

# Peter's Night in Jail

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Preacher: David Spurgeon

[0:00] Then we need to have an invitation. Amen. All right. I'm going to actually do something I normally don't do. You know how many times I hear preachers say, we're going to do something different tonight.

I hear that so often that I'm wondering what normal is. But I'm going to do something different tonight. I'm going to turn my own mic on without having to be told.

I wonder how many years you've got to be in evangelism before you actually remember to turn your own mic on. I don't know because I'm not there. But I don't have any problem hearing myself. So I guess that's why I don't think of it.

But it is good. Did you guys, what, crank these up tonight to make up for the sun going down? What's up with that? I feel like a 747 is coming in on me. Amen.

So I'm going to get the glare off there. But it is good to be in the house of the Lord tonight. Good to be back. Good to see some preacher friends of mine. And Brother Cook, I guess we met years ago.

[0:58] And I'm glad you're here tonight. It's good to see you tonight. And these missionaries I've met before. And one of my dear friends, Anthony Anderson, is here tonight.

So, you know, we're going to have a good time whether you guys do or not, okay? But I'm going to need, you know, an amen section. And Richard, of course, is trying to bring Greg. Come on, that's good.

At least they'll respond. It's better than yesterday. What's your name again there with the long, long hair? Did you have a question for me? Oh. Oh, okay.

Yeah. Jake. Jake. All right. Are you ready? You know, it's okay to have a good time in church. So, like, loosen up, would you? Amen. Amen. I'm going anyway.

Wow. If you're walking through the valley, there are shadows all around.

[2:02] Do not fear. He will guide you. He will keep you safe and sound. He has promised to never leave you nor forsake you.

And His word is true. God is good all the time. He put a song of praise in this heart of mine.

God is good all the time. Through the darkest night, His light will shine. God is good.

God is good all the time. God is good all the time. He will be good all the time.

He will be good all the time. Still for us, He chose to die. He filled us with His Holy Spirit.

[3:04] Now we can't stand and testify that His love is everlasting. God is good all the time. God is good all the time.

God is good all the time. He put a song of praise in this heart of mine. God is good all the time.

Through the darkest night, His light will shine. God is good all the time.

God is good all the time. Though I may not understand all the plans He has for me, my life is in His hands.

And through the eyes of faith, I can clearly see. God is good all the time. He put a song of praise in this heart of mine.

[4:12] God is good all the time. Through the darkest night, His light will shine. God is good.

God is good. He's so good. God is good all the time. Amen. Amen.

We're not. But He is. But He is. That's why this is about Him and not about us. Amen.

That's right. Talk about His light. I guess I better leave that alone. Okay, go ahead. Just a second. Sorry, there's a glare.

It's okay. We ain't going home night. You know, we live in Ohio. Take all the time you want. I entered once a home of care.

[5:20] For age and penury were there. Yet peace and joy with all. I asked the lonely mother whence, her helpless widowhood's defense.

She told me Christ is all. Christ is all. Christ is all. All in all. She told me Christ is all.

She told me Christ is all. I stood beside a dying bed where lay a child with aching head waiting for Jesus' call.

I marked his smile to a sweet as may and as his spirit slipped away, he whispered Christ is all.

I saw the martyr at the stake. The flames could not his courage shake, nor death his soul appalled.

[6:26] I asked him whence his strength was given. He looked triumphantly to heaven. He answered Christ is all.

Christ is all, all in all. He answered Christ is all. I saw the gospel herald go to Africa's land and Greenland's snow to save from Satan's thrall.

Not home nor life he counted dear. Mids' wants and perils, oh no fear. He felt that Christ is all.

Then come to Christ, he'll come today. A father, son, and the spirit say. The bride repeats the call.

For he will cleanse your guilty stains. His love will soothe your weary pains. For Christ is all in all.

[7:36] Christ is all, all in all. Oh, Christ is all in all.

