



The Book of Acts:

Holy Spirit Adventures

Passage: Acts 12:1-24

The Book of Acts – A call to see the Spirit move again and again in every generation

Introduction

Enjoy the Table Talk video with Pastor Angela [here](#).

How do we react when “things don’t go the way they were supposed to”? Expectations can be wrong in the first place. Pastor Jon focussed on our desire for ‘safety’. How do we reframe that so we don’t live in fear or shrink from living well?

Unpacking the Sermon

1. Acts 12:1,2 “...King Herod arrested some... He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword.”

After so many wondrous events, now horror comes as the Apostle James is murdered and Peter is taken prisoner. This is evidence of the real spiritual war in which we find ourselves. Jesus acknowledged it in John 16:3 and he promised ultimate victory. What verses come to mind that can help us balance our fear with Jesus' words, “I have overcome the world.”?

2. Acts 12:5 “...the church was earnestly praying to God for him.”

In an exemplary way, the church gathered and prayed. Discuss your thoughts about this response. In Eph. 6:18, prayer is the last piece in putting on our spiritual armour. Consider Phil. 4:6 and 1 Thessalonians 5:17. Discuss the importance of prayer.

3. Acts 12:6,7 “ Peter was sleeping between two soldiers...”

Peter was able to sleep though he was in prison. Discuss peace as an outcome of prayer. (Phil. 4:7) His trust in God was rewarded. How does this example underline the value of prayer and trust in God? How is it motivational?

4. Acts 12:23,24 “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. But the word of God continued to increase and spread.”

God wins. Herod had James murdered. Yet King Herod’s reign was cut very short. Pastor Jon said, *God overcame bad leaders, bad thinking, military power,*

economic fights, wrong motives... Religious, political, economic, social, national racial issues. Look around everyone, our world, no matter where you land, has all of this going on right now. But God, found through Jesus the Christ, always wins!

Discuss biblical and modern-day examples of how this is true. How does remembering God's victories help us to keep our courage up?

APPLICATION

Expectations – *During the greatest moves of God, there will be real opposition. When God moves, Satan moves, when God moves, people push back! Comfort is not the ultimate factor for a follower of Jesus.*

Discuss the challenge of maintaining the right expectations and trusting God in our difficult times. How can you as a group encourage each other in this?

Resting in God – *So if safety is not guaranteed, can we rest, sleep like Peter?*

By the Spirit, we can find rest like Jesus sleeping in the storm or Peter sleeping in prison. How can your group help each other to trust so you can experience peace like in Is. 26:3?

Prayer – *A simple truth. In the ongoing moves of God, prayer is still key.*

Enemies of prayer are **Coldness, Boredom, Cynicism,** and **Lack of Faith.**

How can your group encourage each other in the face of these? How can you pray more?

CLOSING PRAYER

Thank you Jesus for the example of your people during Herod's persecution. Please help each of us to understand the nature of the spiritual conflict around us. Inspire us by your Spirit to believe in your victory. Please help us to have right expectations. Please help us to break through worry, doubt, and turmoil to have your peace and rest. Stir us to be true prayer warriors and overcome challenges by your Spirit. Build your kingdom in our midst despite all opposition! Amen

Have questions about the sermon? Email us: groups@sanctuschurch.com