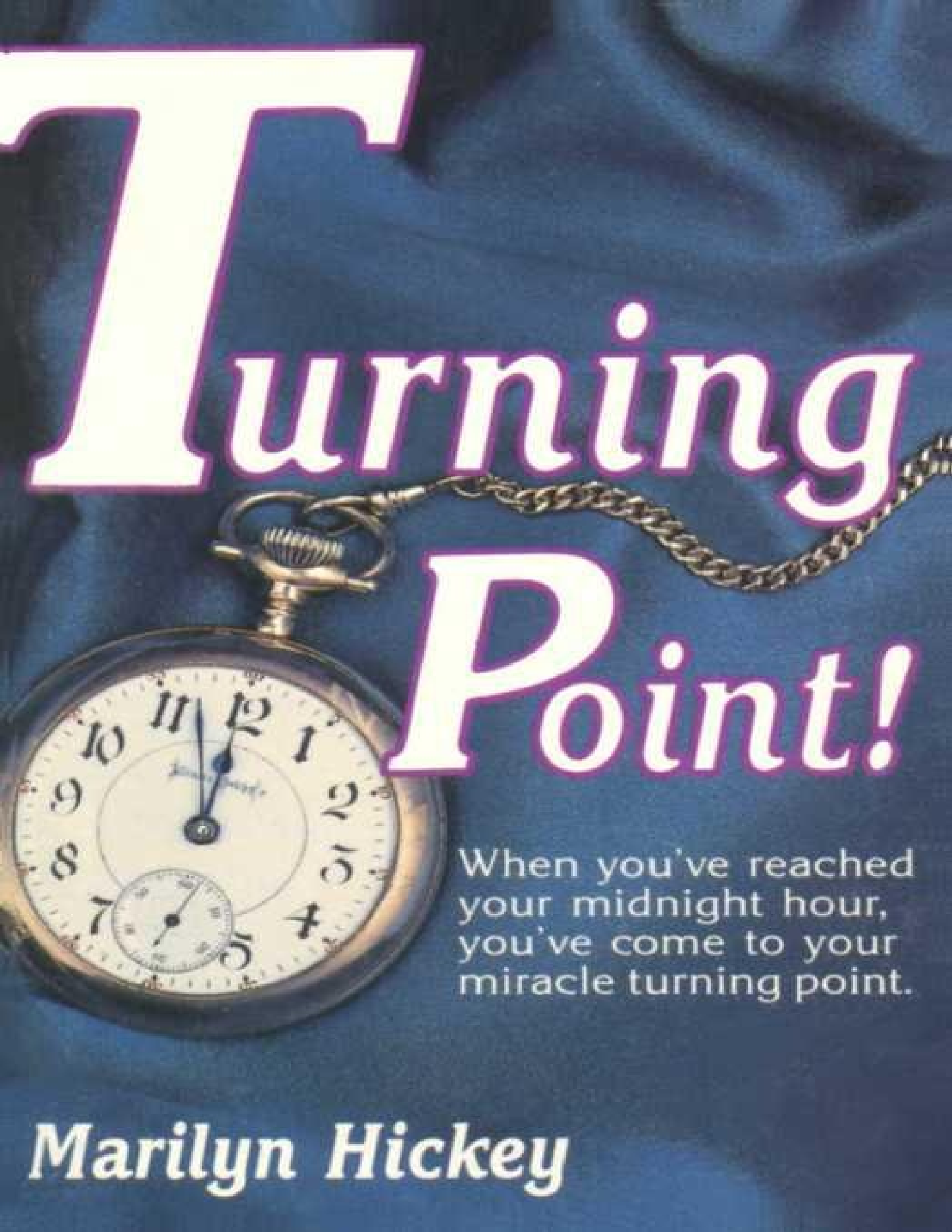
Turning Point!



When you've reached your midnight hour, you've come to your miracle turning point.

Marilyn Hickey

Turning Point!

"No, I can't do it; I won't do it. It's too dangerous," thought the young South Korean despite the promise he made to his mother many years before. Yet here was his mother telling him she would pay for him to emigrate to America so he could enter North Korea with a U.S. passport—by selling her eyes! She was willing to cast herself into total darkness so that her son could take the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ into North Korea.

When his mother died, never having the opportunity to do as she had said, her son thought he was off the hook and would not have to honor the promise. Yet God, in His divine providence, made a way for the young man to come to America, which became his turning point. God then began to convict him that he was indeed destined to minister to North Korea. When he chose to obey God, God used him. He has since been to North Korea 62 times, taking the gospel to his countrymen and leading many to Christ.

