

04-03-2022, COTR Texarkana

Title: Why God? What Now?

Purpose: When we're confused and don't understand why something bad happened, provoke people to fight back, always trust God and embrace the experience.

Truth for Today: When we're confused and don't understand why: fight back, always trust God and embrace the experience.

Text: Acts 12:1-11

Topic: Problems, Crisis, Trust, Faith, Spiritual Warfare

Series Title: Mentor Me

Series Purpose: Provoke people to learn and apply life lessons, good and bad, from Biblical characters.

## Why God? What Now?

- I. Introduction (I'll be chasing turkeys this month; vacation every other week)
  - A. Review series: Mentor Me. It's about learning life lessons from Biblical mentors. Def. mentor: a counselor, guide, tutor, or coach. Historical characters in the Bible are the most reliable mentors we can find because they show us what to do and what not to do from God's perspective.
  - B. Today we begin with one of the most miraculous answers to prayer in the Bible, [Acts 12:1–11 (NLT)... King Herod Agrippa began to persecute some believers in the church...3...he also arrested Peter... 5 But while Peter was in prison, **the church prayed very earnestly for him**. 6 The night before Peter was to be placed on trial, he was asleep, fastened with two chains between two soldiers... 7 Suddenly...an angel... stood before Peter. The angel...said, "Quick! Get up!" And **the chains fell off his wrists**...9 So Peter left the cell, following the angel... 10 They passed the...guard posts and came to the iron gate... and **this opened for them all by itself**....11 Peter ...said, "**The Lord has sent his angel and saved me**...]" Wouldn't it be great if every problem we faced turned out like this? Sometimes it doesn't.
    1. I skipped over vs. 2, [Vs. 2 **He had the apostle James (John's brother) killed with a sword**.] Wouldn't it be nice if we could just skip over life's difficulties like this? We can't. Evil operates in the world and Christians are affected by it. Like James, sometimes bad things happen, and prayers don't stop it, and we wonder why. Tragedies like this can shake our faith in God. I bet his brother John struggled. John the beloved was Jesus' closest disciple. Imagine how he felt when his brother was killed, and the Lord didn't stop it. I imagine he asked, why God? But a bigger question is what do I do after the bad experience.
  - C. Today we'll learn what to do if our faith in God is shaken because something bad happens. We'll be mentored by Paul and Silas and Mary and Martha. This is

a complex subject, and I don't have all the answers, but our mentors will show us how to fight back, always trust God and even embrace the experience.

D. Title: Why God? What Now?

E. Truth for Today: When we're confused and don't understand why: fight back, always trust God and embrace the experience.

II. Mentor me Paul and Silas. Show me what to do when I'm under spiritual attack.

A. [Acts 16:16–33 (NLT)...we met a slave girl who had a spirit that enabled her to tell the future. She earned a lot of money for her masters by telling fortunes...18...Paul ...said to the demon within her, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And instantly it left her. 19 Her masters' ...grabbed Paul and Silas and dragged them before the authorities at the marketplace...23 **They were severely beaten, and then they were thrown into prison...**]

1. Mentoring lesson #1: Christians are in a spiritual war. They did a good thing and the devil got mad. Sometimes bad things happen to us to stop our witness.

B. [Vs. 25 **Around midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God**, and the other prisoners were listening. 26 Suddenly, there was a massive earthquake...All the doors immediately flew open, and the chains of every prisoner fell off!...29 The jailer called for lights and ran to the dungeon and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. 30...and asked, "**Sirs, what must I do to be saved?**" 31 They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, along with everyone in your household."]

1. Mentoring lesson #2: When a spiritual battle is the reason we're facing problems, fight back with prayer and worship. These weapons of war are powerful.

2. Mentoring lesson #3: Don't just take it; make the devil pay, e.g., jailer & L cancer

3. Mentoring lesson #4: Lesson: Just because something bad happens, it ain't over!

4. Truth for Today: When we're confused and don't understand why something bad happened, provoke people to fight back, always trust God and **embrace the experience**. God may not be causing our problems, but if He allows it good can come out of bad situations. Faith helps us look above the problem for God.