Amen. I heard a preacher say, I haven't been saved very long. And I was preaching and I said this.

The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing.

That is so profoundly simple. It landed where it needed to. It's stuck. And it's true. And what I've seen in 30 years is that when the problems come, because other things become the main thing.

And we lose our focus. We lose our focus on Jesus Christ and things that are important to him. And we start squabbling over nickel-dime things that the devil uses to tear churches up.

And I've watched it year in and year out. And I guess we just need to be reminded that that's who's behind it. It's the stinking devil. Amen.

[8:38] And I'm sad to have to report I've seen him win too many times.

And so I'm in the business of trying to encourage preachers, encourage missionaries, stay in the fight and remind them who the fight's with.

Amen. It's good to be in church tonight. Say, you already said that. Well, I said it again. I mean it.

Amen. Acts chapter 12.

Acts chapter 12 tonight. Amen. Amen. Pastors leave stuff from the pulpit.

Song leaders. I'm standing up here trying to focus. I read stuff. I read the notes. Sometimes I read them to you if I think they're interesting. That wasn't that interesting.

Verse 1. Acts chapter 12 tonight. Verse number 1. The Bible says this. Now, about that time, Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain other church.

[9:41] We're going to be talking about that tonight. Lord willing, preaching about it a little bit. And we'll pray again. Father, I love you and I come to you in the name of Jesus Christ, the name that is above every name, the name in which we gather.

And Father, confident that your Bible tells us in Matthew 18 that where two or three are gathered together in your name, there you are in the midst. So we're not begging you to show up. We're trying to keep from running you off.

Help us focus on thee and try to get something. Be sensitive to the spirit of God and be sensitive tonight to the word of God. I love you tonight, Lord. I don't know the needs of anybody in here really except my own.

And I need something from you. And I pray it would be so. Pray we'd all feel that way. Pray, God, you'd see fit to meet with us. I made a message and the response to it. Bring honor and glory to Jesus Christ.

In his name I pray, amen. About that time, it says, head, the king stretched forth his hand to vex.

Vex, certain of the church. That word vex, I looked it up.

[10:45] It means this. It means to plague, to torment, to harass, to afflict, trouble, distress, or persecute.

Amen. That's a busy guy. He's trying to do all that. To who? To the church of Jesus Christ. It says now about that time. So then you're going to have to look back in chapter 11 to get the context and see what the time frame is.

And in verse 30 it says this, which also they did, and I'll clarify that, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

You've got Barnabas and Saul leaving Antioch and coming to Jerusalem. They're delivering relief to the saints in Jerusalem from these newly converted Gentiles in Antioch.

The disciples, by the way, you go back up to verse 26, who were first called Christians in Antioch. Amen. These folks, one of the first things they do is give to send relief to help the brethren.

[11:56] That's pretty good truth. I think people get saved and take them years to ever loosen their grip on their stinking money. That's one of the first things they do. And they're sending relief.

And it says in verse 29, and then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea. I mean, the model is there.

We're supposed to help one another out. Not just within our little few, but we're supposed to help out the church of Jesus Christ, wherever it is. Amen. Amen. All right. What's interesting to me is this relief is being sent to the elders in Jerusalem by the very people that were skeptical of their conversion.

Just a few verses earlier in Acts 11, 22, the Lord's moving up there in Antioch.

And it says in verse 22, They were skeptical.

[13:05] Isn't it a cry in shame? We know what the power of Jesus Christ, the Word of God, can do. And then when somebody gets saved, you know, instead of rejoicing, sometimes we're critical, we're skeptical.

I still have the opinion God can save anybody He wants. Amen. Amen. The point I'm trying to make is this. These are the ones, and they proved valid. It said in verse 23, Who, when he came, Barnabas, and had seen the grace of God and was glad and exhorted them all that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.

Barnabas was a man full of faith in the Holy Ghost. It said in the next verse, And it's interesting to note that he recognized the grace of God by seeing it.

