

Topic: Answering God

Text: Acts 12:1-17 (NIV)

Theme: “God’s ways in answering our prayers”

INTRODUCTION

- God has a thousand ways to answer our prayers. If we expect or claim for an answer the same way He stepped in into the needs of other Christians, we are limiting God’s creative ways to meet our own needs.
- After Herod Agrippa I beheaded James (brother of John), he extended his fury by throwing Peter to prison for execution. An earthly king trying to stop the work of the heavenly King through Peter, no way!
- In this sermon, see how God moved His hand and used His resources that led to Peter’s miraculous escape from prison. Time and time again, God’s faithfulness to respond and rescue His people from the most impossible situation is way beyond imagination.
- Take note: God is no respecter of person. He doesn’t discriminate gender, race, church position, or intellect. He answers the prayers of His children in many unique ways.

I. GOD DOES THE IMPOSSIBLE WHEN WE DO THE POSSIBLE

V6 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.

V7 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.

V8 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.

V9 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.

V10a,b 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.

A. The impossible things that God did to Peter:

1. It was impossible for Peter to escape due to the following conditions:
V4b ...handing him over to be guarded by four squads of four soldiers each...
V6 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.
 - a. well-guarded, 16 guards;
 - b. he was sleeping;
 - c. he was between two soldiers;
 - d. he was bound with two chains; and
 - e. two guards at the entrance.
2. The angel woke him up.
V7b He struck Peter on the side and woke him up.
3. Peter's chains fell off from his hands.
V7c "Quick, get up!" he said, and the chains fell off Peter's wrists.
4. They passed the first and second guards unnoticed.
V10a They passed the first and second guards and came to the iron gate leading to the city
5. The gate opened by itself.
V10b It opened for them by itself, and they went through it.

B. The possible things that Peter did:

1. Peter was not worrying, he was sleeping soundly.
V6a The night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter was sleeping ...
2. Peter woke up.
3. Peter dressed up and put on his sandals.
V8 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.
4. Peter walked and followed the angel.
V9 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.

C. Application (“Men do the possible, and God will take care of the impossible”) Examples:

1. Peter walked on the sea.
2. Jesus did not heal the blind man instantly; his eyes were anointed with mud and washed himself in the pool of Siloam.
3. Naaman was healed of leprosy when he obeyed Elisha to wash himself 7x in Jordan River.

II. GOD MOVES HIS HAND WHEN WE PRAY AND HAVE FAITH

V5 So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him.

V12 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.

A. The believers prayed *EARNESTLY* and without *CEASING*.

V5 So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him.

B. The believers stepped out in faith, though it was an *IMPERFECT* faith.

1. They did not leave the gate open.

V13 Peter knocked at the outer entrance, and a servant girl named Rhoda came to answer the door.

V14 When she recognized Peter's voice, she was so overjoyed she ran back without opening it and exclaimed, "Peter is at the door!"

2. They did not believe that their prayer was already answered.

V15 "You're out of your mind," they told her. When she kept insisting that it was so, they said, "It must be his angel."

V16 But Peter kept on knocking, and when they opened the door and saw him, they were astonished.

C. Application:

1. When we have done all we could do, God would intervene.
2. We do not know what God would do, but we know God could do something.

III. GOD ENDS INTERVENING WHEN WE CAN BEGIN AGAIN

V10c When they had walked the length of one street, suddenly the angel left him.

V11 Then Peter came to himself and said, "Now I know without a doubt that the Lord sent his angel and rescued me from Herod's clutches and from everything the Jewish people were anticipating."

V12 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.

A. God ends intervening to fortify Peter's faith.

V11 ... "Now I know without a doubt that the Lord sent his angel and rescued me from Herod's clutches and from everything the Jewish people were anticipating."

B. God ends intervening to allow Peter to testify and give glory to God.

V17 Peter motioned with his hand for them to be quiet and described how the Lord had brought him out of prison. "Tell James and the brothers about this," he said, and then he left for another place.