

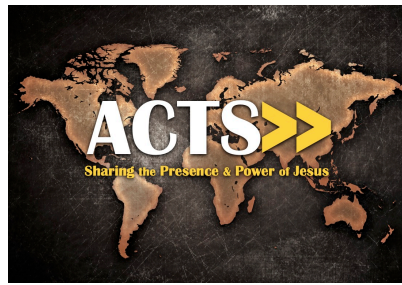
SEQUOIA NOTES

Today's Sequoia Message...

God's Power Through Prayer

With Shawn Woods

August 10, 2025



"And so I tell you, keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened." (Luke 11:9-10)

Do our prayers matter today?

Acts 12:1-19 & 24: "About that time King Herod Agrippa began to persecute some believers in the church. He had the apostle James (John's brother) killed with a sword. When Herod saw how much this pleased the Jewish people, he also arrested Peter. (This took place during the Passover celebration.) Then he imprisoned him, placing him under the guard of four squads of four soldiers each. Herod intended to bring Peter out for public trial after the Passover. But while Peter was in prison, the church prayed very earnestly for him. The night before Peter was to be placed on trial, he was asleep, fastened with two chains between two soldiers. Others stood guard at the prison gate. Suddenly, there was a bright light in the cell, and an angel of the Lord stood before Peter. The angel struck him on the side to awaken him and said, "Quick! Get up!" And the chains fell off his wrists. Then the angel told him, "Get dressed and put on your sandals." And he did. "Now put on your coat and follow me," the angel ordered. So Peter left the cell, following the angel. But all the time he thought it was a vision. He didn't realize it was actually happening. They passed the first and second guard posts and came to the iron gate leading to the city, and this opened for them all by itself. So they passed through and started walking down the street, and then the angel suddenly left him. Peter finally came to his senses. "It's really true!" he said. "The Lord has sent his angel and saved me from Herod and from what the Jewish leaders had planned to do to me!" When he realized this, he went to the home of Mary, the mother of John Mark, where many were gathered for prayer. He knocked at the door in the gate, and a servant girl named Rhoda came to open it. When she recognized Peter's voice, she was so overjoyed that, instead of opening the door, she ran back inside and told everyone, "Peter is standing at the door!" "You're out of your mind!" they said. When she insisted, they decided, "It must be his angel." Meanwhile, Peter continued knocking. When they finally opened the door and saw him, they were amazed. He motioned for them to quiet down and told them how the Lord had led him out of prison. "Tell James and the other brothers what happened," he said. And then he went to another place. At dawn there was a great commotion among the soldiers about what had happened to Peter. Herod Agrippa ordered a thorough search for him. When he couldn't be found, Herod interrogated the guards and sentenced them to death. Afterward Herod left Judea to stay in Caesarea for a while. v.24: Meanwhile, the word of God continued to spread, and there were many new believers."

• We were made in God's image.

• Our purpose: to reign.

So, how did we get here: We believed in a lie. We believe in a lie.

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Point #1: God created us to co-reign with him. Not as equals, but as signposts that co-create a beautiful world through self-sacrificial love.

Point #2: We believed a lie, causing suffering, and gave that authority to Satan, which functionally looks like worshipping the everyday things that offer us significance.

Point #3: Now, what does Jesus promise? To break the chains, take back our reign, and restore our communication breach.

Philosopher Blaise Pascal: "We are not merely passive set pieces in a prearranged cosmic drama, but we are active participants with God in the writing, directing, design, and action that unfolds. Prayer, therefore, is much more than asking God for this or that outcome. It is drawing into communion with him and there taking up our privileged role as his people. In prayer, we are invited to join him in directing the course of his world".

Big Idea: Jesus has given us prayer as our way to break free from the deeply held beliefs, ideas, and habits that enslave us and others and what empowers us to shape the world with him.

Pause.

Reflect.

Ask.

Yield.



Sequoia Impact Communities are where we
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To get plugged in email:
impactcommunities@sequoiachurch.org

God's Power Through Prayer
#15 of 22 - August 10, 2025

- 1) Have you had an experience with unanswered and answered prayer? What did you learn from these experiences?
- 2) Read Acts 12:1-24. What is the **Context** for this passage? Who is the writer and who is the recipient? What is the purpose for writing? What has happened prior to this passage?
- 3) **Observation:** What do you notice about this passage? Why do you think the believers were committed to pray for Peter's release?
- 4) What is the **Meaning** of this passage? What do we learn about prayer from this passage?
- 5) Why were the believers surprised when Peter showed up at the door?
- 6) How does God enable us to co-reign with him and how is prayer a way that we exercise this privilege? How is this revealed in this story?
- 7) Reflect on the Big Idea and discuss the merits of this reality.

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- 8) **Application:** How will you apply this message and what next step is God asking you to take today?
- 9) How can you apply the "PRAY" acronym?
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