

# **Unstuck: How the Early Church Changed the World**

Lesson 10

Acts 12:1-19

November 14, 2021

## **Prayer: Our Most Powerful Weapon**

### **Introduction**

How much do you expect from your prayers to the Lord? Do you expect big things or little things?

It's a popular cliché to say that "God answers all our prayers, but sometimes the answer is 'no.'" There is profound power in our dialogue with our heavenly Father. The Lord is always listening to us and always working in our lives, frequently in ways that we do not see and surprise us.

In Acts 12, we get an illustration of the power of prayer in the early church. Peter was imprisoned by Herod just after he had executed James. Peter was facing a certain death sentence, but the local church was praying earnestly for him. Finally, God answered dramatically by sending an angel to break Peter's chains and escort him out of prison. It was such a powerful demonstration of God's power and His love for the church that both Peter and the believers that had been praying had a hard time believing that it had happened.

In the same way that He responded to the prayers of Peter's friends and broke him out of jail, God cherishes our prayers and will respond in dramatic and surprising ways. Because it's the centerpiece of our relationship with Jesus, our prayers should be continual, earnest, and expectant. When we pray, we do so knowing that He loves us deeply and can do the impossible.

***Memory verse: "So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him."—Acts 12:5***

Pray and read Acts 12:1-19. What questions or observations do you have about this passage?

**What does the passage say?**

1. When did Herod arrest James, Peter, and the other church members? (Acts 12:1-4)
2. What did the church do when Peter was in prison? (Acts 12:5)
3. What happened immediately after these prayers? (Acts 12:7-10)
4. What were the people at Mary's house doing when Peter got there? (Acts 12:12)
5. How did the church react when Peter showed up at John Mark's mother's house? (Acts 12:13-16)
6. What did Peter tell the people at Mary's house to do after he told them the story of the Lord getting him out of jail? (Acts 12:17)

## **What does the passage mean?**

1. Both Peter and James were arrested in this passage. Peter was miraculously delivered, but James was executed. Does this mean that God only answers certain prayers and ignores others? (Acts 12:1-10)
  
2. Peter initially thought that the angel getting him out of jail was only a vision or dream and was not real. What does it say about Peter's expectations of God answering his prayers? (Acts 12:11-12)
  
3. If the church had been praying for Peter when he was in jail, why were they so surprised when he showed up at Mary's house? (Acts 12:12-17)



