

Acts 12

by Brian Long

The sermon on Acts 12 emphasizes the power of prayer and God's deliverance in the face of trials faced by the early church.

Duration: 45:32

Scripture: Acts 12:1-17

Topics: "Prayer"

Description

In the sermon, the speaker discusses the Bible app and its helpful features, such as videos and illustrated maps, that enhance the study of the Bible. The speaker then focuses on the story of Peter being put into prison and highlights the surprising detail of the prison's size. Despite the opportunity to escape, the angel instructs Peter to get dressed and follow him, emphasizing the message of God to be prepared and ready to work after coming out of a trial. The speaker also emphasizes the importance of testifying and sharing God's work in our lives, using Peter's example of immediately sharing his testimony with believers after being released from prison.

Transcript

I talk a lot about being led by the Spirit. I want to be led by the Spirit. The Scripture commands us to be led by the Spirit, to walk in the Spirit.

But when you are led by the Spirit, there's always a clash with the flesh and with our own reasoning. And I did come this morning with a message. I didn't have an assurance.

I had an assurance it's a word from the Lord, but for some reason this morning didn't have an absolute assurance that it's a word for today. And as we begin to worship and I was praying, I couldn't get Acts chapter 12 off my heart, which is a completely different text. And Steve has been sharing a lot about Acts chapter 12.

So what I want us to do is to have a family time, Church. And we're going to ask our brother to share from his heart, from the Word of God, what God's put on his heart from Acts chapter 12. And then I would like to share a little bit from that.

And if you have something as you listen to this, if you have a question, if you have a comment, something you want to share, something God stirs in your heart from the Scripture that you want to say from that,

that's what we're going to do this morning. I know it's different. That's OK.

It's OK to break out of, you know, what you expect to happen next. And so I believe this is what God is leading today. So let's tune our hearts to what the Lord would say to us.

And Steve, would you share with us what God gives you? I was thinking about when Curtis was saying, he blacks your brother Brian to call him on Thursday because it doesn't give him a chance to get nervous during communion times, a new one for him. So. But I praise God for a preacher who follows the leading of the spirit and isn't afraid to get out of the comfort zone of normal.

For those of you who are on Facebook and friends with me or like Cornerstone, I'll go ahead and apologize up front and say this will probably be. But at work, our marketing group always puts forth this thing that says people have to hear something eight times before they remember it anyway. So this is only number two for you.

So anyway, Brian shared a little bit. I don't know why exactly. Been praying at a real special time with God a few weeks ago, and I was telling him that acts as one of those chapters that, for lack of a better way to say it, I always end up the charismatics and the Pentecostals, you know, that's they always preaching acts and the Holy Spirit and tongues and all that.

And I don't know, it just wasn't a book I ever really would go to when I would pick up my Bible to read. And that following week, I just I picked up my iPad and I said, you know, God, where do you where you want me to go? We're very high tech here. Is this better, Curtis? Thank you.

But anyway, took me to acts and started actually kind of just after the upper room experience and. Became real clear what God started to speak to me, and that was. I told Brother Brian, get up.

Is the words that keep coming to mind over and over as you read that this was the church in its birth, in its beginning, and over and over you read where God would speak to someone and we think about the eunuch on the road, get up and go to this guy. And it wasn't God in a very general sense saying, go reach Barnesville. It was God saying, get up, go to this house, knock on this door, ask to speak for this person, this person, tell this person this, this person goes, this person does.

It was very specific. And I felt God speaking to me on that, that a lot of times maybe we do get too broad in our ministries. We don't nestle back with God and say, OK, God, you show me what you want me to do.

You show me who you want me to minister to, not what or where, but who you whom do you want me to go to? Is it Brother Leon? Is it three? Who is it you want me to minister to? And anyway, continued on through that. And when I got to chapter 12. God really spoke to me and convicted me in this chapter, and if you don't mind, I'm just going to read the whole thing and then we will kind of come back through.

First, I want to pray if I can. Dear Heavenly Father, I come to you this morning, Lord, and I ask you right now, Father, to. Lord, to calm my nerves, Father, Lord, to put your words.

In my mind, from my heart, Lord, and share what you would have me to share in this chapter, Father, what you would have us to hear. Father, I ask and I pray that, Lord, that the message that comes from this father would be received. From the heart, the way I want to, Lord, Father, that.

You would. Protect me from any hint of pridefulness or anything, Father, but to be directly from you, Lord, I ask you in your precious name, Amen. Chapter 12, it was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them.