Amen. Would to God we would. Amen. Instead of running everything through our little critique filter system. Hold on a second. I learned this on the road.

Amen, Brother Spurgeon. Hey, that's okay with me. That's the way it's got to be. Amen. Amen. So that's what's going on here. It says now about that time. So that's the time.

[14:12] All right. God is moving up there. The Lord's moving in.

Converting people up there in Antioch. While in Jerusalem, the birthplace of Christianity, you've got the king, herod the king, and just doing what politicians do.

Whatever pleases the people. Bunch of chameleons. Amen. And he's giving the church a hard time. The word the Bible uses is vex. I give you a definition.

But I want you to notice in verse 2. It says this. And he killed James, the brother of John, with the sword. Now wait, killed.

I go back to the definition. Plague, torment, harass, afflict, trouble, destruction. Killing ain't part of it. Amen. That's some serious vexing right there when you start executing people.

James, and it says the brother of John. And he's one of the original four. Going back to Matthew chapter 4. That got called out with Andrew and Peter and John and James, the sons of Zebedee. James was one of the ones that gave up his family.

[15:17] He gave up his occupation. Gave up his religion. I dropped everything and responded to the call where the Lord said, Follow me and I'll make these fishers of men. And he responded and he's faithful.

And this is what he got for it. He got beheaded. That's not what he got for it. I'll tell you what he got for it. What he got for it is a place up there in heaven with the Lord. Amen.

His life didn't end there any more than yours or mine will. I hope that we can go out as nobly as he did. Amen. It says in verse 3, and still the context is here to King.

Verse 3, it says, and because he saw killing James, because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also.

Then were the days of unleavened Britain. It pleased the Jews. These are the same Jews that it pleased to crucify Jesus Christ.

[16:14] And boy, they were hoping that they had put this thing away when they crucified the Lord of glory. And now obviously they have not. And they're under great conviction.

They want this thing to go away. And they are systematically encouraging the government to kill the early Christians. Amen. I'll tell you what, it didn't stop it.

It didn't slow it down at all, did it? It kicked it in high gear. That's what persecution does. Amen. Maybe we could stand a little more of it in the United States. Amen. Verse 4, and again, Herod, and when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him, intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people.

Now, Brother Drake, I don't know about you. When I was a paratrooper, we didn't have quaternions. We had fire teams and squads and platoons. We had things like that. We had companies, battalions, all that.

But Herod notes four quaternions. And so that's real deep. That's an old antiquated word. It means 16 men. They put 16 men to guard Peter.

[17:34] Boy, they were a little nervous about him, it tells me. Amen. Round the clock, he's got... These are the most experienced warrior soldiers on the planet, these Roman soldiers.

And Herod's got four of them guarding old Peter. Peter. And what I want to point out, number one, I guess I better do it like that for you. What you got going on here, what we're going to look at, is Peter at rest.

Peter at rest. Notice again, and when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping. He's sleeping. He's in prison.

He's in prison. He's in a lot of trouble. They just executed James. He's probably confident that that awaits him. And he's so worried about it that we find him here asleep.

Amen. That's worthy of note to me. And let me just tell you from experience, sleeping when you're locked up is not as easy as it might sound. Usually, jails are pretty noisy.

[18:41] Amen. You got guards barking orders and prisoners yelling over each other and doors banging and clanging. And once in a while, if you're fortunate, there'll be a good fight over a food tray or a payphone.

That's what I kind of live for. You got loud speakers blaring, trying to break up all the violence. And none of that's phasing Peter a bit. His Bible says he's asleep.

Let me tell you something. Being behind bars is an ungodly place. It's an intimidating place. And it's often a very violent place. I mean, once a guy's locked up, if he's looking at a lot of time, he really doesn't have much to lose.

Amen. I'm glad I wasn't a kid when I got locked up. I was 37. I was looking at a lot of federal time, like I talked about yesterday. I wasn't in a good mood.

