

## Prayer And Praise In The Inner Prison

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

The body may be imprisoned; but the soul can neither be confined within walls, nor bound with chains. The feet may be fettered, but the thoughts fly like swift-winged arrows to the angels' home beyond the skies. The dungeon may throw its more than midnight darkness over the natural vision, and shut from mortal ears the groans and cries of tortured humanity; but the light of divine mercy will shed a halo of glory around the soul; and the murmured prayer or the suppressed sigh, will be heard, as if in tones of thunder, at the throne of God.

Although the bodies of Paul and Silas are bathed in their own blood, their hearts are full of comfort, hope and joy. They regard it as an honor that they are accounted worthy to suffer persecution for the sake of Him who died for them. While on earth, Jesus said to His disciples, “Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad; for great is our reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you” (Matthew 5:11-12). This happiness Paul and Silas now realize, finding it a well-spring of joy in that night of darkness.

Neither the Roman Empire, nor all the powers of darkness, could pluck this wonderful joy from their irrepressible hearts. They are happy in spite of all that Satanic malice can devise, or human power can inflict. Their hearts are filled to overflowing and their joy breaks forth in prayers of thankfulness and songs of rejoicing. With what strange and thrilling emotions must the other prisoners have listened! For such prayers and songs had never before been heard within those gloomy walls. Nor did the prisoners alone hear them, but God also; and in the quaking earth He dispatched a swift messenger for their relief.

Paul and Silas garnered this beautiful joy from doing the will of God; from seeking to convert others to Jesus Christ. Let us with all due diligence seek to reproduce the desire within the hearts of Paul and Silas to do God's will by teaching His gospel and showing the light to a lost soul and to resolutely stand in the face of persecution. “The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise” (Proverbs 11:30).

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