He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword. When he saw that this met with approval among the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter. Also, this happened during the festival of unleavened bread, reading for the NIV.

After arresting him, he put him in prison, handing him over to be guarded by four squads, four soldiers each. Herod intended to bring him out for public trial after the Passover. So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him.

That's very important. The night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers bound with two chains and centuries to guard at the entrance. Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared in the light shown in the cell.

He struck Peter on the side and woke him quick. Get up, he said, and the chain fell off Peter's wrist. Then the angel said to him, put on your clothes and your sandals.

And Peter did so. Wrap your cloak around you and follow me, the angel told him. Peter followed him out of the prison, but he had no idea that that what the angel was doing was really happening.

He thought it was he was seeing a vision. They 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. Then Peter came to himself and said, now, without a doubt, 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. When 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.

Peter knocked at the outer entrance. A servant named Rhoda came to the answer the door when she recognized Peter's voice. She was so overjoyed.

She ran back without opening it and exclaimed, Peter is at the door. You're out of your mind. They told her when she kept insisting that it was so.

They said it must be his angel. But Peter kept on knocking. And when they opened the door and saw him, they were astonished.

Peter motioned with his hand for them to be quiet and described how the Lord had brought him out of prison. Tell James and the others, the other brothers and sisters about this, he said. And then he left for another place.

In the morning, there was no small commotion among the soldiers as to what it had become of Peter. After Herod had a thorough search made for him and did not find him, he cross-examined the guards in order that they be executed. Then Herod went from Judea and Caesarea and stayed there.

He had been quarreling with the people of Tyre and Sidon. They now joined together and sought an audience with him. After securing the support of Blastas, a trusted personal servant of the king, they asked

for people because they depended on the king's country for their supply of food.

On the anointed day, Herod, wearing his royal robe, sat on his throne and delivered a public address to the people. They shouted, this is the voice of God, not of a man. Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down and he was eaten by worms and died.

But the word of God continued to spread and flourish. When Barnabas and Saul had finished their mission, they returned from Jerusalem, taking with them John, also called Mark. The first part before Herod's death is where God really spoke to me on several different levels.

But the first thing that very clearly there's going to be trials, very clearly in the spreading of the gospel, there's going to be challenges that we come up against that are going to be overwhelming. And Herod was definitely a challenge to the new church. It says in the verse there, you know, that he was pretty rough on the Christians.

I mean, in prison, killed, you know, for preaching the gospel, they put you in jail and you more than likely would meet your end there. But it's amazing how God uses trials to spread his word. And this was another case of that.

And you see that all the way through Acts is where there was, you know, a persecution, where there was a stress on the church that immediately after that, there's a verse in there that will say, and the word of God spread and the word of God spread. Um, the, uh, when I was reading this, I told brother Brian that the internet's kind of a, an amazing thing. There's a lot of bad on it, but there's also a lot of good on it.

Um, I have an app that it's called the Bible app. And when you're studying the Bible, you can very quickly jump into a short video shows you a video of like a little movie clip. Um, and also show you if you want to go to maps, you can see illustrated maps to show you where the story that you're reading is taking place.

And, um, on this one, uh, Peter was put into prison and I don't know about you, but sometimes when you read it, you think, oh, okay, so he's put in a jail and you have these visions of a little cell or something. But when I looked at this, this place was huge. I mean, I, the closest thing I could relate it to was Connors over in harmony.

I mean, it was just, it was a massive complex and, um, that's very important to understand that because when you're, when you're reading these stories of God delivering people, um, you should give us, take heart and give us faith that we could be deep, deep into a trial. Peter was deep into this prison. They had him way back.

I mean, he was under guards, uh, four guards per shift all day, all night. He had two guards stationed beside him in chains. He was completely bound up, completely bound up, um, in a place where he probably was thinking there's no way God's going to use me here.

You know, is this where I meet my end? Herod's got a reputation, had to be crossing his mind. Um, but there he was. And, uh, we get to verse five and oh, in one point he had been there for some time.

This didn't happen immediately because Herod was putting this off till after Passover. So I read where most of them thought it was probably at least three to four days. Could have been five days that Peter was in this situation, bounded between these guards.

Um, but verse five was the one that God really, um, convicted me on. And, uh, it's one I think that the church should hear. And I hope, hope we do this morning.

