

Community Group Discussion Questions

“Rest and Rescue”

Acts 12:6-19

Sermon Series Title: “Church Beginnings”

Sermon Series Summary: From now until around Easter, we will be in the book of Acts, covering chapters 1-12. After the Ascension of Jesus Christ, we see the NT church being born by the power of the Holy Spirit. Through this series, we see the church being built, the kingdom going forth, and the gospel being proclaimed.

Setting: The book of Acts is a transitional book between the resurrection of Jesus and the established local churches of the epistles. With Jesus’ call to the church in Acts 1, we see how the gospel spreads to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the end of the earth..

Summary: In our passage, we see the miraculous rescue of Peter from prison. He is found at peace, arrested in between two guards. After his rescue, he goes to the house of Mary where he eventually gives a report of what happened. This passage teaches us about prayer, suffering, peace, and rescue. And it points to our ultimate rescue in Jesus Christ.

Main Point: *“Christ has rescued us from the penalty of sin and one day will rescue us from the presence of sin.”*

Sermon Points:

1. The Rest
2. The Rescue
3. The Report
4. The Ultimate Rescue and Rest

Last week, we saw how James, the son of Zebedee, was the first apostle to be martyred. Peter was also imprisoned, next in line for the execution. We will see his miraculous rescue today.

Read Acts 12:6-19

Community Group Discussion Questions

1. In my opinion, this passage is one of the funniest passages in Scripture. What do you find funny?

(Answers may vary.)

2. How can we find peace and rest in the midst of the storm in our lives?

(Like the early church and the people of God throughout history, we encounter suffering. We may face persecution for our faith as well. How can we have peace like Peter, even if we are facing loss and death?)

In Scripture, we see that God knows us and hears us. And He welcomes us to bring our naked selves to Him. Psalmists bring their raw emotions and hurt before the Lord. Some of their accusations and claims are borderline blasphemous, and yet, God still welcomes that. It's because He knows us, hears us, and is with us.

That's part of the hope. Second, it's to trust in His sovereignty. Peter knows that there is nothing more to be done. He has done everything he can to live for Christ up to this point. He has probably talked with his guards endlessly and prayed continuously. He knows he has no control over what is going to happen to him. There is peace in knowing how helpless we are.

Lastly, I believe it's his hope. Either he will be rescued from prison and be with the body of Christ. Or he will be rescued from this life and be with Christ Himself. He has full confidence in what will happen after he passes. That gives him so much peace that he can sleep deeply in prison.)

3. Are there times when we are found disbelieving in answered prayer? Why do we do this?

(The early church is found praying. They have been praying for days, and they are praying all night. Although they have been praying, they don't believe Rhoda when she says that Peter has been rescued. They give these reasons to rationalize what she has heard. It's so easy for us to pray for something, even diligently, and still doubt God's answer to the prayer.)

Community Group Discussion Questions

4. What does this passage teach us about our ultimate deliverance?

(Peter's rescue from prison points us to our ultimate rescue from the prison of our sin and shame. Jesus has rescued us through the ransom of His blood. He was the one arrested to set us free. He was nailed to the cross, so that we may no longer receive the punishment for our sin. He was condemned for us. He was put to shame for us. And He took on all anxiety, restlessness, and stress on the cross for our sin, so that we may have the peace of God.)

Final Thoughts: *In this humorous passage, we are reminded of how weak our faith is at times. Like Peter, we may not realize we are being rescued while it is happening. Like the church, we may not believe in answered prayer even though we have been praying. And yet, God still answers their imperfect prayers. We may not receive a rescue from all the suffering in our lives, but we have and will receive rescue from the worst problem and source of suffering, sin. Jesus has rescued us of its penalty through the cross, and He will rescue us from its presence on the Last Day. Hallelujah.*