

Acts 12:4-12

When Peter came to himself, he said, “Now I know for sure that the Lord has sent forth His angel and rescued me from the hand of Herod and from all that the Jewish people were expecting. V.11

Waiting out the process

This weekend, I was reminded of the story in Acts 12:4-12 when Peter is imprisoned and the LORD breaks his chains, opens the prison gates, and leads him to freedom. These few verses show many aspects of God and of ourselves in this one instance of our imprisonment and His power.

Peter’s freedom was preceded by the fervent prayer of his friends.

*Acts 12:5 Peter was kept in prison, but prayer for him was being made fervently by the church to God. Link that to James 5:16 Confess your trespasses to one another, and prayer for one another, that you may be healed. **The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.***

God’s timing was perfect. I am not a great fan of God’s timing on the front end when I am waiting the results. However, I am usually in awe in hindsight.

*Acts 12:6 – **on the very night when Herod was about to bring him forward**, the LORD made His move to free Peter. I am sure we can all think of those eleventh-hour outcomes in our lives. They are designed to strengthen our dependence upon God and our trust in Him.*

Peter was asleep while the LORD worked on his behalf, but the work could only complete its course when Peter awoke and engaged in the process.

*Acts 12:6 Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains... and an angel of the LORD suddenly appeared, struck Peter’s side and **woke him up, saying “Get up quickly.” And his chains fell off his hands.** In 2Kings 5:5-11, Naaman was captain of the king’s army, and was a leper. Elisha gave him instructions on how to be healed, but Naaman rejected them because they were not fancy enough for him. Eventually he followed Elisha’s instructions and was healed, but until he did so, he was locked in his disease.*

God worked all the circumstances, instructing, opening, leading, while Peter behaved as if in a dream.

Acts 12:9-11 Peter went out ... but thought he was seeing a vision. The LORD led him past the first and second guards, to the iron gate leading to the city which opened by itself. Immediately the angel departed from him. God is not dependent upon our grasping everything that is happening. He just wants our

willingness to go along with Him and His plans. This comes with *knowing* that God can be trusted.

How often do we keep praying over something that the LORD has already resolved?

Acts 12:12 Peter went to the house of Mary ... where many were gathered together and praying. Even when Peter was loosed from his chains and walking out of prison, after he needed the prayer, those at Mary's house were still in fervent prayer. Sometime we just have nothing left to us but prayer.

If you are like me, you are sweating the details, worrying about results, and wondering if you will ever see an answer, only to find that you are in the clear, the result is knocking at the door, and the LORD has moved on to the next thing. I think we just have no concept of how effortlessly God works in the lives of those who awaken to His touch, renew their minds, and respond to His leading.

If we can wait out the process then we *understand* God's plan, we see His purpose, and we grasp how He wants to use us.

You are so good to us, LORD.