



The Midnight Season

“While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him” (Mathew 25:5-6).

While the bridegroom tarried, the ten virgins which took their lamps, and went out to meet the bridegroom began to slumber and eventually they all slept off. The ten virgins started out with great zeal and excitement. They took their lamps and separated themselves from everything that was going on around them, and they went out to meet the bridegroom. They had no idea how long this will take, they had no idea what challenges they were likely to meet on this path that they have chosen, but the overriding desire in their hearts was to meet the bridegroom and be united with him.

The kingdom of God shall be likened to these ten virgins. The ten virgins presented to us in Mathew 25 is a type of the church and the plan of God for the church in these last days. Just like the ten virgins the zeal and the enthusiasm of the church began to wane as the bridegroom delayed in showing up. This decline was gradual. They began first to slumber and then they slept off completely. To slumber means to be in a state of very light state sleep, almost awake. To slumber is to sleep lightly or to doze off, sleep for a short time, nap, to be dull or half asleep.

The enemy takes advantage of our tiredness, exhaustion, and sometimes our carelessness and begins to creep into our lives and ministry in a gradual and innocuous manner. By the time we know it, we have lost all control and slept off completely. But God has a way of ushering in a season of midnight in our lives which ultimately brings a change and a transformation into our lives. At midnight a cry was made. There is usually a season of midnight in a man's life. Midnight is a dark season, but God sends us help in the middle of our midnight. God gives us an opportunity to hear the midnight cry and to wake up from our sleep. Our midnight season can be our season of transformation. Our midnight season can be an opportunity for us to wake up and trim our lamps so that we can shine better for our Lord.

The Lord Visited Samuel at Midnight

“And the child Samuel ministered unto the Lord before Eli. And the word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision. And it came to pass at that time, when Eli was laid down in his place, and his eyes began to grow dim, that he couldn’t see; and ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was, and Samuel was laid down to sleep; that the Lord called Samuel: and he answered, here am I. and he ran unto Eli, and said here am I; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not; lie down again. And he went to lay down to sleep” (I Samuel 3:1-5).

It was a midnight season for Samuel. The true word of the Lord was scarce in those days, and there was no open vision in the land. The eyes of the older prophet Eli had grown dim and he couldn’t see properly any more, and the light of God in the temple where the ark of God was had gone out. This is truly a midnight season for young Samuel, but a midnight cry came to Samuel and he could not recognize it, but that midnight cry persisted until he was able to appropriately respond to the cry. Samuel was young and did not know how to recognize and respond to the word of the Lord. Three times the voice came to Samuel at midnight and three times Samuel woke up and responded by going to Eli. He had a willing heart and wanted to do the will of God, but the word of the Lord was yet to be revealed unto him. He could have been discouraged and given up after the first or second calls but he persisted even when he had no clue what was happening. We need to hold on to God persistently even when we do not seem to understand. Our God is faithful; his purpose will come to pass in our lives no matter what.

“And the Lord called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, here am I; for thou didst call me. And Eli perceived that the LORD had called the child. Therefore, Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he calls thee, thou shalt say, speak, the LORD; for thy servant heareth. So, Samuel went and lay down in his place. And the Lord came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then answered, speak; for thy servant heareth” (I Samuel 3:8-10).

Samuel humbled himself and leant how to take instruction from Eli and obey all the instructions he was given to the letter in spite of everything that was happening in the temple. He did not belittle Eli because of what was happening to him, he respected God’s call on Eli’s life and listened to him. We must humble ourselves before the Lord and obey his instructions to us, for he is faithful and able to turn our night seasons around.

Samuel laid down in his place and waited patiently for the word of the Lord. He waited to hear the voice of the Lord in the midst of his midnight season. We must learn to be calm and wait quietly and patiently on the Lord so that we do not miss him. We need to hear his voice in the midst of all the noise that is around us. *“They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint” (Isaiah 40: 31).* I wait for the LORD, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope (Psalm 130:5).