That gave me an advantage as far as I was concerned. But, boy, I'll tell you what. We preach around some of these prisons. We've seen guys in county jails, too. We see young guys, guys on the street, busted for different things, mostly dope.

[19:43] And they're in the bars, behind the bars, trying to play the man and act tough and look tough. And some of them are pretty tough. And they're trying to play the man because some of them know they're going to a place that they really have no idea what's ahead of them.

And I feel sorry for them because I know what's ahead of them. Amen. I got to tag along. In the early days of that community service I was doing, I got to tag along sometimes when the preacher would go make visits.

And a guy from another church, he had a son that was train wrecked. I think he was 17 at the time, nice-looking young man, regular kid.

But he had some real, real problems, sin problems. All right? And they couldn't get any help for him. He was hard-hearted and smug and disrespectful, been raised in church.

And he liked his sin, and he didn't have any intention of giving it up, getting right with God. And so they exhausted all the resources at that church, and they called over to our church.

[20:52] And one of the guys went and talked to him, and I tagged along. I tagged, you want to go? And I go, sure. You know, I'm trying to learn how to be a Christian. So I tagged along. And I mean, they sat there.

The guy's dad and the preacher I was with sat there and talked to this kid for an hour. And telling him all the stuff. He's heard it over and over again. And he's rolling his eyes.

And he's smug. And he's not listening. I mean, I just, I mean, in Jesus' name, I want to go just choke him. I think it would have helped him. I think there's a whole lot of people in the body of Christ that just need to be taken out back and whipped.

I really believe that. Amen. But we can't do that. I guess we've got to trust God to do that. And I'll tell you what, sometimes people rather we did it than God, because I've seen him do a number on some folks.

I'm glad. I don't want to be in his sight. You hear me? You don't either. So this kid, this kid, they ain't getting nowhere. And I'm going, like, we're just wasting our time. And then they did what I didn't expect.

[21:52] One of the preachers looked over at me and said, okay, well, we ain't getting nowhere, Brother Spurgeon. You got anything to say? And I thought, I looked over at the kid.

And I said, son, can you picture yourself in bright red lipstick? Because, I mean, you're going to be somebody's girlfriend in no time.

I'll tell you what, that broke him. Boy, he had a little scared look on his face, and he teared up a little bit. And I don't know how it ended. I don't know. I hope that wasn't prophetic. Amen.

But I'm telling you, we got Peter. He's locked up. And to me, it's interesting that he's asleep. To me, it means he's come a long way since that storm in Mark chapter 4.

Amen. Where he was afraid he was going to perish while the Lord was sleeping. Now Peter's the one that's sleeping. So somewhere between Mark chapter 4 and Acts chapter 12, I guess he learned to cast all his care upon the Lord.

[22:54] Because he wrote for us to do that in the first epistle he wrote. Peter's sleeping. But Paul wrote this in 1 Corinthians 15, verse 34. He said, Awake to righteousness and sin not, for some have not the knowledge of God.

Would you agree with that? Some have not the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame. So if Christians are asleep at the wheel, people all around, way back then, still the same, are on their way to a devil's hell.

And you don't have to go to New Guinea or Russia to find lost people on their way to hell. There's plenty of them around here. And I'm not just saying that because we're in California.

Because I'm in every state and there's plenty of them in every state. And Paul says, I speak this to your shame. Christians these days have been lulled to sleep.

I'm not talking about them other crowds. What good would that do? I'm talking about our crowd.

We've been lulled to sleep by comfort and compromise, complacency, and then some get wrapped around the axle over the cares of this life.

[24:04] You need to turn that thinking computer off more than you do.

Amen. I'll tell you what, Christians in our age, I'm talking about a lot of Bible believers, are asleep and they don't want to be woke up.

Amen. And they get offended if you try. You can share what the Word of God says, but don't preach. I don't want that anymore.

