

THE POWER OF PRAYER

It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them. He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword. When he saw that this pleased the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also. This happened during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. 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.

Acts 12:1-4 (NIV)

❖ Dealing with CRISIS:

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

Acts 12:5 (NIV)

1. At a time of Crisis... you experience a LOSS of CONTROL.
2. At a time of Crisis... you don't have any CLEAR ANSWERS.
3. At a time of Crisis... you can't see WHAT'S AHEAD.
4. At a time of Crisis... you have a fear of GREAT LOSS.

❖ The CHOICES you make DEFINE your Crisis:

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

Acts 12:5-6 (NIV)

1. We can just give up and surrender to the Crisis... CHOOSING DEFEAT.

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

Galatians 6:9

2. We can work hard and fight against the Crisis... CHOOSING DETERMINATION.
3. We can turn to God and turn the Crisis over to Him... CHOOSING DEPENDENCE.

Trust in the Lord with all our hearts and lean not on our own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him and He will make your paths straight.

Proverbs 3:5-6

❖ The Outcome of Crisis when you make the FAITH CHOICE:

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. 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. 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. 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. 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." 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. Peter knocked at the outer entrance, and a servant girl named Rhoda came to answer the door. When she recognized Peter's voice, she was so overjoyed she ran back without opening it and exclaimed, "Peter is at the door!" "You're out of your mind," they told her. When she kept insisting that it was so, they said, "It must be his angel." But Peter kept on knocking, and when they opened the door and saw him, they were astonished. 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.

Acts 12:7-17 (NIV)

1. There is an EXTERNAL OUTCOME.

2. There is an INTERNAL OUTCOME.

3. There is a STRATEGIC OUTCOME.

- *If I choose to trust God, submit my life to His will, spend time with Him in His Word and in prayer, He will do great things through me that can impact eternity.*

Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Ephesians 3:20-21 (NIV)