The Midnight Hour

This man truly experienced a "midnight hour" in his decision to follow the Lord's call on his life. The midnight hour is often a turning point when a decision is made, an action is carried out, or a plan is set in motion.

Midnight is often negatively depicted as darkness and gloom, but according to Scripture, it doesn't have to be. It wasn't a time of gloom and doom for the Israelites as the death angel passed over their houses and smote the firstborn of the Egyptians:

... About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt: And all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh... and all the firstborn of beasts (Exodus 11:4,5).

For Egypt, midnight was a turning point to death; but for the Israelites it was a turning point to a new life in a new land.

I often wonder what it must have been like for the Israelites who sat safely in their houses while the death angel passed over. I believe they knew what was going on—they probably heard the cries of the Egyptians and the baying of the dogs as death overtook the firstborns. Yet I don't think they sat in fear; I think they sat in the anointing of what God was doing in their midst. Why? Because the only thing that can pass through the blood is the anointing. The devil can't go through the blood—it stops him dead in his tracks. But the anointing can always pass through the blood.

In the Old Testament, when Aaron and the priests were anointed, the blood

of the consecration ram was put upon "*... the tip of Aaron's right ear, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot"* (Leviticus 8:23). The blood preceded the anointing. Likewise, the first thing you would have seen in the Tabernacle or Temple would have been the brazen altar—where the blood was shed. You have to come through the blood before you come to the anointing.

In the New Testament, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the anointing didn't come until *after* the Cross and the Crucifixion. The anointing could not come without the blood for it must come through the blood. If you want to move into the future with an anointing, you can because you have the blood of Jesus which makes a way for you. The one thing that can pass through the blood is the anointing and the anointing is for God's people.

After God's chosen people had come into the Promised Land, Israel came under Philistine rule and was subjected to persecution. Deliverance began for them at midnight when Samson executed vengeance:

And Samson lay till midnight, and arose at midnight, and took the doors of the gate of the city, and the two posts, and went away with them, bar and all, and put them upon his shoulders, and carried them up to the top of an hill... (Judges 16:3).

It was after this, that the Philistines truly sought to destroy Samson.

When we think about Samson, we are tempted to think only of how many times he blew it. Because of his weakness for women, he was eventually captured, tortured, and humiliated by the Philistines. We need to look past his sins and mistakes to his turning point. When his hair grew out, he finished the job God had set before him. Samson, one man, was used by God to kill more Philistines in his death than during his lifetime. He's even listed in the Hebrews 11 hall of faith—God doesn't remember Samson's sins because he repented of them. The same is true for you. When you repent, God treats you the same way and forgets your sins.

Ruth is another example of what can happen at the midnight hour. Following her mother in-law's advice, Ruth sneaked in and lay down at Boaz's feet during the night in an effort to convince him to carry out his kinsman-redeemer obligations toward her: *"And it came to pass at midnight, that the man was afraid, and turned himself: and, behold, a woman lay at his feet"* (Ruth 3:8). When he realized she was essentially proposing, he made a decision that would impact the world.

At midnight he told her he would do what was necessary to be her kinsman-redeemer. (There was a closer relative who wasn't able to fulfill the obligation.) Boaz completed the necessary steps, married Ruth, and they had a son. Obed

became the father of Jesse who was the father of David. They all ended up in the lineage of Jesus— and it started at midnight. Boaz and Ruth's decisions became a turning point to life not only for them but also for all who choose life through Jesus—eternal life.

Choose Life

Yes, midnight is coming for the lost, but for the redeemed, midnight means life! The midnights of these people's lives became turning points because they chose life. Your choices will also have a great deal to do with your midnights; for if you *choose* life, then you'll *have* life. If you choose the blood, you can overcome the enemy. If you choose the blood and the anointing of the Holy Spirit, then you can destroy the yokes of the enemy: "*... and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing"* (Isaiah 10:27). And by destroying the works of the enemy, your life takes on a whole new meaning and perspective—you become a conqueror!

Even some of the sad stories in Scripture which involve the midnight hour turn out for good when a choice for life is made. In I Kings we read of Solomon's great wisdom in judging between two women, each of whom claimed the same child as her own. Both women had borne children, but the one had apparently rolled over on her child and accidentally smothered it in the night. According to the one woman, the other " . . . *arose at midnight, and took my son from beside me, while thine handmaid slept, and laid it in her bosom, and laid her dead child in my bosom"* (I Kings 3:20).

Solomon decreed that the solution to this problem was to cut the living child in half. Instead of seeing her child killed, the real mother chose life by telling him to give the child to the other woman. The "phony" mother told him to go ahead and divide him. The real mother got her baby back because she chose life.