Amen. I'm glad I'm getting old. I'll be dead and off the scene. I don't know what you guys are going to do with the next generation if they don't get woke up. Amen. And even when I say that, I speak as a fool because I'm happy to report that as I travel around the country, I see that God is raising up young men that are sound in doctrine, solid on the book, still doing the work.

And it is a really... A couple of years ago, I took a trip up in the great Northwest, and I preached for John, and I preached for Nathan, and I preached for Josh Bryant, and I preached for Daniel, and Brother Walski knows all these guys, Zach, who I'm talking about, and Adrian.

And it was a relief to me to see that even if us old guys do pass off the scene, if the Lord continues to tarry, there's some soldiers for Christ standing, standing firm for the faith.

[25:27] And it's a blessing. It's kind of a mixed blessing because I'm hoping the Lord doesn't tarry. But I tell you what's more important, and I don't know how this will go. I tell you what's more important than the Lord coming back, and we want the Lord to come back, right?

That's going to happen. You don't have to worry about that. That's going to happen. We just don't know when. We know it's going to happen because he said so. But I tell you what's more important

than when the rapture is, is whether or not we'll be found faithful when he does come. Now, that's your personal responsibility. Amen. And just like we sang the last two verses of that song, amen, about cleanse me.

We need to stay as close to God as we can so that we can be faithful, so we can make some kind of difference. It doesn't matter what everybody else is doing. What are you doing?

What are we doing? What's this church doing? Are we going to stay on track, or are we going to play games? Amen. All right? And it's sad to me also that I travel around and I see some preachers, you know, in an effort to stay relevant in this new age, preach more apologetically.

[26:37] I don't think my preacher ever apologized for nothing. Well, if he was wrong, he'd come back and apologize. That told me he was a man. I've been around some preachers that will not admit they're wrong.

And, buddy, I was almost 38 when I got saved. I know that men are not perfect. So if I see a guy conducting himself like he's never wrong, I write him off.

I'm moving on. The only perfect man is Jesus Christ. Can I get a witness there? All right. I'm going to search until I get one. Amen. So people don't want to be woke up these days.

They don't want to be disturbed. That's why, you know, a pastor's job is to comfort the afflicted.

And, boy, you got your work cut out for you, man. And evangelist, you know, I don't have a flock.

I just, my job is to afflict the comfortable. And I just go church to church, try to stir it up a little bit.

Can I tell you, I love my job. Amen. Amen. Let me tell you this to you.

[27:34] Peter is sleeping. Peter's rest. That's what we're talking about. Peter may have been sleeping, but you're not supposed to be Christian. It says in Romans 13, and knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep, for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.

Amen. Let me tell you something. Paul said, I speak this to your shame. It's time for God's people to wake up and get the main thing back to being the main thing. And the main thing isn't you.

It isn't your family. It isn't what's going on. The main thing is that you walk out them doors. And you know what's neat about being in the hills? You can see neighborhoods for a long way. You can see.

And, buddy, there's people there that need Jesus Christ just like you did. Amen. So, number one, you got Peter at rest, dig?

Peter at rest. But, number two, verse six, again, what chapter are we? Okay. And when Herod would have brought him forward, let me see, go on. The same night Peter was sleeping. Watch this.

[28:39] Between two soldiers. Now, we have, you know, a shift. We got eight. We got 16 soldiers, two at a time. They are keeping this guy locked down. Between two soldiers.

And not only that, it says he's bound, verse six, bound with two chains. Two chains. Like one might not have been enough. I don't know.

Amen. Amen. Chains, in this case, represent literal bondage. Right? Amen.

Kind of like that guy, one of my favorite Bible guys in Mark chapter five, the maniac of Darius. He had often, often been bound with fetters and chains.

Amen. I told you a story yesterday about going to jail in Toronto, trying to change planes, get to Mexico. I left out the most humiliating part of that whole trip.

