

# 1 The Early Church at Prayer

Acts 12:5

Ch. 12:1-24 just before  
( ) between Saul & B- being  
Ch. 11:30 and 12:25 when they  
were returning.

In the last paragraph of the eleventh chapter of Acts we read of a world famine which came to pass under Claudius. In this calamity the church took up plans for relief. It seemed that in Judaea. Each disciple as he was able was determined to send help to the brethren in Judaea. Barnabas and Paul were chosen to take the offering to them.

But the devil was at work at the same time. His agent was Herod. This man instead of helping put forth his hand to kill and persecute those of the church. He killed James the brother of Jesus and seeing that he was pleasing the Jews - helping his political career he seized Peter also and put him in prison. Around the saint of God was placed sixteen soldiers to guard him through days of unrelieved bread. Like a modern enemy would say "wait till we get him out of the church."

Here we see a praying church. These were trying time for the church.

1. It was poor. The church has always had to be, more or less, a beggar. Some people have always loved it and have given according to their ability. No one knows just what power, "poor dollars" have had. The church was poor, but was rich in determination to carry on in calamity financially. This attitude has always characterized God's people. When hard times come I guess God's followers a chance to demonstrate their faith.
2. It faced a political enemy. No institution has suffered more at the hands of kings, and other political leaders than the church. Governments directly and indirectly defeat the church, enterprise church schools. The church pioneered in education but the state came along and step by step ran us out of the field.
3. The church was praying for a captured man. Peter had been taken by Herod Agrippa. He was nephew to Herod Antipas who beheaded John the Baptist, and brother to Herodias. It would appear that he was captured for good. Sixteen soldiers were put over him. Four seemed to guard the prison proper, two of them sleeping with Peter being chained to him. Jerusalem seemed to have had three walls, so that to get from the prison, which was likely at the outer wall, three gates had to be passed before coming into heart of Jerusalem. In the face of all this the church prayed for Peter.
4. The church was a praying church. This is the only way she has ever made things happen in fields of spiritual

Conflict.

Peter was carried by physical force to prison. I do not mean that he was forced to go but physical beings had charge of him. But there were powers greater than flesh greater than armed soldiers, greater than iron bars, locks, keys, and chains working in his behalf. The church was praying.

a. It was praying for a man in prison. If the early church could pray for a Christian man who was bound by chains should not the modern church pray for sinners who are simply souls bound by sin.

Peter was not the only Christian bound with chains. Christians today are bound - some with chains of gold, silver, land, politics and are putting the chains on themselves. Some are allowing others to put the chains on them. Peter's chains for awhile were keeping him away from prayer meeting. But Peter did not like the chains. Some of us did not at the little prayer meeting people were praying.

b. The early church was praying when it seemed that all physical conditions were against the prayer being answered. But they prayed.

What these prayers did.

- a. Caused angels to stir. Here we see that "Prison wall do not a prison make nor iron bars a cage." Peter was sleeping when the angel came. Locks lost their grip and chains ceased to bind and Peter walked away.
- b. Brought Peter to the early church.
- c. Increased their faith in God because they saw God's power turned loose in behalf of right.

Peter was released from his hindrance for unrepentance and when released was given instructions for procedure. And although Peter was a Christian released from physical hindrance which he did not choose to have hind his yet there are further applications here for us who are released from chains of unbelief or spiritual impot that we have placed on our selves.

1. Rise up quickly. we are not to delay - to day is the day of salvation. Why will ye wait dear brother, ah why will ye tarry so long.
2. Mind thyself - not ready - the battle is on. Do not be found wanting.
3. Put on your sandals there is marching to be done.
4. Put on your gounant - be in proper garb.
5. Follow me. A divine presence, when we do this we come to the wright places. To the right attitude.

Peter gave his experience. How that the Lord had led. Inviest him by means of the angel. He did not say how good

he was but gave the Lord the honor when you hear people begin to talk about how good they are you better watch your step around them.

I have heard people bless out picture shows and then know of their going when they were away from home, bless out bathing pools but on the July show as the time, bless out chautauques but while the Chautauqua was on going till their tongues had come on them.

☰ The early church did not spend its time gossiping or saying how good "I am" but it prayed, preached, and practiced just as so many church people do to-day and the "word of God multiplied".

Last part of chapter 11 is account of world famine. Ch. planned relief. Paul & Barabas -

gave at work also - Herod - Peter prisoner & 16 soldiers, 30 days of unrelieved bread.

The early church,

1. It was poor. It has always had to buy. The power of poor dollars. Rich determination.
2. It faced a political enemy. Kings have been enemies of the church many times.

3. It was a praying church. This is the most powerful instrument she has ever used.

It was praying for a captured man. (Peter)

It was praying for a man in prison (location of prison) (at last ch. prayed for a saint - just should not do modern ch. pray for peo. improvement by us)

we have christian & day bound with chains. a. bold, b. silver, c. stand d. politic

Peter's chains kept him not from prayer meeting

It was praying when all physical things seemed against prayer being answered.

4. Effect of the prayers.

- a. Caused angels to stir.
- b. Brought Peter to early ch.
- c. Increased their faith.

5. Purpose of Peter's release from his hindrances. Usefulness. Same is true in our case.

6. Instructions to Peter

1. Rise 2. Herod 3. Put on sandals 4. Payment <sup>7 follow</sup>

7. Peter gave his experience - the tool by his angel released him - gave tool credit when Peter say how good they are look out.

8. The early church did not gossip about prayer, preached and practiced.