

### **Acts 12:1-11**

**<sup>1</sup> It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them.**

<sup>2</sup> He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword.

**<sup>3</sup> When he saw that this met with approval among the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also. This happened during the Festival of Unleavened Bread.**

<sup>4</sup> After arresting him, he put him in prison, handing him over to be guarded by four squads of four soldiers each. Herod intended to bring him out for public trial after the Passover.

**<sup>5</sup> So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him.**

<sup>6</sup> The night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries stood guard at the entrance.

**<sup>7</sup> Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. "Quick, get up!" he said, and the chains fell off Peter's wrists.**

<sup>8</sup> Then the angel said to him, "Put on your clothes and sandals." And Peter did so. "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me," the angel told him.

**<sup>9</sup> Peter followed him out of the prison, but he had no idea that what the angel was doing was really happening; he thought he was seeing a vision.**

<sup>10</sup> They passed the first and second guards and came to the iron gate leading to the city. It opened for them by itself, and they went through it. When they had walked the length of one street, suddenly the angel left him.

**<sup>11</sup> Then Peter came to himself and said, "Now I know without a doubt that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from Herod's clutches and from everything the Jewish people were hoping would happen."**

Good Morning First Baptist Members and Friends! I am thankful to be in the Lord's house – one more time! If you are thankful for waking up this morning – thankful for being able to make it to the Lord's house – thankful for the freedom to praise and worship the Lord without fear of persecution – then I invite you to Shout to the Lord.

*Shout to the Lord, all the earth, let us sing  
Power and majesty, praise to the King  
Mountains bow down and the seas will roar  
At the sound of Your name*

*I sing for joy at the work of Your hands  
Forever I'll love You, forever I'll stand  
Nothing compares to the promise I have in You<sup>1</sup>*

I want to acknowledge the impressive work of the Christian Education committee and those that support them. Daphney, Linda and Jasmine have truly stepped up to the plate and they are knocking the ball out of the park.

I want to acknowledge all the high school and college young men that were here last night. It felt good to pull into the parking lot and have a young man look out to make sure who ever was coming into the building felt acknowledged and welcomed. Thanks to each of you.

Our Adult Sunday School lessons for the month of November will be from the books of Acts. With the exception of next Sunday when we will be concluding our Fall Revival the sermons for the month will also be from Acts – unless God sends another message or messenger.

There is a lot of information contained within the 11 verses under consideration. We learn that this King Herod, who was the grandson of Herod the Great, was seeking to gain the approval of people – in this case the Jews - in order to solidify his position as king. When he saw that beheading James met with their approval he seized Peter with the intent of bringing him to public trial after the Festival of Unleavened Bread. If you had continued reading the chapter you would have learned that King Herod thought so much of himself that he allowed the people to worship him and he was struck with a sickness and died.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.metrolyrics.com/shout-to-the-lord-lyrics-zschech-darlene.html>

*21 On the appointed day Herod, wearing his royal robes, sat on his throne and delivered a public address to the people.  
22 They shouted, "This is the voice of a god, not of a man."  
23 Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died.*

I thought about preaching:

### **THE MESSAGE FROM ANGELS DEPENDS ON HOW YOU LIVE!**

Thought I would point out that one angel came from God to save Peter and another angel came from God to slay King Herod.

But that did not give me the peace I was seeking for this morning, so I returned to vs. 5 and read that Peter was in prison but the people were praying. It would be easy to fall into the cliché and preach:

#### **PRAYER CHANGES THINGS!**

Yet I knew there was something more so I read on to the 12<sup>th</sup> verse and there it was!

*12 When this had dawned on him, he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark, **where many people had gathered and were praying.***

This 12<sup>th</sup> verse linked with the 5<sup>th</sup> verse

*5 So Peter was kept in prison, but **the church was earnestly praying to God for him.***

During this preaching moment I want to make a connection between praying with purpose and unity in the church. For my note takers stay with me, I worked to make this title simpler, but it did not happen.

**Praying with Purpose + Unity in the Church = Transformation**

## SHALL WE PRAY?

Creator God, Sustaining God, Transforming God thank you for all that you have given us to help us understand the Word that has been preserved for our generation. Thank you for bibles and commentaries and gifted teachers and preachers. Thank you for digital libraries, religious blogs and relevant social media. Thank you for devices that will read the words to us if we are unable to read for ourselves. Thank you that no one in America can say they do not have access to your Word. Now I ask on behalf of us all that you send the Holy Spirit to guide us during this time of study. Let us hear something that when applied will make us better than we were when we entered. Abba, please use me – allow me – to preach your Word. Amen and Amen.

### **Praying with Purpose + Unity in the Church = Transformation**

- **Clear about many aspects of prayer**

Food, Clothing, Shelter, Safety, Health, and Love

**This is a partial list of what we need to survive and thrive**

- **But when we pray for the church...**

Prayer for the Church

Who do we want to be?

Why do we want to be this?

How will being this bring God glory?

- **When we pray for unity?**

*unity between alliance members: harmony, accord, cooperation, collaboration, agreement, consensus, solidarity; formal concord, concordance.*  
ANTONYMS strife, discord.

Let us look at how this all comes together in the passage under consideration.

### **First the church was earnestly praying**

-- This is not a 5 second "Lord, bless all those over there ..." prayer

-- This is a prayer of faithfulness; a prayer of boldness and specificity

### **Second the church was specifically praying**

-- Praying for Peter to be released and to be unharmed

-- Praying for restoration and protection and the return of their brother

**Third the church was expectantly praying**

- Praying knowing that God was listening and would answer them
- THIS IS CRITICAL!! Do we prayer expecting God to answer?

Revival – for unchurched to find Jesus

1<sup>st</sup> Saturday – for those in need – not greed to have food and clothing

Harvest Dinner – to celebrate as family and community what God has done  
for us

Election of Leadership Council  
Moderator and Co-Moderator

Thanksgiving

And what will we do when He does!