[29:39] It wasn't just being locked up. I've been locked up before. But when I realized that they weren't going to put me on a plane that night, and they did book me a room at the Toronto West.

That was not a Best Western. But go to jail. Okay, here we go again. But the worst part, after they took my wallet, my passport, my carry-on, all it had in it was my Bible and like 5,000 Spanish tracts. Because I wouldn't trust that to check in. I kept that with me. And so they take that. They take my passport. They take, I had shoes on.

They took my shoelaces. Let me ask something. Do I look like the kind of guy that could hang himself in his cell with his shoelaces? I mean, come on. But the worst part about it is these two guys come, and they've got shackles, and I'm shackled, and, you know, belly band, and shackled at the legs.

And I'm walking to an international airport, international airport, and when we got outside, the paddy wagon that they were going to use to take me to jail was a minivan.

[30:54] I was never so humiliated in my entire life. I mean, for the first time, I looked around and see if any of the guys from the old days might be at the airport. That was so embarrassing.

I know a little bit about physical, literal change. Amen. But there's another type of bondage that every bit is real.

And Paul referred to it in Galatians chapter 5, verse number 1, where he said this, Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty, wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

Amen. You know, traveling around, you see it the same as I do, people everywhere are bound by the chains of their sin. Many of them don't even know it. Sometimes it's lust, greed, covetousness, things like that, envy, pride, bitterness, and it's sad.

Many don't know. Sometimes people do know, and they don't care. That's why they need the Lord. But what amazes me is that a lot of Christians have done exactly what he warned them not to do.

[32:01] They've gotten themselves entangled again with the yoke of bondage. It says in Galatians 4, verse 9, Why do you think those admonitions are in the Bible?

Number one, because it's very possible. Yes, you're saved, and you love Jesus. It's very possible to be brought into the bondage of sin after the Holy Spirit moves in.

Believe me, that's no party for him. Amen. Peter may have been bound, and the Bible makes it clear that he was bound, but you're not supposed to be.

John 8, verse 36 says, If the Son therefore shall make you free, you shall be free indeed. You and I are supposed to be free indeed in Jesus Christ. Let me say it again.

Peter was asleep, but you're not supposed to be. And Peter was bound, but you're not supposed to be. Let's look at verse 4. Go back up to verse 4 again.

[33:16] And we'll look at Peter's reality. It says this, And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, delivered him to the four quaternions of soldiers, to keep him, intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people.

Amen. He got a little holiday weekend there, but Herod intends to bring him forth, and that's not for trial. Amen. Peter's not, you know why he's asleep?

Because he's not in his cell fretting about whether or not his lawyer's going to do a good job. He's not even worried about it. He's not worrying about any surprise witnesses or a sympathetic jury. He's not concerned about, you know, what kind of day the judge is having. None of that matters. This is about sentencing. This is about his execution. And Peter knows it.

And he's locked up for serving Jesus Christ, and he knows that it's right after the Easter egg hunt. He's going to be executed. Amen.

[34:18] That's his reality. He's going to have his head cut off just like James did. But his reality is he's about to die. Paul wrote to us in Hebrews chapter 9, As it is appointed, and as it is appointed, and the man wants to die, but after this, the judgment.

Let me tell you something. As different as people are, and believe me, people are different. We're supposed to be for the glory of God. Amen. It's okay. We're not all supposed to be the same. Amen. And as different as people are, every human being has two things in common. Two things in common. Number one, everyone is a sinner.

The Bible says all is sin and come short of glory of God. It doesn't matter if you're Armenian. Oh, did that flip out? Sorry. It doesn't matter who you are. It doesn't matter where you are. The Bible says all.

That's why everybody needs to be saved. We don't have to figure it out. You don't have to figure it out. You're a sinner. You need to be saved. If you're not saved, you need to be saved. Are we live streaming?

[35:20] You need to be saved. Are we? Good. Good. I wouldn't want to say anything, you know, awkward. Truth of the matter is, I would anyway, and deal with it later.

