

**Series:** The Acts of the Apostles: To Judea/Samaria VII

**Text:** Acts 12:1-25

**HI: No opposition can derail God's mission.**

**Title:** *Opposition to the Mission*

**Hook:** Mission v. Opposition

**Date:** 5.7.23

**Purpose:** To remind God's people that Jesus will accomplish his mission despite every shred of opposition.

**FCF:** Like the early church, we face opposition of every sort in a wicked world. The grace of God meets us here as he liberates us from sin and death continues his mission in and through us.

**COR:** Like those in this text, we are all aware of corrupt political power brokers whose self-absorption and pettiness hurt those in their charge. The good news here is that God sees all and knows all, and while he is growing his church and activating them in the world, he will also judge the wicked.

**Witness of Christ [WC\*]:** Echoes of Jesus' trial, arrest, and execution prove the HI and reveal the pinnacle of this idea for God's people. (Luke 22:47-54) See 12:3 // Luke 22:54 // Acts 1:16

**Apologetic:** Introduction: even if you're not a believer, this story gets at our hunger for justice, as a corrupt ruler meets his Maker. Body: II.B. Again, some of you here are skeptical of the Bible, but this type of clear honesty from the narrator rings true. Why would Luke show this negative picture of the early church? I believe he does this because this is true to what happened. CCL: God will not relent. He will not give up on his people. If you're here and you're not a believer—this is a message of good news for you—there is only one who truly knows you better than you know yourself, and he loves you. He sent Jesus to die for you. He invites you into his family, not through you being perfect, but simply by trusting in him. We will have some prayer team members around the room in a minute who would love to talk with you or pray with you if you'd like to know more.

**Form:** Inductive

**Call to Worship:** Psalm 107:15-16: "thank the Lord for his steadfast love, for his wondrous works to the children of man! For he shatters the doors of bronze and cuts in two the bars of iron."

**Benediction:** Ephesians 3:20-21: Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within

us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

**Outline:**

**I. A wicked world is a dangerous place for a faithful church. (1-5)**

A. This world's power doesn't tolerate God's people. (3b-4)

B. God's people don't belong to this world. (1-3a, 5)

**II. The Lord's liberation defies expectation. (6-19)**

A. Peter is perplexed. (6-11)

B. The church is skeptical. (12-17)

C. Herod is vexed. (18-19)

**III. God's mission will flourish while his enemies perish. (20-25)**

A. God's enemies is neutralized. (20-23)

B. God's mission is realized. (24-25)

**Main Idea:**

Subject: How does the threat of Herod hinder the mission of God?

Complement: It doesn't.

Exegetical Idea: The threat of Herod doesn't hinder the mission of God.

Theological Idea: The threats posed by the rulers or powers opposed to God do not hinder the mission of God through his people.

**Homiletical Idea: No opposition can derail God's mission.**

**Introduction:**

**Blues Brothers (PIC)**

READ Acts 12:1-5

**12** About that time Herod the king laid violent hands on some who belonged to the church. <sup>2</sup>He killed James the brother of John with the sword, <sup>3</sup>and when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also. This was during the days of Unleavened Bread. <sup>4</sup>And when he had seized him, he put him in prison, delivering him over to four squads of soldiers to guard him, intending after the Passover to bring him out to the people. <sup>5</sup>So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church.

## **I. A wicked world is a dangerous place for a faithful church. (1-5)**

Patrick Schreiner: "Satan attempts to shut down the church from every direction."

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. 1 Peter 4:12

Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. 2 Timothy 3:12-13

READ Acts 12:6-11

<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."

## **II. The Lord's liberation defies expectation. (6-19)**

Charles Wesley, 1738: *And Can It Be, That I Should Gain?* Long my imprisoned spirit lay Fast bound in sin and nature's night; Thine eye diffused a quick'ning ray, I woke, the dungeon flamed with light; My chains fell off, my heart was free; I rose, went forth and followed Thee.

READ Acts 12:12-17

<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.

READ Acts 12:18-19

<sup>18</sup> Now when day came, there was no little disturbance among the soldiers over what had become of Peter. <sup>19</sup> And after Herod searched for him and did not find him, he examined the sentries and ordered that they should be put to death. Then he went down from Judea to Caesarea and spent time there.

READ Acts 12:20-25

<sup>20</sup> Now Herod was angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon, and they came to him with one accord, and having persuaded Blastus, the king's chamberlain, they asked for peace, because their country depended on the king's country for food.

<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.

<sup>25</sup> And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem when they had completed their service, bringing with them John, whose other name was Mark.

**III. God's mission will flourish while his enemies perish. (20-25)**

Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. Romans 12:19

**HI: No opposition can derail God's mission.**