



**Sunday, April 22, 2012**

## **The Church and Prayer**

**Speaker:** Michael Boot

**Scripture:** Acts 12

### **Sermon Notes:**

1. In this chapter the angel of God delivers Peter from prison and dethrones the blasphemous Herod.
2. We should expect the Acts of the Holy Spirit to continue in our day, through prayer and preaching.
3. Despite persecution by the authorities, the apostles chose to obey God, declaring Christ's reign and salvation to both Jew and Gentile.
4. In God's sovereignty, Herod's action against Peter leads ultimately to his own destruction, and the relief of the persecuted church.
5. Prayer is the channel of communion to God; in God's sovereign grace and infinite condescension, He acts through the church's prayers.
6. Prayer is the condition of divine operation.
7. The early church enjoyed so much growth that there was danger of complacency in Zion; God shocked the church into taking up urgent prayer.
8. Elijah prayed in an impossible situation; the water poured on the altar proved the delivering power of God (1 Kin. 18)
9. In the stories of both Elijah and Peter, God demonstrates that He will answer when His people pray.
10. Angels are sent by God for the assistance of the saints (Hebrews 1:14).

11. God removed his chains, but the angel told Peter to get up and leave; God is sovereign and we are responsible.
12. Peter is sleeping, demonstrating trust in the active power of God, no matter the outcome.
13. Peter was prepared for the possibility that God would be glorified by his suffering and death (cf. 1 Peter 2:19-23).
14. Christians are the most sane people on the planet, because we have the Bible; we accept God's plan and purposes for our lives and the world.
15. Answered prayer sometimes comes in unexpected and unusual forms.
16. With Herod, God glorifies His own name, bringing His slumbering judgments to action. In pride Herod receives divine homage, but God brings swift destruction upon him for violating the commandment he well knew (Ex. 20:3).
17. The Lord will destroy wicked kings (Psalm 149:6-9).
18. This week, let us urgently call on God for the blessing we desperately seek from His fatherly hand, and be ready for His answer, whatever it may be.

### **Application Questions:**

1. Why did Herod imprison Peter? What purposes did God accomplish through Peter's imprisonment?
2. Compare God's sovereign and miraculous intervention in Acts 12 and 1 Kings 18.
3. Do we act and pray as if we serve the same God who delivered Peter?
4. What is the importance of prayer if God is sovereign?
5. What are some urgent needs to pray for in the life of the church today? What about my own life?
6. What was Herod's downfall? What sins may we need to repent of either corporately or individually?