It says, so Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him. And man, that convicted me when I read that. Uh, when I think about how little time I spend lifting brother Brian up to God, when you go back in the later chapters where God's laying out how the church has to be done, you know, the, the pastor of the church has to be seeking God's face, looking to be hearing from God and the others are lifting him up, lifting him up for that.

And God really convicted me on that. I don't spend a lot of time. I've, I've improved since I got into this chapter, but I hadn't been spending a lot of time for brother Brian, for Martha, for their children.

Um, God has a vision for this church and that vision I think is maybe a lot larger than what we see sometimes. And I know God meets with us and you know, that has to make the devil angry. You know, that has to make him want to just go crazy that God's meeting with us, that he's blessing us.

How much more so on our pastor and his family, how much more so on his children, how much more so are they going to be coming? You know, the devil would love nothing more than to attack them with illnesses, with, you know, whatever he can throw at them to take them off of, off of their ministry. And I hope we grasp that this morning. What an important calling really has.

God's really been showing me that he gave me this the other day in prayer that when we meet him at the cross, none of us walk away without a calling on our life. He doesn't save us to sit. He doesn't save us to turn, you know, to attend church three times a week.

We have a calling. Part of that calling is prayer. And much of that needs to be for our church, for our ministries of our church and for our pastor and his family.

And I love that. Um, again, the specifics of acts could have read and the church was praying. No, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him.

I don't, I know there's people that get into the types of prayers and how we pray and all that kind of stuff, and I don't want to do that, but I, I would encourage us to earnestly lift brother Brian and Martha up. You know, they've got big decisions coming at them. They've got things going on.

We need to be lifting them up because as we read on in this chapter, um, the night God answers prayer, God answers earnest prayer and people that are praying. The night before Harry was to bring him to trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers bound with chains and centuries stood guard at the entrance. Suddenly the angel of the Lord appeared and the light shone in the cell.

He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. That part kind of cracked me up a little bit, to be honest with you. Uh, Peter's in this had to be a dark place and he's deep into this prison.

Uh, the angel of the Lord comes, fills the room with light. He didn't wake up. So I like kind of had to smack him a little bit.

I can kind of relate to that sometimes. Uh, sometimes God's showing me something or sometime, you know, I know what I should be doing could even be an answer to prayer. I don't see it.

I don't get it. Can we miss it? Absolutely. I think we can.

I think we need to be praying, expecting and looking for the answer. Peter, you know, he's in a bad shape there in the cell, so we got to cut him a little bit of slack, but I do think that was an interesting note that, that the authors put in there and struck him on the side and woke him up. Um, I turned on the TV and I get in trouble.

I don't know. Light in a room from God. I would probably wake up quick, get up.

He said the chains fell off Peter's wrist. When God shows up, the chains fall off people. When he shows up, the chains fall off.

We are free, but I love the detail of this. Again, the angel said to him, put on your clothes and your sandals, wrap your cloak around you, follow me. Could a very, I mean, if I'm Peter and I'm in prison and I know what's coming my way.

And all of a sudden I look down, the chains are off me. The guards are in the floor. I'm probably going to be getting out of there as fast as I can.

But the angel said, no, no. Get dressed, put your shoes on, follow me. Man, that's such a, to me, that's a message from God.

Don't run out into this. When you're going through, you can be having trials and stuff. Don't miss what God may be trying to show you in that.

And on this one, I think it very clearly later, whenever we get there, you'll see. There was a very specific reason that angel was saying, get dressed, put your sandals on, be prepared. Now follow me.

Peter followed him out of the prison, but he had no idea what the angel was doing. It was really happening. He thought he was seeing a vision.

It took totally relate to that. I mean, sometimes, sometimes it's hard for me if I'm praying for something and God's putting it in front of me, I can know it, but still, sometimes it's hard for me to wrap my head around it. I'm writing this and putting it on Facebook.

I knew I was supposed to, but I fought it. I didn't know who it was for. I didn't know why I was writing it.

Uh, you all know me. I can, I can write with the best of them, but not like this, you know, and I'm like, God, what am I doing? What am I doing? Why? I mean, just sitting here in this stuff, just coming out on the paper, not for me. Um, but God knows, God knows what he's doing in those instances.

Um, so here we are, we're in, you know, he's in this trial. We could be in this trial. God, as I said, could very easily just went in and said, Peter, you're here.

Peter, the next moment wakes up and he's on the road out in front of Mary's house. He didn't do that. Did he? He walked him through it out of it.

