

LIVING IN DIVISION AND DISTRUST

Living Light – Part 1 of 2

KEY REALITY: We turn to God when **BAD** things happen, believing He could have kept them **FROM HAPPENING** in the first place.

“For God so loved the entire world that He gave...” John 3:16

“1 It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to torture them. 2 He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword. 3 When he saw that this met with approval among the Judeans, Herod proceeded to seize Peter also... 4 After 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 Passover. 5 So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him.” Acts 12:1-5

OBSERVATION #1: The men and women who actually knew Jesus personally and chose to follow Him were **NOT IMMUNE** to random, unexplainable tragedy and loss, in spite of believing that God could have kept these bad things from happening.

OBSERVATION #2: They **CONTINUED** trusting in and turning to God, because the thing that made the least sense of all, the crucifixion of God’s Messiah, resulted in the greatest possible **GOOD** for all.

“3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In His great mercy He has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil, or fade... 6 In all of this, you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. 7 These have come so that your faith-- of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire-- may result in... praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.” 1 Peter 1:3, 6-7

“8 Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him, and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, 9 for you are receiving the end results of your faith, the salvation of your souls.” 1 Peter 3:8-9

“6 The 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. 7 Suddenly 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 of Peter’s wrist. 8 Then 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. 9 Peter 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. 10 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. 12 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. 13 Peter knocked at the outer entrance, and a servant named Rhoda came to answer the door. 14 When she recognized Peter’s voice, she was so overjoyed she ran back without opening it and exclaimed, ‘Peter is at the door!’ 15 ‘You are out of your mind,’ they told her. When she kept insisting that it was so, they said, ‘It must be his angel.’ 16 But Peter kept on knocking, and when they opened the door and saw him, they were astonished. 17 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 brothers about this,’ he said, and then he left for another place. 19 After Herod had a thorough search made for him and did not find him, he cross-examined the guards and ordered they be executed. Then Herod went from Judea to Caesarea and stayed there a while. 21 On the appointed day, Herod wearing his royal robes, sat on his throne and he delivered a public address to the people. 22 They shouted, ‘This is the voice of a god, not of a man.’ 23 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. 24 But the word of God continued to increase and flourish.” Acts 12:6-24

“13...we don't mourn as those who have no hope. 14 We believe that Jesus died and rose again...” 1 Thessalonians 13b-14a

“Cast all our cares on Him because we know He cares for us.” 1 Peter 5:7

“Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.” Hebrews 4:16

Question #1: Has your **FAITH** ever taken a ding because of random, unnecessary, unexplainable suffering?

Question #2: Why are we so prone to **ATTACH OUR FAITH** or our confidence in God, to how well things are going around us?

Question #3: Read Hebrews Chapter 4:14-16. What does the author encourage his readers to **ANCHOR** their faith to?

BOTTOM LINE: There is HOPE, even when there are no EXPLANATIONS.