III. Mentor me Mary and Martha. Show me what to do when I feel Jesus lets me down.

A. [John 11 (NLT)...Lazarus was sick. He lived in Bethany with his sisters, Mary and Martha...3 So the two sisters sent a message to Jesus telling him, "**Lord,**

**your dear friend is very sick.”** 4 But when Jesus heard about it he said, “Lazarus’s sickness will not end in death. No, **it happened...so that the Son of God will receive glory from this.”** 5 So **although Jesus loved Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, 6 he stayed where he was for the next two days.”**...17 When Jesus arrived at Bethany, he was told that Lazarus had already been in his grave for four days. 18 Bethany was only a few miles down the road from Jerusalem...]

1. Mentoring lesson #5: Vain imaginations test our faith; we must control our thoughts, e.g., He was so close, why didn’t He come; Jesus, don’t people you love deserve better than this?
2. Mentoring lesson #6: Sometimes the Lord doesn’t stop our crisis because He is using it for a higher purpose. Christianity is 1<sup>st</sup> about serving God, not God serving us.
3. Mentoring lesson #7: It’s hard to pray and wait and nothing changes.

B. Vs. 20 When Martha got word that Jesus was coming, **she went to meet him. But Mary stayed in the house.**

1. Mentoring lesson #8: When we feel like the Lord let us down, we can quit or keep following Him. Some people run to God in a crisis; some run away.

C. Vs. 21 Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 But **even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask.”**

1. Mentoring lesson #9: Faith believes God can do the impossible. [Mk 9:22–23 (NLT) The spirit often throws him into the fire or into water, trying to kill him. ...help us, if you can.” 23 “What do you mean, ‘If I can’?” Jesus asked. “**Anything is possible if a person believes.**”] Faith gives us power to fight.

D. [Vs. 28 Then she returned to Mary. She called Mary aside...and told her, “**The Teacher is here and wants to see you.” 29 So Mary immediately went to him...**]

1. Mentoring lesson #10: If we’ve turned away from God in a crisis we turn back.

E. [Vs. 39 “Roll the stone aside,” Jesus told them. But Martha...protested, “Lord, he has been dead for four days. The smell will be terrible.” 40 Jesus responded, “**Didn’t I tell you that you would see God’s glory if you believe?**”...43 Then Jesus shouted, “Lazarus, come out!” 44 And the dead man came out...45 **Many of the people who were with Mary believed in Jesus when they saw this happen.**]

1. Mentoring lesson #11: If we believe and don’t give up, we may see a miracle.
2. My heroes: Donna Turner, Noah, Apostle C

IV. Mentor me Paul; show me what God may be doing through my problem.

A. My anxiety struggle, [2 Cor. 12:7–9 (NLT) ...even though I have received such wonderful revelations from God. So to keep me from becoming proud, I was given a **thorn in my flesh**, a messenger from Satan to torment me and keep me from becoming proud. 8 **Three different times I begged the Lord to take it away.** 9 **Each time he said, “My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.”** So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, **so that the power of Christ can work through me.**] A Christian doctor tried everything she knew medically to do said, maybe this anxiety is a thorn in my flesh.

B. [2 Cor. 1:3–11 (NLT) **All praise to God...4 He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others.** When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the **same comfort** God has given us...8 We think you ought to know...about the trouble we went through...We were crushed and overwhelmed beyond our ability to endure, and we thought we would never live through it. 9...we expected to die. But as a result, **we stopped relying on ourselves and learned to rely only on God...**]

1. I've learned: (1) Keep fighting because God's not the cause of my torment (2) Trust God in my weakness because God is faithful, (3) Embrace the experience because God is doing something in me and for others. I'm encountering His grace in my weakness and I'm learning to stop relying on myself and rely only on God. Other people who struggle with anxiety tell me my story gives them faith and courage to keep going.

## V. Conclusion

A. Title: Why God? What Now? When we're confused and don't understand why, our mentors teach us to fight back, always trust God and embrace the experience. The reason, [Romans 8:28 (ESV) And **we know that for those who love God all things work together for good**, for those who are called according to his purpose.]

1. James went to heaven, but his death didn't stop his brother John. He was a pillar of the church, and wrote 4 books of the Bible, including Revelation. May we approach our troubles and disappointments in the same way.

## VI. Response

A. Prayer

B. Souls

VII. Bibliography/ Resources: Logos Bible Software and Library, Platinum Edition, was used to prepare this message.