and the did sing hymns, but the order of things it not what we just read.

As you read the actual order for yourself in today's devotional verses, notice that Paul and Silas were in prison, and while they were there, after being beaten mind you, they start to pray and sing hymns the Lord.

Wait, they were beaten and in response they were singing hymns to the Lord, why were they doing it? Maybe you are thinking so that the Lord would deliver them just like He did with the apostles back in chapter 5. But I don't think that's why. Look back at chapter five and you will see why they rejoiced after they were beaten:

† **Acts 5:41** *So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.*

Because *they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name*. This is why I believe Paul and Silas prayed and worshipped the Lord while they were in prison as well. Not so they would be released by God from the prison, but simple because they knew that they belonged to the Lord, no matter what was going on in their lives.

Even back in the book of Daniel, we read the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego and how they were thrown in to the fiery furnace. But before they were thrown into the furnace, they said the following:

† **Daniel 3:16-18** *Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up."*
(underlined for emphasis)

“But if not”, three powerful words that a Christian can say. People will get into trouble and turn to the Lord. Some worship only for the reason of being delivered from what they are going through. But what if God doesn't deliver you from it, will you still worship Him?

Here's another question, were you worshipping the Lord before the trial or problem came? When disasters happen here in the USA, it's funny how people and the nation turn to God, until... yeah that one word “until”; until the dust settles and it's all over, then they turn their backs on God, at least until the next disaster happens.

This may not be an easy devotional for some of you today, but I think it's one you may need to hear. God's not looking for Sunday Christians or a relationship with people only when a disaster happens. No, God wants us and our hearts 24/7/365. God wants to hear worship and praise and prayer from you all the time.

So if things are going great, worship Him.

If you are in the start or the middle of a trial, worship Him.

If you just came out of a trial, worship Him.

Praise Him for Who He is, and stop treating God like He's a genie that you can call on only in time of need. I don't know about you, but I need Him all the time, how about you?

† **Hebrews 4:16** *Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

† **Revelation 4:11** *"You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created."*

† **Revelation 5:12** *saying with a loud voice: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain To receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!"*