

Acts # 55 “The Power of Persistent Prayer” Acts 12:1-25

The death of James was God’s way of waking up the church to the importance of His grace.

Prayer is a principle of grace.

All of the merit in prayer is in the answer or in the One who responds.

We’ll see the church finally resort to prayer and when they do and get a favorable answer, they won’t even believe it.

The death of James was also a powerful means of witnessing for Jesus Christ.

The Jews of Peter’s day were observing the feast of Unleavened Bread but all the ritual in the world without reality behind it is meaningless.

They were mistakenly expecting God to bless them because of what they were doing.

And they’re now hindered from executing Peter because this is the 7-day feast of Unleavened Bread and now, we are down to the last night and Peter is in prison.

The church is constantly awake offering prevailing prayer on behalf of Peter.

They’re using a weapon of grace provided by God; something that cannot bring glory to themselves, only glory to the Lord.

Peter knew his life was in the Lord’s hands and how long he lived was strictly up to the Lord.

Peter is oriented to the plan of God by now and it’s quite interesting that the church is awake and praying and Peter is sound asleep!

In this case we notice something; God takes care of the things beyond our power but He does not interfere with natural function.

The angel knocked the chains off of Peter but Peter had to get dressed for himself.

Like Peter, we as believers in Jesus Christ have been delivered hundreds of times and we didn’t even know what was going on.

As far as human activity is concerned, this is teamwork; in verse 5 we have the prevailing prayer of the church and in verse 12 we have the interruption of the prayer meeting by the prayer’s answer.

Jerusalem has lost its power and impact as a church because it’s no longer grace-oriented.

Grace means God does the work (divine good as opposed to human good) and man simply receives what God has accomplished and therefore, God gets the credit.

The Jerusalem church is going from grace to legalism.

Legalism is religion where man is doing the work (human good) and God simply is supposed to bless what man does and man gets the credit.

The Jerusalem church loses its leadership simply because of the principle of legalism.

In other words, another result of that prayer was the spreading of the Word of God, in the form of the Gospel to unbelievers and biblical instruction to those who were born again.

There is no missionary activity until believers have Bible teaching; missions are based on biblical truth, not on emotion.

Barnabas, Saul and Mark will form the first missionary team to go out from Antioch.

So we have 4 results of the prevailing prayer of the church:

1. The deliverance of Peter

2. The death of the persecutor
3. The spreading of the Word of God
4. The basis of the world-wide missionary movement.

In the plan of God, there's only room for the will of God not the desires of man.

It generally takes a catastrophe to awaken believers to their need of the Word of God.

Sooner or later many believers have to suffer loss to get their attention because they have no concept of their need of biblical truth and they therefore make no effort to learn it.

Peter's sleep in time of pressure shows us the importance of faith-rest.

Humanly speaking there was no hope of deliverance, so Peter put the matter in the Lord's hands.

And God changes national leadership and governments to protect believers.