Praise and Thanksgiving

When we choose life, even the darkest hours of our lives can become the brightest. So how do we choose life? The Bible clearly tells us how: *"At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee because of thy righteous judgments"* (Psalms 119:62). At midnight, don't get up and turn on the TV; get up and praise the Lord!

Look at what happened to Paul and Silas when they arrived with the gospel in Europe. After leading Lydia and her family to the Lord and casting a spirit of divination out of a girl, they were beaten and thrown into prison. Paul and Silas chose to ignore their circumstances, *"And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them"* (Acts 16:25).

How interesting that people watch what you do in the midnight hour. They

watch what you do at the darkest time of your life more than during the successful times. Your unsaved loved ones watch how you handle a crisis. The world wants to catch you blowing it. Paul and Silas could have whined, murmured, and complained; but instead, with the prisoners listening, they chose life. They prayed and praised the Lord, and look at what happened in their midnight hour. There was a great earthquake and they were loosed from their bonds and the doors of the prison were opened!

Despite that tremendous miracle, Paul and Silas remained where they were though they could have escaped. The jailer came to them trembling in fear and reverence for their God and asked, "... *Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"* (Acts 16:30). Paul and Silas' choice to praise God led to the jailer and his family's decisions for eternal life. The choices you make in crisis times can point others to Christ.

Any time you choose worship and praise, you are choosing life. Look at the end results of Paul and Silas' captivity. One of the strongest New Testament churches was founded in Philippi following that midnight worship hour. And to think it all started through Lydia who got saved at the river, a demon-possessed girl, and a jailer and his family. What a church! Paul wrote a letter to the Philippians that endures to this day. The common theme of Philippians is "rejoice!" Paul wrote and told them to rejoice. They probably said, "We have been ever since you came here!" Why? Because that's the way they started!

Accidental Turnarounds

Even accidents can have life-changing results. While Paul was in Troas, he preached to the believers.

Paul must have been really long-winded because one of the young men fell asleep while he preached with "tragic" results:

... Paul preached unto them,... and continued his speech until midnight. And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead (Acts20:7,9).

Sometimes accidents happen and we ask, "How could God let this happen?" or "God, could this be of You?" I don't personally think that accidents are from God; they're from the devil. As Christians, however, if we choose life, then God can use the accident and make a miracle out of it! He can make it a blessing in your life instead of defeat and make the midnight hour a turning point.

That's what happened in Eutychus' case.

Paul went down and embraced him, and said, *"...Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him. And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little*

comforted" (Acts 20:10,12). That was quite an experience, but one that God must have used to strengthen the believers and bring souls into his kingdom—maybe even Eutychus was saved because of it!

Folks, when accidents happen, don't get all upset and blame people for what happened. Instead turn to God and let Him put other people in your path who can offer their love, and nurture and care for those hurting around them—including you. I want God to use me to love people, don't you? I want to be available to extend His love to a hurting world—no matter what condition the people are in.

Prayer Awakenings

Eutychus' fall was a "wake up" call of a sort—it definitely roused him from a sound sleep! I don't know about you, but I hate to be awakened in the middle of the night. When I travel overseas, it is often difficult to get used to the time differences, especially when I go to Asia. There's about a 15-hour difference so I find myself awake at the craziest times. I might go to sleep at ten but awaken at one. There are nights I might only get three hours of sleep. So I say, "Well, I'm awake so I'll just pray." Every now and then, even here in the States, the devil will awaken me. That's a big mistake because I use this time for an opportunity to pray and praise. *Praying is choosing life,* so if Satan wakes you up or you are struggling with insomnia, don't count sheep! Talk to the Shepherd! Pray! He can turn the midnight hours into turning points.

Jesus gave us a parable about prayer which has to do with a man who was awakened in the middle of the night by his neighbor:

... Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee.

I say unto you, though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth (Luke 11:5-8).

Sometimes we think, "God, are you saying to me that if I don't keep praying, praying, praying; knocking at the door and pushing, pushing, pushing, that I won't get my prayers answered?" Can God be pushed to the limit of the unjust judge? (See Luke 18:1-7.) No. Here Jesus is talking about a friend, not the unjust judge. He's not saying we have to push Him over the wall to get an answer to prayer.

He's saying, "Ask."