And the one thing God spoke to me on that is because we've been having some, some trials in our life. I know a lot of people in this church have, uh, I think sometimes God wants us to understand just where we were when he freed us and just what he's taking us out very easily. We could be bounced out, everything good, everything golden, but what are we learning on the way out of that prison? What did Peter see? Peter saw God, Nick just laying down everything that was an obstacle.

The guards that were at the doors down the gates that were blocking him in opened. So Peter got to see God work all the way out of that prison. And again, big, big place, many city blocks, big place, but he got to follow God out of that.

And it really spoke to me is that sometimes when we find ourselves in trials or going through stuff that we don't understand, uh, pray, um, recognize when God's freed us and then follow him where he wants to take us. Um, they passed the first and second guards came to the iron gate leading to the city. It opened for them by itself and they went through it.

If you're following God, you're seeking him in prayer. Don't be surprised when the gates open by themselves. Don't be surprised when he clears the way for you when you know you are in his will.

It's his will for us to live free lives in Christ, not be in bondage, not be bound up, not be in trials. That's his will. And if we're following him and we're staying behind him and not running ahead of him, he will take care of all those obstacles in front of us.

Um, when they'd walked the length of one street, suddenly the angel left him. Then Peter came to himself and said, now I know without a doubt that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from her. His clutches and everything the Jewish people were hoping would happen.

Um, God just spoke to me on that. Proclaim the victory when you get it. And I love what Peter does next.

He's been in this, he's been in this mess. He's had people praying for him. And I think it's very important for a church, for all of us, if we're going through something and God answers our prayer to share it with each other.

Uh, Peter first, he's, I think he's saying this to God. Now I know without a doubt you've rescued me. Now I know without a doubt you've saved me.

And what are we going to do? We're going to go tell some people. So, uh, when it 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. Um, love that scene.

They're brothers in trouble. Where are they at? They're praying. I read, they can't probably prove this without a hundred percent, but many suspect that was actually the upper room is where they were praying.

Um, but many people had gathered and were praying when we meet, when we pray, when we lift up folks, we've seen healings in our church, we've seen people come to know Christ that we paid, that we have prayed for. Um, he hears and he answers our prayer. Again, part of this story, you could almost see a little bit of comedy in it.

When Peter knocked at the outer entrance, a servant named Rhoda came and answered the door, she recognized Peter's voice. I guess the way those doors worked over there, they had a, an outer gate door before you could go into the house. So he was at the outer gate and pretty much was it's me, Peter, let me in.

Well, you couldn't see. So she was going from his voice. Um, and she was so excited that she turned around and ran back in the house and didn't open the door for him.

I kind of had a mental image of Peter standing there going, I just got out of prison. God just met, you know, miraculously rescued me. And here I am and she takes off running and leaves him standing there.

That kind of made me smile when I read that. But then this, this next part spoke to me too. It says she goes in and she's overjoyed.

She runs back in. And what do the people who were praying tell her? You're out of your mind. There's no way.

You know, there's no way. Um, what I felt God speak to me on that is yes, be earnestly in prayer, but always be looking for me to answer. Always be watching for the answer.

Uh, you know, we can, we can deep dive into prayer. We can deep dive into, you know, I've. My dad used to, there was no other word for it than labor in prayer.

I mean, I never understood that, but he would, I mean, he would just, he would go in the bedroom and lay flat on the floor, put his face on the floor and just labor you're praying for me. And good Lord knows I need it. And I think those prayers have been answered, but, um, there's also a time to be praying and be expecting, be watching for God to move.

And again, for our church, I hope that's the way we are. I hope we're praying and I hope when, you know, the, the answer to that prayer comes to the door and knocks and says it's been answered, I hope we're ready to stand up and rejoice and praise God for it and that we don't let it move past us because we're not aware and we're not being sensitive to God and when he's answering our prayers. Um, anyway, it took three times before poor Peter got the door open for him.

And, um, they, uh, what, I mean, when you're, you can kind of feel for them, the miracle of God. I mean, when you think about the people that were there, they'd seen God's miracles. I mean, they knew God, they have seen the power of God still yet took three times for them to finally understand and believe, Hey, this prayer has been answered Peter's here.

Um, I liked that. It noted that he motioned with his hand for them to be quiet. Don't you imagine they were a little loud.

