



**Prairie  
Tabernacle**

**August 22, 2010**

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## Sermon Notes

### *What are you Expecting?*

Acts 12:1-24

**Acts 12:5-17** <sup>5</sup> So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church. <sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> 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. <sup>8</sup> 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." <sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> 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." <sup>12</sup> When he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose other name was Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying. <sup>13</sup> And when he knocked at the door of the gateway, a servant girl named Rhoda came to answer. <sup>14</sup> Recognizing Peter's voice, in her joy she did not open the gate but ran in and reported that Peter was standing at the gate. <sup>15</sup> They said to her, "You are out of your mind." But she kept insisting that it was so, and they kept saying, "It is his angel!" <sup>16</sup> But Peter continued knocking, and when they opened, they saw him and were amazed. <sup>17</sup> But motioning to them with his hand to be silent, he described to them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, "Tell these things to James and to the brothers." Then he departed and went to another place.

**Acts 12:21-24** <sup>21</sup> On an appointed day Herod put on his royal robes, took his seat upon the throne, and delivered an oration to them. <sup>22</sup> And the people were shouting, "The voice of a god, and not of a man!" <sup>23</sup> Immediately an angel of the Lord struck him down, because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and breathed his last. <sup>24</sup> But the word of God increased and multiplied.

**Introduction:** Prayer & Expectations

***What are you Expecting?***  
Acts 12:1-24

**1. Herod opposes the spread of God's Word (1-4)**

- a. James (brother of John) was put to death
  - Jesus had prophesied that he would suffer (Mark 10:38-40)
- b. Seeing that it pleased the Jewish leaders, Herod put Peter in prison
  - His intent was to have a show trial and public execution following the Passover
- c. Opposition to God's Word comes in many ways today
  - political
  - family
  - mockery from culture
  - sickness
  - friends
  - hard hearts

**2. The Jerusalem church responds to opposition by praying (5)**

- a. Peter was thrown in prison, but the church was praying fervently
  - They were praying together
  - They were praying earnestly
- b. How do you respond to opposition to the gospel?
  - apathy?
  - give up?
  - anger?
  - lose heart?
  - *Or do you pray earnestly with other believers?*

**3. The Great Escape and Not-so-Great Expectations (6-17)**

- a. The LORD sends His angel to rescue Peter (6-11)
  - Peter was fast asleep
  - The angel leads Peter out of the prison, but Peter thinks he is dreaming
  - Peter only realizes it is real after the angel leaves (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 12:11
- b. Peter goes to the prayer meeting and knocks on the door (12-16)
  - Rhoda, a servant girl is filled with joy and tells everyone but forgets to open the gate for Peter!
    - No one believes her story!!
      - They tell her she is crazy
      - They tell her she is seeing his angel/ghost
- c. Peter is still knocking, and finally they open the door and see that it really is him (16-17)
  - Peter tells the story how the Lord rescued him from prison
- d. The LORD often acts contrary to our expectations!

***What are you Expecting?***  
**Acts 12:1-24**

**4. When you pray, what are you expecting?**

- a. What were the people in Acts 12:1-24 expecting?
  - Herod was expecting Peter to die
  - The Jewish leadership was expecting Peter to die
  - The guards were expecting Peter to die
  - The church was expecting Peter to die
  - Even Peter seemed to be expecting Peter to die
  - Rhoda appears to be the only person in the story who is expecting God to answer her prayers
- b. Why was almost everyone expecting Peter to die?
  - Because James had just died at Herod's hand
    - Why did God save Peter but not James?
- c. When you pray, what are you expecting?
  - the worst?      • the inevitable?
  - not much?      • nothing?

**d. When God's Word is opposed, PRAY, and EXPECT God to multiply His Word.**

- Luke 18:1-8 Always pray and don't lose heart
- Mark 9:24 *Lord I believe, help my unbelief!*

**5. God removes Herod and the Word of God spreads (18-24)**

- a. Herod has the guards killed and leaves Jerusalem (18-19)
- b. Herod makes a speech and is called a god by his listeners
  - He accepts the praise that should only go to God
    - So God strikes him dead
      - Note: the Jewish Historian Josephus also tells the story of Herod's death
  - Don't miss the warning in the story of Herod
    - Opposing God and taking praise that belongs to him is dangerous business
    - God will not let it go on forever
- c. Acts 12:24 *But the word of God increased and multiplied.*
  - God has purposed to spread His Word, and His purpose will be accomplished

**When God's Word is opposed,**  
**PRAY,**  
**and EXPECT God to multiply His Word.**

***What are you Expecting?***  
Acts 12:1-24

**Our Response**

1. Think about how God's Word is being opposed in your life experiences. Perhaps it is in the lives of family or friends or others that you know. Maybe it is in your workplace. Maybe it is in the lives of friends serving as missionaries.
2. Are you praying earnestly with other believers about it?
3. Are you expecting God to answer your prayers?
4. Pray with the expectation that God will overcome opposition and multiply His Word.

**Questions for Personal Application & Small Group Discussion**

1. Describe a time when you were involved in earnest prayer with other believers for an urgent need. How did God answer your prayers?
2. Do you currently have regular times of prayer with other believers? Discuss.
3. Do you sometimes find it hard to believe that God will answer your prayers? Why or why not?
4. God has purposed to spread His Word. How does this fact help you to expect God to work through your prayers?
5. Pray that the Lord would increase your faith when you pray. You may want to pray the prayer from Mark 9:24: "*Lord I believe, help my unbelief!*"
6. Spend some time praying earnestly for an urgent need, expecting God to work through your prayers.

**Questions, Comments?**

If you have questions or comments about today's message, please send me an email at this address:  
**questions4tim@prairietab.com**

Thanks, Tim



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