

Faith isn't saying I believe

Acts 12:6-11

Welcome

- Hello and welcome to Mission Sent
- Tonight our big question is, what is faith?
- What does it mean to say we have faith?
- Hopefully you have found your way there, I will pray and we will jump in

Acts 12:6

Now when Herod was about to bring him out, on that very night, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries before the door were guarding the prison.

Acts 12:6

- Remember last week we saw Herod is violently laying hands on the church and has arrested Peter intending to kill him
- Here we pick up in that narrative with Luke describing the scene
- Peter is locked up in jail, handcuffed to guards to make sure he doesn't go anywhere
- To say the least, Peter is facing sure death. I mean, it is bleak
- If you are Peter, you are sitting here looking at the situation going there is no way out

Acts 12:6

- I am sure some of us have been here before
- Looking at your life, looking at where you are and thinking things will never get better
- Peter is literally trapped in prison, in bondage
- And there really isn't anything going on to make him think there is something miraculous about to happen
- However, let us not forget, that even during this bleak time the church is praying earnestly for him

Acts 12:7

And behold, an angel of the Lord stood next to him, and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him, saying, "Get up quickly." And the chains fell off his hands.

Acts 12:7

- Next let's look at this scene from a higher vantage point
- Remember it is bleak, there is no way out and yet what do we see Peter doing here?
- The angel of the lord showed up and had to strike Peter to wake him up why?
- How many of us have this peace when things are crashing all around us?
- How many of us instead of killing ourselves trying to figure it all out, could just lay down and sleep?

Acts 12:7

- This is what the Psalmist is talking about in Psalm 46:10, ““Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!”
- See some of us, we know what it is like to be in these dark places, we know what it is like to look at our situation and not see the way out
- However, we need to learn to handle it just like Peter is here, being still knowing God is God and like a good good Father He is still in control, He still is holding us in His hand

Acts 12:8-9

And the angel said to him, “Dress yourself and put on your sandals.” And he did so. And he said to him, “Wrap your cloak around you and follow me.” 9 And he went out and followed him. He did not know that what was being done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision.

Acts 12:8-9

- Now this is where things really start unfolding
- Look what it said, Peter did not know if this is really happening or if he was seeing a vision
- In other words, Peter isn't sure if this is what Jesus is leading him to
- He hears the angel of the lord tell him to get dressed, and what did Peter do
- He got dressed

Acts 12:8-9

- He wasn't sitting here going let me pray about this
- He isn't sitting here trying to fully understand everything
- He doesn't stop and ask the angel to explain what all is about to happen
- He is told to get dressed, and gets dressed
- This is what I have been preaching for so long now, faith isn't saying I believe this is true, faith is saying because I believe Jesus is who He claims to be, I will do

Acts 12:8-9

- See we have to understand, sometimes the picture isn't clear at first
- Sometimes all we have is just the beginning of what Jesus is calling to
- But we have to stop waiting to act
- I will tell you right now, when it comes to mission academy there seems to be thousands of things that still need to happen
- But here we are looking for a building to house students in
- When I look at mission media, and know where we were with listeners and see now where we are it would be easy to stop, to just say this isn't worth it

Acts 12:8-9

- But yet we still recorded new episodes this week
- When we look at Mission Sent, I mean sometimes I can stand up here and hardly see an empty seat, and then other times it seems like it is just Debbie, Josh, the kids and me here
- It would be easy to stop, it would be easy to look at everything going on around us, the church being in decline, people constantly telling us they are going show but don't, it would be easy to say let's just close it up
- But faith is saying regardless of what this looks like in the natural, regardless of how dark it seems, I will do because I know this is what Jesus is calling us to

Acts 12:10-11

10 When they had passed the first and the second guard, they came to the iron gate leading into the city. It opened for them of its own accord, and they went out and went along one street, and immediately the angel left him. 11 When Peter came to himself, he said, “Now I am sure that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from the hand of Herod and from all that the Jewish people were expecting.”

Acts 12:10-11

- How many of us have heard the saying hindsight is always 20/20?
- In order to understand this, look at Joshua 22:10, “10 And when they came to the region of the Jordan that is in the land of Canaan, the people of Reuben and the people of Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh built there an altar by the Jordan, an altar of imposing size.”
- Here we see Israel coming into the promised land, and look at what they do, they enter it and build an altar, but why?
- So they can look back and see what God has done

Acts 12:10-11

- Think about it, every week we take communion, why?
- To remember what Jesus has given us
- See it is easy for us to look back in our lives, and go look how I overcame
- Look how I walked through divorce, look how I overcame addiction, look at how I overcame whatever, and not go look how Jesus brought me through
- Peter here is sitting in freedom, he has overcome certain death, from a situation that seemed like the end is here for sure, and look at his response

Acts 12:10-11

- Now I am sure the Lord sent his angel and rescued me
- See yes God will give you mountains you can't climb, but understand he does so that we look to Jesus and not ourselves
- Yes Peter got up, yes, Peter got dressed, yes Peter ran and did all that Jesus commanded him
- But it was Jesus who opened the gate, it was Jesus who broke the chains holding Peter in bondage
- Yeah for some of us, we find ourselves in the same spot, we are stuck

Closing

- We are just sitting here waiting to die
- But as Josh comes up and we start to close, ask yourself what is it right now you need to do in faith?
- What is the nudge, the strike the Angel of the lord is calling you to?
- Whatever it is, take time to do it
- Stop contemplating it, and start getting dressed ready to run. If you need someone to talk/pray with let me know I am here for you
- Pray