Because Samuel responded and heard the midnight cry God began to do a new thing in Israel *“And the Lord said to Samuel, behold I will do a thing in Israel, at which both ears of everyone that heareth shall tingle” (I Samuel 3:11).*

Nehemiah heard the Cry at Midnight

“The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah. And it came to pass in the month of Chisleu, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the palace, that Hanani, one of my brethren, came, he and certain men of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem. And they said unto me, the remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire. And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down

and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven” (Nehemiah 1:1-4).

It was midnight for Nehemiah and for all of Israel, it was a very dark hour for God’s people. The people were in great affliction and reproach, it looked like God has totally abandoned his own people. There was pain and reproach in the land. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and the gates of the city are destroyed and burnt down with fire. It is indeed a midnight season for the people of God. But no matter how dark the night might be the day will break and the morning will come.

God spoke to Nehemiah in the middle of his midnight season. Nehemiah even though he was in exile heard the midnight cry, and that cry woke him up from his slumber. The midnight cry came to Nehemiah in the form of the message that was relayed to him by Hanani one of the brethren that came from Judah. “And it came to pass in the month of Chisleu, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the palace, that Hanani, one of my brethren, came, he and certain men of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem” (Nehemiah 1:1).

The first thing to note is that Nehemiah had a desire for God and for Israel the people of God. In spite of the fact that he was in exile far removed from the physical situation in Israel his heart was with the people of God. He carried the pain of God’s people with him every day he spent in exile. He knew that this was a very difficult moment for him and for all of God’s people but he never gave up his love for God or for the people of God in spite of all that was happening. We must never allow the things that we may be going through as individuals or as a nation to distract us from serving God. We must fix our gaze on the Lord and not on the problems and difficulties that we may be going through. Weeping may endure for the night but joy will certainly come in the morning if we do not give up.

The first thing that Nehemiah did when he met the brethren that came out of Judah was to ask after the welfare of the people in Jerusalem because that was what was uppermost in his heart. His heart and passion were directed towards God and God’s people even in the middle of the crises all around. For this reason, God was able to speak to Nehemiah, he was able to hear the midnight cry, and was also able to respond appropriately. It is one thing to hear, it is another to respond appropriately after hearing the word of the Lord. During our difficult moments it is important our heart is in the right place. We must not allow the things we may be going through to overwhelm our hearts. We must guard and keep our hearts with all diligence in moments of crisis for out of it are issues of life (Proverbs 4:23). The LORD will keep in perfect peace, whose heart is stayed on him: because he trusteth in thee (Isaiah 26:3).

The second thing that Nehemiah did when he heard the midnight cry from the brethren that visited from Judah was that he began to trim his lamp immediately. He began to humble himself before God and to pray and to repent for his sins and for the sins of the Israel “And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven, and said, I beseech thee, O LORD GOD of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him and observe his commandments: let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou mayest hear the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee now, day and night, for the children of Israel thy servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel, which have sinned against thee: both my I and my father’s house have sinned”.

As Nehemiah prayed in response to the midnight cry things began to change. God began to open doors for Nehemiah to go back and rebuild the broken walls of Jerusalem and to bring restoration back to Israel the people of God. In the same way, God can turn our midnight

around like he did for Nehemiah, God can turn the midnight of our nation around if we humble ourselves before God like Nehemiah did.

God granted Nehemiah favour in the presence of King Artaxerxes and God went ahead of him and prospered him and he was able to arise and build the broken down walls. Sometimes God uses our midnight seasons to wake us up from our slumber and to reposition us so that he can bring the best out of us. Some of the greatest transformation we ever saw in the bible came out of midnight seasons.

Jacob's Change came at Midnight

“And he rose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two womenservants, and his eleven sons, and passed over the ford Jabbok. And he took them, and sent them over the brook, and sent over that he had. And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him. And he said, let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. And he said unto him, what is thy name? And he said, Jacob. And he said, thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince had thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed” (Genesis 32:22-28).

