

soundtrack

press play

introduction

Part One - We are part of the story of God.

Part Two - Every great story has a soundtrack.

The Problem is in our lives when difficulty comes and darkness strikes. Our immediate response is to hit pause on the soundtrack instead of hitting play.

Remember Moses at the Red Sea with the Egyptians at their back? It would be easy to press play then. That was miraculous. Most of our lives will not be like that.

A lot of life is broken because of sin. It has a lot of unexpected turns. There are a lot of midnight hours. And it's easier to press pause. The soundtrack fades, even though the story continues on.

It's in those moments that we need the soundtrack the most.

press play

How do we press play in the dark times? How do we press play when life's circumstances are not what we want or expected.

If we are going to press play, 2 things need to happen:

1. We have to believe in God.
2. We have to believe that there is a bigger story going on around us.

Acts 16 – We are going to experience part of God's story

Background: Acts is the story of the beginning of the church. The disciples saw Jesus alive from the dead and they began spreading the news and planting churches. One of the great church planters is a guy named Paul. He traveled to a place called Philippi and started a church in the house of a lady named Lydia

Acts 16.16 - A slave girl had an evil spirit and could tell future events. She was making her master very wealthy. She followed Paul around announcing who he was and what he was doing. At first glance, that seems kind of cool.

Paul had to be careful of 2 factions in his day: The first was the Roman colony. Philippi was under Roman rule and they had an outpost set up and all they wanted to do was keep the peace.

On the other hand, you have Jewish people that don't like Jesus, don't want Jesus. Paul is just trying to ease in and make connections and get a church started. The slave girl was drawing attention to him and what he was doing. She kept it up for many days.

Finally, Paul became troubled (insert the word hacked off, ticked off) and he turned around and spoke to the spirit to leave the girl. At that moment, the spirit left and the girl was free.

The owners of the slave girl realized that they weren't going to make any more money. They seized Paul and Silas and drug them to the authorities (Roman Empire). They accused them of starting a riot. Remember, all Rome cares about is keeping the peace.

vs 22 - They ordered them to be stripped and beaten and thrown into jail.

What happened to this story? You had a few guys just telling people about Jesus. Now they're stripped, beaten and thrown into the inner most jail.

What just happened? This is not Red Sea shores. This is not salvation or deliverance. Where is God?

vs 25 - about midnight, about the middle of the night, Paul and Silas had a decision to make - were they going to press pause? Where was God? Or would they press play and 1. Believe in God and 2. Believe there is a bigger story going on.

Everyone expects us to press play when the story is good. School is going good, lots of friends, parents make some money, got a boyfriend/girlfriend. It's easy to press play then.

Midnight is just you alone in the darkness. Have you been there? Everyone else is gone. It's the hour you're in bed by yourself and it's just you and voices in your head telling you that you won't make it through this one.

Vs 25 -- At midnight, Paul and Silas began to pray and sing hymns to God. They decided to press play. And the other prisoners were listening... no kidding...

Trials are actually a megaphone for the soundtrack for the story of God. It can either squash the soundtrack or amplify it.

The prisoners were listening because it was unusual. People won't listen to you when the days are sunny because they expect you to press play. They expect you to be singing the soundtrack. But they will lean in and listen when you press play at the midnight hour because they don't understand how you can sing when life hurts like this.

All the prisoners were listening because 2 guys choose to press play.

Something else... worship changes things. It won't always change the natural situation or circumstance and that's just being honest. But it always changes us.

Vs 26 - a lot changed from their worship - suddenly there was an earthquake and the prison was shaken - all the doors came open and all the chains fell off. The jailer woke up and saw the doors open and was going to kill himself because he assumed the prisoners had escaped.

Paul called out and stopped him because they were all still here.

I'm sure that's the way things happen in the Bible: something comes along our way and knocks us out and we just sing a song and an earthquake happens... right.

It's doesn't work for me that good.

Notice, even after the earthquake:

1. They still had wounds.
2. When they had an opportunity to get out fast, they choose to stay.

Why? They knew something was going on. They knew there was a bigger story. They decided to stick around for it.

Vs 29 - What kind of question is that? His first question isn't why didn't you leave? What happened here? It's an interesting question. Paul and Silas must have told this guy about Jesus before hand. He somehow knew that they were Jesus followers.

If I'm Paul I answer it by saying, "Number one, you gotta let us out of here and number two, we'll send an envelop back to you with instructions for how you can meet God when we get to the next city."

Vs 31 - What an amazing night. The jailer and his whole family believed because Paul and Silas pressed play.

The soundtrack is most needed in the middle of the night.

Who are people going to listen to anyway? The guys that have been beaten and arrested yet still care more for others then they do themselves.

How did Paul and Silas do it?

1. They believed in God.
2. They believed they were part of a bigger story.

God-colored vision

Psalm 16.8 "I have set the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken."

This is the way you respond to darkness and confusion and pain and suffering. We're all going to be in circumstances that we don't understand. We don't know what's going on. We don't know what God is up to. We don't know how any good is going to come out of it. The point is that we believe in God and we believe he has an incredible story unfolding around us.

Psalm 16.8

Set the Lord right in front of you - that sustains you. There are going to be days when you don't know what God is doing. But it doesn't matter because you know who he is.

You may be in the darkest night or the sunniest day. You have to lock onto him and make it your purpose to know him more. That's how you press play.

You're going to respond in one of 3 ways:

1. We look at everything through "me" colored vision - these people don't even know another story is going on. They think it is completely about them. Everything is "me". Everything you see is "me." They see life through their own story. When you're locked in prison at midnight, the only thing you can think about is getting out. "I didn't do anything. This isn't fair. Somebody

better fix this. I don't like this." They don't care about the jailer or their neighbors or coworkers. They don't see the story.

2. We look at God through "Life" colored vision. We praise him at the Red Sea. Life is good with the car, with the girl, with the job. Everything feels right and is going good. Life is good, so God is good.

When life turns bad, God turns bad. We point the finger back. It's his fault and why isn't he doing anything about it. We press pause.

3. We look at life through "God-colored" vision. The first thing you see is God. You set the Lord continually before you. We choose to interpret the things around us through God's character. We face life knowing that God believes in us and that he loves us and that he has a great plan for us - regardless of what life throws at us.

This isn't denial. This isn't a syrupy, "praise God" anyway.

The reason we praise him is because we believe in him and without his power we don't stand a chance facing this circumstance.

conclusion

The problem is we don't want that role in the story. We don't want to be Paul and Silas locked up in jail in the middle of the night. The truth is we all have that role. We all face chapters like that in the story.

By pressing play, you're not telling God that you want more of it. You are just recognizing that it will come and when it does you won't be surprised or shaken. You are making a decision that you will always set God before you no matter what.

Maybe you're in the middle of a dungeon right now. You're right smack in the middle of it. Take a step tonight. A small step. Replace the darkness in front of you with God. Choose to put him in front of your vision.

Maybe the prison doors won't swing open, but the doors of your heart will swing open.

Press play.