If you went to a friend's house at midnight and asked for food because you

were hungry, he might tell you to get lost and come back at a decent hour—even if he didn't have to wake up the whole family. In Bible times in the Middle East, to respond to a friend's request, you would indeed have to wake up the family to get him the food—in those areas, entire families occupied the same bed which was attached to the door (perhaps something akin to our Murphy beds). So to open the door, he'd have to wake everybody up. But then, if he said "no," to your request, you'd probably end up waking everyone up anyway trying to convince him to change his mind.

But God is more than a friend; He's our Father. If a son knocked at the door and said, "Father, I'm hungry," the Father would say, "Get in here, Son!" We just love to feed our kids, right? When our kids come home, we fix all their favorite foods. If they don't like something, you don't fix it again—and it doesn't matter how old they get! My mother is in her eighties; she can hardly fix lunch anymore but she still loves to feed me!

That's the way our Father is. If we come at midnight and say, "Father, I need bread," He'll say, "Honey, you are at the right door" and give us the bread. *Choose the Father.* He won't let you leave needy. Maybe you've been running to friends and they won't even let you in. Your friends can let you down but God won't. Why? Because you are His child. The Father hears you, and will open the door wide because of your midnight prayers—or any prayers.

Modern-day Samsons

We have seen how all these midnight-hour situations and crises became turning points for those involved. Samson, one man, took the anointing of God and dragged that gate—and in doing so, ultimately turned the nation around. One man routed the Philistines. Can one man or woman do something miraculous like that today?

I believe so—in fact I know so! One of the pastors in our church is married to a woman whose bold actions began to change the history of this nation. When she was still in high school, she and her best friend decided they wanted to have a Bible study in the school. Everybody told them, "No, you can't do it." But the year before, "Equal Access" had become law and these girls fought for their right to have their Bible study. Their school district and their state court told them they could not and the case was eventually appealed to the Sixth District Court of Appeals, which allowed them to have their Bible study. But then the school district asked the American Civil Liberties Union for help and they appealed the decision to the U.S. Supreme Court which upheld the decision. Now Equal Access guarantees religious groups the right to meet in a school if the school has other clubs not directly related to the curriculum.

This young high school student decided to take a stand, do something, and get involved. She had no idea at the time what it would lead to—a turning point.

In another instance, severe persecution led to the shaking of a nation. In Nepal, they used to put Christians in prison for preaching the gospel. But do you know what happened in the prisons? The Christians would lead the other inmates to Christ until the whole prison would be saved! Finally the government said, "Don't put any more Christians in prison. They're winning too many people!" Nepal now has a law that prohibits putting Christians in prison. Furthermore, they are allowed to preach openly because they told their government, "We're still going to preach." Wht a turning point!

I have spoken to many Chinese who have been imprisoned over and over again for preaching the gospel. One man I spoke to had been in prison for five years. At first, he said, the guards were very cruel and continually beat him. That's when he went on a fast, and prayed for all the guards to be saved—and they were! Once the guards were saved, they fasted and prayed with him, got a Bible, and got the entire prison saved. Then the guards allowed two prisoners at a time to slip out at night to the surrounding countryside where they made many converts and started many churches. Guess what time they sneaked out at? MIDNIGHT!

Arise!

I saved the best midnight for last: *"And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him"* (Matthew 25:6). Who knows? Could Jesus come at midnight—tonight? Revelation tells us that Jesus will return during the darkest period the earth has ever known. If you have made a choice for life, you know that when He comes, you won't be left behind!

We never know what situations await us down the road. We don't know what obstacles we will face tomorrow let alone next year. If your reaction is one of defeat, you will never get out of debt, never get healed, never overcome that mental or emotional problem. If, on the other hand, you confront that problem head-on by thanking and praising God, praying, and rejoicing in His provision for you, your midnight hours will become turning points for victory, freedom, and life.

Receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior of Your Life.

The Bible says, *'That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe m thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation"* (Romans 10:9,10).

Tb receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior of your life, sincerely pray this prayer from your heart:

Dear Jesus,

I believe that You died for me and that You rose again on the third day. I confess to You that I am a sinner and that I need Your love and forgiveness. Come into my life, forgive my sins, and give me eternal life. I confess You now as my Lord. Thank You for my salvation!

Signed _____

Date_____

Covering the Earth with His Word!

Ministering to both physical as well as spiritual needs is at the heart of Marilyn Hickey Ministries and Marilyn's call to "cover the earth with the Word" in the uttermost parts of the world in places such as ...



Turning Point!

Are you—or someone you love—facing a "midnight hour" . .. with a spouse or child? ... the pressure of financial difficulty? . .. the hardship of sickness, rejection, guilt, depression or secret sin?

Learn and apply truths from God's Word that can turn your "midnight hour" into a miracle turning point in your life or circumstances.

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