Everybody's a sinner. That's one thing. But the second thing everybody's got in common is, everybody's going to die. Everybody's got an appointment to meet their maker. The Bible says

we've got a once to die, and after this, the judgment.

Truth of the matter is, everybody's got two appointments. Two appointments. The Bible says the wage of sin is death. And that means this. That means Peter's reality and yours are identical.

The difference between him and you is he knew when. Amen. Next day, probably. And you and I don't know. But the Bible does say in Proverbs 27, boast not thyself of tomorrow.

For thou knowest not what a day may bring forth. I got plans. You know, I got things I'm hoping to do. Amen. But I might not get to. I don't have a promise I'll wake up tomorrow, but I have a promise of where I'll wake up if I don't wake up in that motor home.

[36:29] I know where I'm going to go. I got a promise there. And if you're in here and you're not saved, you got a promise too. There's a couple of them. And I preached on it the other day. Yesterday in hell, he lift up his eyes.

And if you die without Jesus Christ, well, you're going down. And if you die as a child of God, you're going up. But you don't have a guarantee of going to work tomorrow.

Amen. It might be your day. Your number might be up. That's why I even said, prepare to meet thy God. Amen. So we got Peter at rest.

And then Peter's, oh, what was next? I'm getting old. I forgot already. We got Peter's, come on, help me out. Restraint. You're no help tonight. And then Peter's reality.

Amen. And then you got, okay, it's got to get better, right? Peter's rescue. Let's get to the rescue.

Look at verse 5. As dire as his situation appeared, maybe why he's able to sleep is because, I don't know if you're supposed to say this in church, he had an ace up his sleeve.

[37:33] Is that okay to say that? Okay, I hope so. Because it's too late now, right? In verse number 5, Peter, therefore, was kept in prison, but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.

Amen. There was no vigils. Nobody called CLA. None of that stuff. Nobody freaking out. They just knuckled down and prayed.

Gee, I wonder if that'd still work. I wonder why that's our last resort sometimes when it should be our first resort. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

In other words, you got sin in your life? You got somebody who needs your prayer? You're going to have to get the sin out of your life to get a prayer through. And that's what we miss. Amen. We play around with sin because we compare ourselves to this crowd or that crowd compared to them.

And compared to them, you might be doing all right. But that Bible says, If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. I hope you get right with God.

[38:43] I'm just going to be selfish if you're not, because Susan and I need your prayers on the road. Not to mention your missionaries. Not to mention your families.

Not to mention each other. Amen. Got Peter's rescue. It says, Prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.

Then look at verse 7. Now we capitalize on verse 6. Verse 7 says this, And behold, the angel of the Lord came unto him, and a light shined in the prison, and he smote Peter on his side, and raised him up, saying, Rise up quickly.

And then look at this. It says, And his chains fell off from his hands. Remember them two chains? Amen. They just fell off.

They fell off. How about that? Personally, knowing the sense of humor the Lord has, what do you mean? Call me to preach. Amen.

[39:40] Knowing the sense of humor God has, I wonder if them two soldiers woke up like chained together. That would not be good. I mean, you read Acts 16. It's not good when a guard loses a prisoner.

Them guys were in bad shape. Verse 8 says this, And the angel said unto him, First he woke him up, and raised him up, and the chains fell off.

And verse 8, And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind down thy sandals. Now here's the key to Peter's rescue. And so he did.

And it goes on and says, And he saith unto the angel, speaking, And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. Look at verse 9. And he went out, and followed him, and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel, but thought, but he thought, but thought he saw a

vision.

This rescue attempt, this rescue, it wasn't an attempt, this rescue was successful for a simple reason. Peter did what the angel told him to do.

[40:56] Amen? He didn't have to. He wasn't forced to. Peter could have done like too many Christians. I lightened up there, didn't I?

You see that? And said, Oh, I can't, I'm chained down. I can't, I can't rise up quickly. And then maybe he realized, Oh, the chains fell off.

