

# Acts 12 – 26 July 2020

## “Getting Washed In God’s Will”

### Introduction

The Church has begun to expand. Antioch in Syria is taking over as the most productive HQ of the church.

Great persecution has been happening in Jerusalem.

It’s often in these times of great need that we earnestly seek to know God’s will.

If we truly want to do a great work for God, it begins by believing the right things (Read John 6:29)

Read Rom 12:2 – We need to set our minds to know God’s will

We’re renewed in the spirit of our mind by the washing of water which is the Word of God

### **Today, 4 Tips For Performing God’s Will**

**1<sup>st</sup> Tip – Believe Today Is The Best Day To Live For God (Chap 12:1-3)**

## Read Vs 1

1. This is Herod Agrippa I, grandson of the Great
2. Reigned from 41-44 AD
3. Small history of some Herods

### a. Herod The Great

- i. Reigned at time of Christ's birth
- ii. Close with Roman Caesars
- iii. Many his sons reigned but Agrippa's father Aristobulus didn't, he died b4 the Great.

### b. Herod Archelaus

- i. Joseph & Mary warned not to go back b/c he reigned in Jerusalem
- ii. Deposed shortly thereafter

### c. Herod Philip

- i. Ruled NE of Galilee
- ii. Had his wife Herodias taken by bro Antipas

### d. Herod Antipas

- i. Rules Galilee & Samaria
- ii. Beheaded John the Baptist b/c of Herodias
- iii. Trial of Jesus

## Read Vs 2

1. This is James, bro of John, sons of thunder
2. He's one of Jesus' inner-circle of disciples
  - a. Healing of Jairus's daughter, he's there
  - b. Transfiguration, he's there
  - c. Garden of Gethsemane, he's there
3. Even being the closest person to Christ doesn't eliminate an earlier death.
  - a. The number of our days is in God's hands
  - b. Sin can limit your days, but may just be God's will beyond our understanding.
4. Jesus said, "Occupy until I come". – Do it now
5. Paul - "redeem the time b/c the days are evil".
6. Paul also said, "Today is the day of salvation".
  - a. Maybe for YOUR salvation.
  - b. Maybe for you to offer salvation to another
7. Every Christian will die, but not every Christian truly lived for Christ
8. Don't assume you have a lifetime ahead of you

## Read Vs 3

1. Herod is motivated by pure politics.
2. Difference with Saul of Tarsus
  - a. He was killing Christians thinking it will promote God's will.
  - b. Herod was killing Christians thinking it will promote himself.
3. It's the week of Passover
  - a. Many Jews visiting for Feast Days
  - b. Didn't want to upset them during this time

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Tip – Believe God Uses A Variety Of Methods (Chap 12:4-11)**

## Read Vs 4

1. Easter – should be Passover – only occurrence
2. 4 quaternions – 16 soldiers, 4 per shift
3. Agrippa knows Peter has escaped from prison

## Read Vs 5-6

1. God's method of timing isn't always the same
  - a. Healed Peter's mother-in-law b4 she died
  - b. Healed Jairus's daughter after she died
  - c. Martha said to Jesus after Lazarus died, "If u had been here, Lazarus wouldn't have died"
2. Some of us wait briefly to see God's will done, some of us wait much longer, even beyond the point that we think God will act.
3. Peter is waiting till the very night b4 dying.

## Read Vs 7-9

1. This seems to be a quiet, secret escape.
  - a. Paul & Silas released by a great earthquake
2. As Jesus does, the Church shouldn't be afraid to update its methods.
  - a. Assuming God can only operate, "The way we've always done it" will lead to a rut.
  - b. Chuck Smith "Only different between a rut and a grave is the length and depth"

## Read Vs 10-11

1. Do what seems right, even if the method is strange & afterward you'll see God's hand.
2. New Methods does not automatically equal sinful methods
3. Openness is the key
  - a. Use Evangelism methods but be open to your brother being receiving salvation thru a different conversation
  - b. Use Worship methods but be open to changing them over time

## **3<sup>rd</sup> Tip – Believe In His Sovereign Will & Not Our Faith (Chap 12:12-17)**

## Read Vs 12

1. John Mark wrote the Gospel of John
2. Mary's house was place of Upper Room
3. 1<sup>st</sup> trip w/ Paul, not 2<sup>nd</sup> trip. Later restoration.

## Read Vs 13-16

1. This is the group that vs 5 said, “ceased not to pray” for his release from prison.
2. Rhoda was so excited she left Peter at the door.
3. No one believed it could be Peter thinking it was Peter’s Guardian Angel.
4. One of Jesus’ oft used expression was, “where is your faith”.
  - a. Jesus wants our faith
    - i. Not to activate His will being done
    - ii. But to be blessed by His will being done
  - b. Exp of Martha, Mary & Lazarus in John 11
    - i. Characterized by the weeping of the ladies
    - ii. Could have been characterized by their hopeful belief in Jesus.
  - c. To Thomas in John 20:29 “Blessed are they that have not seen and believe.”
5. God’s will will happen whether we’re apart of it happening or not.

## Read Vs 17

1. James, Jesus bro, leader of Jerusalem Church
2. This is basically the last Bible tells us of Peter
  - a. Gal 2 – Paul confronted him re: his bias
  - b. He writes 2 letters to the church
  - c. Tradition tells us of him going to Rome and martyred on a cross upside-down

## Read Vs 18-19

1. Normal for Herod to kill the soldiers.

## **4<sup>th</sup> Tip – Believe The Church Will Advance Despite Persecution (Chap 12:20-24)**

## Read Vs 20-23

1. Josephus tells us he was decked out in silver.
2. Lord smites him w/ disease & he dies in 5 days
3. Persecutors will have their end but see vs 24



## Read Vs 24

1. Sometimes the greatest persecution leads to the great move of God in our community.
2. Jesus founded His church and gave the promise in Matt 16 that even “the gates of hell shall not prevail against it”.
3. Don’t focus on the persecutors, focus on the truth of God getting into the hearts of people.
4. Don’t put your time and length of words and effort into fighting the evil, but put your effort into shining the light.

## Read Vs 25

1. There is some indication that Barnabas and Paul were at John Mark’s Mom’s house when Peter got out of prison.
2. They now return to Antioch w/ John Mark
3. This sets up the spread of the Gospel to far nations of the world.

## Conclusion

Sometimes knowing God's will seems like a mysterious matter. Here are 4 Tips that will help us perform God's will

- 1. Believe that today is the best day to live for God**
  - a. Whether you're a Grade A Christian or otherwise, we're not guaranteed more than now
  - b. Don't wait til someone dies to think, "Man I wish I told them about Jesus"
- 2. Believe that God uses a variety of methods**
  - a. Accept new things that aren't sinful
- 3. Believe in His sovereign will, not our faith**
  - a. Ever heard someone say, "Ya just gotta have faith"? Faith in what? Substance matters
- 4. Believe that the Church will advance despite persecution**
  - a. Our lives are to promote God, until He allows it to be ended