

Acts 12:1-25
Only a Prayer Meeting

Introduction:

Luke brings to our attention how the church was so often engaged in prayer both privately and corporately. It appears that this church prayer meeting went on through the night. Interesting advice you will find in Spurgeon's book of sermons on, "Only a Prayer Meeting..."

I. The New Wave of Persecution

A. Wicked King Herod

1. Execution of James (One of the apostles – Mk. 10:39)
2. Peter imprisoned waiting execution v.4

B. What was Peter's reaction to all this?

1. Peter seems to have a calmness provided by the Holy Spirit
2. Peter writes in his epistle to cast your care upon the Lord – I Pet. 5:7
3. Peter was sleeping between two soldiers – v. 6

II. Lessons in Deliverance

A. Peter's deliverance came at the last possible moment – Psa. 27:14

B. Peter's experience of deliverance from prison must be balanced with the experience of James, who was not delivered.

C. Peter's imprisonment illustrates for us the nature of spiritual deliverance through the gospel. Prayers of the saints (Charles Wesley and Martin Luther)

III. Answered Prayer

A. Why should Christians pray if God is Sovereign and Omniscient?

1. God works through means which is prayer
2. God works through the means of witnesses of the gospel - Jam. 4:2

B. Praying to God – v. 5

C. Praying together – v. v5

D. Praying specifically – Turn to: James 5:13-18

E. Praying and irony:

1. We see the servant girl rejoicing after hearing Peter's voice – v.14
2. The servant girl was respected in her discovery of Peter at the door v. 15 (Lenski)
3. They all were filled with amazement – v. 16
4. In spite of unbelief, God nevertheless did answer them - I Pet. 5:7,10 (Ill. Polar Bears in the Arctic)
5. Prayer in weakness – Elijah – Jam. 5:17,18 cf. I Kings 17,18

