

Grateful to God

Acts 12:1-24

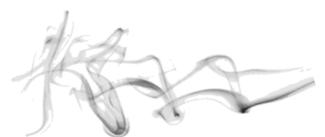
I'm thankful that God is in _____.

I'm thankful God has given us a community to _____ with.

I'm thankful God's does _____ than we can ask or imagine.



EMPOWERED
WITNESSES



Acts 12:1-24

[1] 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 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.

[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.

[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.

Grateful to God

November 27, 2022

Open: How have you seen God respond to a group of people who were earnestly praying?

Read & Discuss: Acts 12:1-24

1. What can we learn about Herod from verses 1-4? How do you think it might affect you to live in a place where you were under such danger for following Christ? What do you believe Jesus might say to those who face the threat of persecution for following Him?
2. What does the response of the church to all this (v. 5) tell us about the early believers? What does it mean to pray "earnestly," as we're told the early church did? Why is there value in praying together as a church or as a group?
3. What stands out to you from Peter's deliverance from prison in verses 6-11? How do you think you would have been affected by this if you were Peter? Has there ever been a time when you suspected that angels might have been caring for you?
4. Has there ever been a time when others could have accused you, like Rhoda, of being "out of your mind" because of a way you witnessed God answer prayer (v. 15)? Although the believers were praying for Peter's deliverance, they were surprised when God actually did what they asked (vv. 14-16). What causes us to behave similarly?
5. What impact do you think it would have had on the other believers to hear Peter tell the story of his deliverance (vv. 17)? Why is it important for us to share testimonies with others of how God has worked in our lives? What keeps us from doing this more often?
6. Herod's story did not end well. Why would God have struck him down (v. 23)? As we think about our world today, how does the contrast between what happened with Herod and what happened with the Word of God (v. 24) encourage you to continue prioritizing the Gospel?

Apply: What are some good things for which you are hesitant to pray because you doubt God will answer positively—even though those things might be good and godly? How do the events of Acts 12 encourage you to pray earnestly?

Pray: Ask God to make us a people who are quick to pray earnestly and who do not hold back from asking God to move in wonderful and miraculous ways.

Acts 12:1-24

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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."

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²⁴ But the word of God increased and multiplied. (ESV)