I imagine there was a praise and worship service started up right there when Peter walked in. Um, and you know, hallelujah for that. But, uh, the last part that I, that I'll share with you guys is, um, Peter motion with his hand for them to be quiet and described how the Lord had brought him out of prison, um, and it's so important for us to get when God does something for us, share it when God answers a prayer, share it, Linda, I think noted, um, on that Facebook page is so important because, you know, I could be going through something that none of you would even know about, and I'm praying earnestly for God to answer and what a joy it is, you know, an uplifting hope.

When Linda would come to me and say, Steve, I was praying or God showed me this on the Bible and God answered this prayer or brother Brian would, or, you know, Larry, anybody, if you share that, it edifies us and it builds us up that God is here and God is answering prayer. We talk a lot about Saturday night prayer meeting, but you understand we have to. God answers prayer immediately.

We could set up here and go on, not arrogantly on anything that we're or anything like that, but just, you want to share when God answers a prayer for you, you want to share when God delivers you from

something. And I really, I hope we grab ahold that we need to be building each other up. And one of the ways that we can do that is when God answers a prayer for you, or God speaks to you, share it with your brother or sister, brother Brian will hand this microphone to about anyone.

I believe, you know, if he feels like the Lord's leading him to do it, share, don't be afraid to share what God is doing for you. In your life, it could be something that's very small to you, but it could be hearing that from a brother or sister. It could be something incredibly large for someone who's going through something that you may not even know about.

I just very important to testify to God answering prayer. And I bet you, Peter went through detail too. Don't you? Yeah, here I was guys.

I was asleep. I had these guards chained to me. The next thing, you know, I'm getting whacked by an angel, the lights in the room and I'm walking out of that prison sandals on, I want to go back and make one point when you go back and read the specificity of God saying, get up, get dressed, put your clothes on, follow me.

God said to me, when you come out of a trial, when you come out of something that you're praying for, be ready to go to work, have your shoes on, be dressed, be prepared, Peter went straight from the trial of his life in prison bound between guards, where did he go? The next step he was, he was in front of believers, giving testimony to what God had done for him. So I, I love that when I read this, I went back and it's like God said, yeah, that's why have your shoes on, be ready to get up and go testify when the Lord does something for us. Um, another note that made me smiles in the morning, there was no small commotion amongst the soldiers.

I bet there wasn't probably a lot of finger pointing. Don't you think, um, who was watching him where you were? No, I thought you were, but, um, I love that. And that that's the way I want Satan to be after my prayer time.

I want him to be in a no small commotion. I want, I want him to, um, I want God to come with his power and his strength and do that in my prayer life. No small commotion, um, complete delivery for Peter out of this.

And the two main points that I wanted to make was, so Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him. Main thing I want to share with you guys is I hope we lift each other up continually in prayer. So important.

It's probably the most, one of the most important things that we can do as a church for each other is to be praying for each other. We may not know all the details, but God does. Um, especially our pastor.

We want brother Brian to hear from God. Amen. I mean, we want that.

We desire that. Um, so leave you with that. Be lifting him up, be lifting each other up and be expecting for God to answer those prayers and give testimony when he does praise the Lord.

It's rich lot, lot there. Isn't there praise the Lord for that? That is surely what the Lord is saying to us today and brothers and sisters, if that verse five isn't marked and underscored in your Bible, it ought to be that's that verse five is the turning point to the whole chapter and it'll be the turning point in your life. It can be the turning point in the whole church.

Peter was kept in prison, but. That's when everything changes, but the church prayed and I love this, how specific the Lord was to there's not much that I don't think needs to be added to what God's given Steve to share, but I would just want to say a few things briefly and about that verse five again, how specific God is in his word. It says that prayer, constant prayer was offered to God for him.

This kind of effective prayer, which I agree is the most effective thing we can do as a church, and we can't get away from that. Prayer has got to be our first response, not our last resort. Most of the time it's our last resort.

It's after you've tried everything else. Oh, well, now let's pray. We better pray about this.

It ought to be our first response that immediately we go to God. That's one thing you'll see throughout the book of Acts. Every single trial they face, their first response was call upon God.

Why? They knew God answers prayer. So prayer that is effective is prayer that's made to God. That's that may sound so elementary and so obvious, but you ask yourself, as I've had to ask myself, how much of my praying is really being made unto God? In other words, how focused is my prayer upon God? A lot of times it's a lot more focused on the mountain than it is the mountain mover.