It took the midnight season to bring change and the much-needed transformation into Jacob's life. Jacob is the supplanter, that is the meaning of his name. He supplanted his brother Esau. He tried to bribe his brother. He did everything he could to avoid the real issues of confronting his misdeeds, and facing his brother Esau for many years, but a time came when he could no longer continue to do so (Genesis 32).

Jacob's encounter with the angel of the Lord came at midnight. He heard a certain cry at midnight, and somehow, he understood this time around that his time was up. He knew that this was his opportunity to confront what he has been running from for years. His change came at midnight, and thank God he recognized that the game was over for him and was willing to let go, he recognized that he could no longer continue to run from God. His midnight season was his opportunity for transformation.

We were told in Genesis 32 that Jacob rose up at midnight and took his entire family and whatever else that could stand in his way and sent them over the brook, and he was left alone. Alone with God to sort out the real issues in his life, alone to sort out the problems that has troubled him all his life. His midnight season gave him this opportunity. Sometimes God allows our midnight seasons to bring us to our wits end, to separate us from the things that have beclouded our eyes and have prevented us from seeing God as we should.

Getting to this point may take years for some depending on how willing and open we are to the dealings of God. We must all cross this bridge if we must enter into God's fullness. We must all cross this Jordan river, if we must enter in, and claim our full inheritance in God. Jordan means death. We must die to self completely so that Christ can be all in all in our lives. Jacob needed to come to this point in his life where he had to give up everything, he thought he had, and was clinging unto so that his change and transformation can truly come.

Jacob was alone with God and struggled with the angel of the Lord throughout the night until his name was changed from Jacob to Israel. Name speaks of our nature, his nature was changed from Jacob the supplanter to Israel the chosen one, one who has power with God and with men. What a glorious transformation this was for Jacob. It took a midnight season to bring this monumental change to Jacob's life. His life was never the same again. The angel of the Lord touched the hollow of his thigh and he was never the same again.

May the Lord grant us grace and enable us to be willing to give up whatever it is that may be standing in our way as we each run our race. May we find grace and help from the Lord to lay aside every weight and sin that can easily beset us and hinder us in our race. Sometimes we are not aware of these weights but that does not mean that they are not there and that they are not affecting the quality of our Christian lives. Sometimes it takes the midnight season to open our eyes to see and identify the weights in our lives. When we do, may we find grace like Jacob did to send everything that is capable of hindering us away to the other side of the brook, and allow God Almighty to do a thorough and perfect work in us - Amen.

At Midnight Paul and Silas Prayed and Sang Praises

“And at Midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. And the suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one’s band were loosed” (Acts 16:25-26).

This was truly a midnight season for Paul and Silas. They had been arrested, severely manhandled and thrown into prison for preaching the gospel. Without doing anything wrong, they were put in the solitary confinement with hands in chains and their feet in stocks. It was indeed a dark and painful moment for them. It was a midnight season for them. But they too heard a midnight cry; a certain cry was made at midnight. They received an inspiration from the spirit at midnight and instead of complaining they began to sing praises at midnight.

Paul and Silas praised the Lord in the midst of their pain, they didn’t understand what was going on, yet they sang praises. They didn’t feel like singing because of the discomfort of the chains on their hands and the stocks on their feet, but they still sang praises to God anyway. At midnight Paul and Silas sang praises to God. And God moved on their behalf, and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison was shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone’s band was loosed.

When we learn to praise God and to give thanks in the middle of our midnight seasons God moves on our behalf and turns our situation right around “In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you” (I Thessalonians 5:18). “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:28). This may not be exactly easy, but the Lord will grant us the grace to look beyond our situations and our circumstances. The Lord grants help to look beyond our present discomfort and look up to him. “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” (II Corinthians 4:17-18). Looking unto Jesus the author and the finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:2).

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