That's how fast your excuses fall off. Amen? And then, or he could have said, Well, you know, if I rise up quickly, then the soldiers might wake up and, and kill me.

Well, duh, they're going to kill you tomorrow anyway. He didn't say that. He didn't say the gates are locked. We can't get out. There's no way. He didn't. He didn't do any of those things.

It might've come natural to some. He just did what the angel of the Lord said to do. What I see traveling around is a lot of times Christians are, they're, they're way quicker to come up with excuses not to do what the Lord would have them to do than they are just to say, here am I.

[42:03] Yes, Lord. Things like that. Amen? And, uh, when we come up with excuses not to do what the Lord directs us to do, however he chooses to direct us, whether it's through preaching or, or the spirit of God bearing witness to the word of God, however the Lord chooses to do it.

When we come up with excuses, yeah, but, well then, sometimes the effort, the rescue efforts that God has in place, the plan, uh, that's going to have to be followed by faith, they fail, but it is never the rescuer's fault.

Peter got out of there and made a great, great impact on the world for Jesus Christ simply because at this point in time, when all looked dark and hopeless, he just did what the angel told him to do. let me just say this. Do you need to be rescued from sin or worldliness or complacency or whatever it might be?

See, the formula is the same. It's just do what God says to do. Hebrews 12 verse 1, we read it yesterday, it said, part of it says, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us.

[43:17] everybody's got a besetting sin. If you think you're, you're above that, you're deceived. Amen. You need to learn to identify your weaknesses so that you can put up a defense against them.

Amen. Lay them aside. Lay them aside. Uh, amen. Uh, whatever it is, whatever distraction that keeps you from living for God, whatever excuse comes up, whatever it is that keeps you from your potential for Christ, he says, lay it aside.

You know, he said, he doesn't say cast it off, he said lay it aside. You know what we do? We, we, sometimes, sometimes this is an archaic word, obviously, but, uh, we'd come to an altar and lay our burden down.

And then when we get done praying and asking God for help, we'd pick it right back up and take it. Uh, Jack Wood said sometimes, said you lay aside so you quit tripping over, over, and over, the same thing over, and over, again.

The answer is in the word of God. It's not changed. Peter did what he was told to do. He could have come up with a lot of logical excuses if you ask me, but he didn't.

[44:32] I've seen God move in churches and I've seen people come up with excuses and drag things out a lot longer than they had to. I've watched God work, orchestrate circumstances to break people to get to the point that he wanted them at in the first place where they just said, yes sir.

Let me say this and I'll be done. If you're in here tonight and you need to be saved, you just do what the Bible says. The Bible says, if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

We got people, we lead them through some little one, two, three prayer. They got it right here. Nothing changes. Here, well, it might feel good for a while, but things don't change very long here and nothing changes in eternity by believing in your head.

The Bible says, well, with the heart man believes under righteousness and with the mouth confession is made under salvation. If you're in here tonight and you never trusted Jesus Christ as your Savior, you need to because you have no guarantee of tomorrow.

If you're in here and you're saved, some of you I've known for a few years, amen, you need to just report for duty and surrender. Amen.

[46:02] You're not on the board of directors. I heard somebody say one time, a lot of people are willing to serve God in an advisory capacity. Yeah. If you're not on the board of directors, then do what you're supposed to do so we can move forward for the glory of God.

Amen. Father, thank you for grace. Thank you for letting me say what was said and I pray and ask, Father, that you just be pleased with our response. However that may be.

If a person needs to deal with something in their life, I pray that they would take it seriously and do so and come back tomorrow for more. I love you and if there's a soul in here that is not redeemed, I pray God you make it easy for them to see they need to get that taken care of and it's easy to take care of.

It just requires a little honesty. It's not my business but it's your business and between you and them, I pray that they get that thing worked out for the glory of Jesus Christ.

Amen and amen. Amen.