A lot of times it's a lot more focused, especially in corporate prayer, what somebody else is hearing me pray rather than what God is hearing me pray. Is your prayer made prayer made to God? Focus prayer. Here's a good way to get back to focus prayer.

It's to get back to the way Jesus taught us to pray. What did he say? When you pray, say. Our father, which art in heaven, if you and I will grasp these two things first, number one.

When I come to God, I'm coming to my father like my child, Holly, would come to daddy. She doesn't come to me and say, Mr. Long, Mr. Long, I would think something's wrong. Holly is something wrong, Mr. Long.

That would be so awkward and foreign and wrong. What does she say? Daddy. Remember this when you come to prayer, Abba, if you're saved, Abba.

Father, daddy, and I say that reverently, not there's a lot of people that throw that around flippantly. I don't believe that. He's not that kind of Santa Claus, he's almighty God, but I can call him dad.

You can if you're washed in the blood, which says to me what? And you, God is for you, not against you. A lot of times the devil. This is why our prayer lives oftentimes don't have any faith in them.

And I tell you, prayer that's offered up without faith is really ineffective. God made that clear in scripture. I know they were astonished and they couldn't believe he was at the gate, but they had to have some faith or they wouldn't have lasted as long as they did.

This prayer meeting lasted through the day and night, day after day. I remember reading one time when a few commentators said it could have lasted three weeks. Three days, three weeks, whatever it was, you don't pray that long with that kind of fervent desperation if you don't believe God's going to answer.

But they were still surprised, just like we are when it actually happens. But think of that, brothers and sisters, will you take that with you today? Our father, when I come to God in prayer, I'm coming to the one who's for me and not against me. You don't have that kind of faith.

You come to God in prayer and you think, oh, boy, I don't know if I could, Lord, Spurgeon said it was like a little bitty ant coming up to this rich farmer who has barns full of grain. And he holds out his little fist and said, could you just spare one little grain of wheat? God says, the farmer says, look at this. What do you mean one grain of wheat? Away with your unbelief, away with thinking that you're a hard taskmaster and I don't know if I should come into your presence.

We come reverently, but we need to remember that Jesus taught us this, Abba. Our father, he's for me, not against me. Secondly.

Who is in heaven? One of my favorite things used to be I've done this, I need to do this again. One of my favorite things to do, especially when I was in New Mexico, because the stars out there were indescribable at night, it was as if they were so close you could just reach out and they was just breathtaking when you look up at the night sky. But any time that I would have a problem that I could not.

They would totally overwhelm me, go out in the middle of the night, lay on my back in the middle of the night and look at those stars and God says that he knows them all by name. He calls them each by name. And, you know, scientists have studied these stars and there's some that are so big that if they were hollow, our entire solar system could rotate on the inside of one star and so far away that you'd take.

You know, thousands and thousands of light years to get to the nearest star, it's just it's mind boggling when you think of it. So I'm coming to the one who is my father and I'm coming to the one who created all of these, our father, who is in heaven. So the question is, what is too big for God? Peter being put in prison.

A drug addict who's in chains and has tried everything and has been back and forth, back and forth, and you know what people finally think? There's no hope for such. You know what God says? One word in those chain, one visitation from God and those chains will fall off. There is not a single problem that ever was brought to Jesus.

Do you try and think of one in the New Testament that was brought to Jesus where he said, if I can solve that one. You don't find them every single problem, five thousand, not enough food, no problem. Peter, in a storm, wants to walk on water, no problem.

Blind man comes. No problem. Woman with the issue of blood that spent all that she had on many, many doctors and still wasn't better.

All she need to do is touch the hem of his garment. No problem. We run out of wine at the wedding, what are we going to do? No problem.

He turns water into wine. Lazarus has been dead for four days. No problem.

Come forth every single thing we face, but we need to make prayer to God. And what I mean by that, when we're praying to our father who is in heaven, we'll start praying faith filled prayer. And that's the only kind of prayer that's really effective.

And I would just say also what Steve said, the earnestness, the fervent prayer, brothers and sisters, this is where we can learn from those old classic Pentecostals. Those there, if you read about many of them years ago, they said things like laboring in prayer. They said things like, let us lay hold of the horns on the altar.

They said things like, let us prevail. They knew something about prayer that you don't hear much about today. Praying through.

You know, we've got to get back to earnest prayer and what brings that about? Desperation, what brings about desperation? Peter is in prison, but does it have to take something like that? Does it have to take one of our dear brothers in this church being and we receive the news, the news about Peter was they're going to cut off his head in the next day or so. That's our beloved Peter. Did you hear, guys? He's going to die.

