

Scripture Texts

ACTS 12:1-16

It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them. ²He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword. ³When he saw that this met with approval among the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also. This happened during the Festival of Unleavened Bread. ⁴After 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.

⁵So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him.

⁶The 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. ⁷Suddenly 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.

⁸Then 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. ⁹Peter 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. ¹⁰They 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.

¹¹Then Peter came to himself and said, “Now I know without a doubt that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from Herod’s clutches and from everything the Jewish people were hoping would happen.”

¹²When 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. ¹³Peter knocked at the outer entrance, and a servant named Rhoda came to answer the door. ¹⁴When she recognized Peter’s voice, she was so overjoyed she ran back without opening it and exclaimed, “Peter is at the door!”

¹⁵“You’re out of your mind,” they told her. When she kept insisting that it was so, they said, “It must be his angel.”

¹⁶But Peter kept on knocking, and when they opened the door and saw him, they were astonished.

MATTHEW 5:11,12

Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Big Ideas

1

The Church had a boldness
that produced conflict.

2

We belong to something stronger;
we belong to the Church.

3

It is time to quit asking God
to shrink our conflict,
and start asking Him
to grow our courage.

4

Public theology matters
because when the Church
loses her voice,
the world loses its conscience.

5

Sometimes we get so lost
in what we are praying for,
that when the miracle shows up,
we don't have the ability
to even recognize it.

6

Sometimes the answer
is right outside your door
and God is just waiting
for you to open it.

Questions & Takeaways

- How can we better hear God's voice, discern His leading, and receive His blessing all the while continuing to pray for more?
- Let's prioritize our belonging... our belonging to the Church... or belonging to PURSUIT.

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PURSUIT