

Narrative - love these parts of Scripture

All the story

12 About that time Herod the king laid violent hands on some who belonged to the church. 2 He killed James the brother of John with the sword, 3 and when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also. This was during the days of Unleavened Bread. 4 And when he had seized him, he put him in prison, delivering him over to four squads [16 soldiers guard Peter] of soldiers to guard him, intending after the Passover to bring him out to the people. 5 So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church.

Peter Is Rescued

6 Now when Herod was about to bring him out, on that very night, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries before the door were guarding the prison. 7 And behold, an angel of the Lord stood next to him, and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him, saying, "Get up quickly." And the chains fell off his hands. 8 And the angel said to him, "Dress yourself and put on your sandals." And he did so. And he said to him, "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me." 9 And he went out and followed him. He did not know that what was being done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision. 10 When they had passed the first and the second guard, they came to the iron gate leading into the city. It opened for them of its own accord, and they went out and went along one street, and immediately the angel left him. 11 When Peter came to himself, he said, "Now I am sure that the Lord has sent His angel and rescued me from the hand of Herod and from all that the Jewish people were expecting."

12 When he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose other name was Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying. 13 And when he knocked at the door of the gateway, a servant girl named Rhoda came to answer. 14 Recognizing Peter's voice, in her joy she did not open the gate but ran in and reported that Peter was standing at the gate. 15 They said to her, "You are out of your mind." But she kept insisting that it was so, and they kept saying, "It is his angel!" 16 But Peter continued knocking, and when they opened, they saw him and were amazed. 17 But motioning to them with his hand to be silent, he described to them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, "Tell these things to James and to the brothers." Then he departed and went to another place.

18 Now when day came, there was no little disturbance among the soldiers over what had become of Peter. 19 And after Herod searched for him and did not find him, he examined the sentries and ordered that they should be put to death. Then he went down from Judea to Caesarea and spent time there. (Acts 12:1-19)

A lot could be said about this passage.

What I believe the Spirit is nailing home for me, and hasn't allowed me to get away from, is the contrast between these three "main characters," if you will, in this passage. And more specifically how this particular situation ended for each of them.

Seems a little unfair for James.

Peter: delivered

John: delivered

James: dead

Both of these men were faithful to Jesus. One ended up dying in obscurity, and the other was delivered and went on to tell the story.

I'll be real, that kind of bothers me. I wonder if anyone else has those same thoughts?

Because how this went down with Peter makes sense to us. It's what we expect (twisted thinking) to happen when people are faithful. God shows up or comes through or whatever and saves the day.

We see this often in Scripture so it's not a ridiculous expectation, but when He doesn't do it like that, it bothers us.

I think it's still hanging onto the idea of a transactional relationship.

Foster care story

What if faithfulness to Jesus means obscurity and death, are we ok with that? What if faithfulness is you disappearing, never being known, never making for a "great story" because you are already a part of the most important story ever told or lived.

I think that is a battle that rages deeply in many of us.

Pastor David—radar story

How different would our life be if what we did was driven by faithfulness to Jesus, not effectiveness or legacy or impact.

Other side of the coin

My small group—the exact opposite. Story.

If your faithfulness to Jesus leads to a delivering for you, are you willing to use the influence you have been given?

God has done miraculous things in your life, that you need to share to build up the church, to be a testimony of Gods goodness to others.

I don't know what boat you are in, but our story today ends with one you definitely don't want to be in.

Herod.

The Death of Herod

20 Now Herod was angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon, and they came to him with one accord, and having persuaded Blastus, the king's chamberlain, they asked for peace, because their country depended on the king's country for food. 21 On an appointed day Herod put on his royal robes, took his seat upon the throne, and delivered an oration to them. 22 And the people were shouting, "The voice of a god, and not of a man?" 23 Immediately an angel of the Lord struck him down, because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and breathed his last. 24 But the Word of God increased and multiplied. (Acts 12:20-24)

What we can count on, whether we die in obscurity or whether we are delivered from trial, is that when people stand against God and when people are faithful to Him, that His words will increase and multiply, that the church will continue to grow. We just need to make sure we get in on it.

HOME GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

JUNE 18, 2023

CONNECTION

How are you doing?

What did obedience look like this week?

ACTS 12:1-24

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What stuck out to you in the passage?

What do you think the Holy Spirit is saying to you?

What do you need to do this week to be obedient?

Is there anyone that you could impact or share with this week?

NEXT WEEK: ACTS 12:25-13:12