They're going to kill him. What is their response? Petitions. Programs.

Prayer. And and I think of that, what if what if we suddenly we heard news, Leon is in a desperate situation, if he doesn't have an answer by tomorrow, we'll never see him again. What would we do, church? God brought us to our knees when it happened to Luke, but does it have to happen like that again? Doesn't the way we stay desperate in prayer is to simply, like I said last week, looking unto Jesus and every single trial we face.

Letting that be our first response, and when you're looking unto Jesus, you see that you're a lot farther away. You know, don't don't come to this place of thinking, oh, we've arrived, we were. Let's do this.

It's good to coast now. No, there's also something different in the Bible about crying out. And there's there's different types of prayer and there's something we don't get in the English language, but in the Hebrew, many times in the Psalms, this word for cry out is a it's a loud I mean, it's literally what it it means, what it says, crying out from the from the gut, crying out from the depths of your heart.

And I know there's been times in my life when I've not experienced breakthroughs in certain areas until I literally got in the car, started driving where nobody could hear me and let it out with all that it was with was within me. Oh, God. And I mean, cry out in desperation.

When last have you prayed like that? There is something that God honors about crying out to God. That's a wonderful study. So I want to thank you, Steve, for sharing.

I know this was the leading of the Lord and I, I believe it's something that we need to leave with today. Get back, brothers and sisters, that prayer is the God is the answer and his method is prayer. Most important thing we can do, but it's focused, it's fervent, it's earnest.

And it's got to be in faith. Amen. Let's stand to our feet and just Heavenly Father, I thank you today for speaking to our hearts.

I thank you for using our brother Steve to as a vessel this morning and speaking to us through him, Lord, and calling us back to the most important ministry of the church. We pray, Lord God, that as a church, we would never lose sight of how much we need you, how dependent we are upon you. Lord, forgive us for coming to places of complacency or apathy and just coasting.

We need you, God, and we thank you that we can call you father. We thank you that we can come boldly into your presence and cry Abba, father, like our little children come to us and say, daddy, and you incline your ear to hear us. And we thank you.

There's not a single problem or trial that we face. There's not a single you know, when we look at a vision, perhaps that you're putting on our hearts ministries, it can seem so overwhelming. But Lord, when we look to you, when we look to you, Lord, our hearts are quieted, they are at rest and filled with faith because you're the one who made the mountains and you're the one who can move them if necessary.

You're the maker of the wind, the master of the wind, the maker of the rain. You are everything, father. And I'm asking you to help us as a church, Lord, to get back to praying, to crying out to you in prayer for it to be our first response instead of our last resort.

And Lord, we're asking you to open prison doors. We're asking you, Lord, to cause chains to fall off, to do the miraculous, the impossible so that your name would be glorified, so that people would be astonished once again, as it said there in the scripture, as our brother shared, so that there would be no small commotion. We pray, Lord God, that you would deal a death blow to the powers of darkness in their works and all the attacks that come against us, Lord Jesus.

We ask you to deal a death blow to the devil's schemes and plans. We ask you to make this place a very difficult place for him, Lord. We pray that you would cause the enemy to tremble.

We pray that you would push back the powers of darkness and bring us as your people back to united prayer. What an amazing thing that it was the response not just of one person, but the whole church gathered at Mary's house, the whole church gathered in that upper room and they knit. They joined in one accord.

Oh, God, how this united prayer honors you. Would you help us as a church, Lord, to pray for one another, to come together in unity, in love for one another and to call upon you? God, I thank you that your prayer answering God, I thank you that your covenant keeping God, I thank you, Father, that you've answered so much, so many of our cries out to you. And I'm just thanking you for the reminder again today and bringing us back to this place of dependence upon you and stirring a faith within our hearts.

I know having as I leave here today, when I call upon God this way, he will answer. He will answer. He will open prison doors.

He will cause chains to fall off. He will lead us each step of the way. He will put us to work.

He will open doors that no man can shut prison doors that open on their own accord. It was you that opened them. And I trust you, Lord, to open doors before us for the glory of your name.

Lord, I commit the body of Christ into your hands now by faith. And we pray your blessing upon each one. May you be exalted, Lord Jesus, as we leave this place today.

And may we see it as our mission to tell others about you in Jesus name. Amen.

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