

“Real Church Life”

Acts 12:1-25

June 28, 2015

INTRO:

What’s the best indication of the kind of man a boy will become?

Answer: His models & meanings...

What’s the best indication of the kind of woman a girl will become?

Answer: Her models & meanings...

The same question & answer applies to churches...

TIMELESS TRUTH:

*What you see & believe...
is what you seek & become!* -JDP

T/S: That’s why God has given us such a vivid portrait of His family’s mission & mandates...

REVIEW: Acts 1:8 = outline & mission...

Last week = “Our Family Tree”

T/S: It’s one thing to know what a family looks like...
but living how a family LIVES is a whole ‘nother story!

PREVIEW: “Promised Paint in our Portrait”

- Persecution
- Prayer
- Peace
- Power
- Proof
- Persistence
- Proclamation
- Problems
- Politics
- Paradoxs
- Purposed-Perseverance

T/S: Let’s take a closer look...

I. (vv.1-4) PERSECUTION

- 1***About that time Herod the king laid violent hands on some who belonged to the church.*
- 2***He killed James the brother of John with the sword,*
- 3***and when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also. This was during the days of Unleavened Bread.*
- 4***And when he had seized him, he put him in prison, delivering him over to four squads of soldiers to guard him, intending after the Passover to bring him out to the people.*

- A. *Providence***
- B. *Pleased***
- C. *Passover***

Exegetical Explanations:

- ALL suffering stems from SIN
- Some glorify God in their living... some in their death
- “Religious evil” exists... then and now.
- See the insatiable appetite of sin...
- Clean outside, filthy inside (white-washed tombs)
- Again... we are a people of persecution...

II. (v.5) PRAYER

5 *So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church.*

- A. ***Prison*** (see Peter's Pattern... 3X Prison)
- B. ***Passion*** (a.k.a. "earnest")
- C. ***People*** (a.k.a. "the Church")

Exegetical Explanations:

- "earnest" = Jesus' prayer in the Garden
- James 5:16...
- From the root of prayer comes the fruit of power!

III. (v.6) PEACE

6 *Now when Herod was about to bring him out, on that very night, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries before the door were guarding the prison.*

- A. ***When-ever***
- B. ***Where-ever***
- C. ***How-ever***

Exegetical Explanations:

- Biblical peace is a spiritual gift that can be “given” away... but NEVER “taken” away – Amen! - JDP
- Read **1 Peter 5:7** (in light of v.8)

*7*casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

IV. (vv.7-11) POWER

*7*And behold, an angel of the Lord stood next to him, and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him, saying, “Get up quickly.” And the chains fell off his hands. *8*And the angel said to him, “Dress yourself and put on your sandals.” And he did so. And he said to him, “Wrap your cloak around you and follow me.” *9*And he went out and followed him. He did not know that what was being done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision. *10*When they had passed the first and the second guard, they came to the iron gate leading into the city. It opened for them of its own accord, and they went out and went along one street, and immediately the angel left him. *11*When Peter came to himself, he said, “Now I am sure that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from the hand of Herod and from all that the Jewish people were expecting.”

D. Supernatural

E. Strategic

F. Sure

Exegetical Explanations:

- God chose to send an angel
 - Environmental miracles...
 - Tactical miracles...

NOTE: The angel opens gates to the city to let Peter out... but the church won't open doors to their prayer meeting to let Peter in...

- Very specific details & instructions given...
 - "Shone the light"
 - "Get up QUICKLY"
 - "Breaking of chains"
 - "Follow me..."

- Initially "didn't realize"
- "Now I'm SURE"

NOTE: Now Jews won't get "what they were expecting" (and wanting)... the death of Peter, like that of James.

V. (vv.12-15a) PROOF

12When he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose other name was Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying. **13**And when he knocked at the door of the gateway, a servant girl named Rhoda came to answer. **14**Recognizing Peter's voice, in her joy she did not open the gate but ran in and reported that Peter was standing at the gate. **15**They said to her, "You are out of your mind."

- A. *Go!*
- B. *Gather*
- C. *Greet*

Exegetical Explanations:

- When we "go" – we might just be the answer to someone else's prayer... Thus, people often times show up as personal answers to prayer – literally!

NOTE:

- Servant girl knew Peter's voice...
- "In her joy... did not open the door" (we oops!)

- "...ran in & reported" – answered prayer
- "Religious Unbelief" = "...out of your mind"

VI. (vv.15b-16) PERSISTENCE

*But she kept insisting that it was so, and they kept saying, “It is his angel!” **16**But Peter continued knocking, and when they opened, they saw him and were amazed.*

- A. *Insisted***
- B. *Insulted***
- C. *Inspired***

Exegetical Explanations:

- She kept on insisting (it was Peter)
- They kept on insulting (lost your mind/his angel)
- Peter would not quit knocking
- “Opened + Saw = Amazed”
- “Amazed” = Inspired!

VII. (v.17) PROCLAMATION

***17**But motioning to them with his hand to be silent, he described to them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, “Tell these things to James and to the brothers.” Then he departed and went to another place.*

NOTE: **“You have to listen before you can tell!”** - JDP

- A. BC** - “describe... out of prison”
- B. @** - “how the LORD rescued”
- C. AD** - “Tell these things...”

NOTE: Shadrach, Mieshach, & Abedigo are great examples!

VIII. (vv.18-19) PROBLEM

18Now when day came, there was no little disturbance among the soldiers over what had become of Peter. **19**And after Herod searched for him and did not find him, he examined the sentries and ordered that they should be put to death. Then he went down from Judea to Caesarea and spent time there.

- A. Disturbance**
- B. Devilish**
- C. Death**

Exegetical Explanations:

- There will come a time, sooner or later, when every enemy of God will realize they have a BIG problem...
- Christ creates Christ-less conundrums! - JDP
- Evil always, eventually turns on evil. - JDP
- Herod / Evil is aloof, leaving a consistent trail of carnage...
- Prevailing pattern(s) paint a person's portrait. - JDP

IX. (vv.20-23) POLITICAL

20 Now Herod was angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon, and they came to him with one accord, and having persuaded Blastus, the king's chamberlain, **b** they asked for peace, because their country depended on the king's country for food. **21** On an appointed day Herod put on his royal robes, took his seat upon the throne, and delivered an oration to them. **22** And the people were shouting, "The voice of a god, and not of a man!" **23** Immediately an angel of the Lord struck him down, because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and *breathed his last.*

- A. **Persuaded** (a.k.a. "manipulated")
- B. **P.C.P.** (a.k.a. "Politically Correct Peace")
- C. **Placate**

Exegetical Explanations:

- To be a friend of the world is to be an enemy of God
- Seeking peace with evil is like hugging a porcupine
- P.C.P. has been dangerous for a long, long time...
- Placating to evil is poisonous!

The Righteous Shall Live by Faith

16*For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17***For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”**

God’s Wrath on Unrighteousness

18*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. 19***For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20***For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. 21***For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22***Claiming to be wise, they became fools, 23***and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.**

24*Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, 25***because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.**

26For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; **27**and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.

28And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. **29**They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, **30**slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, **31**foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. **32**Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.

X. (v.24) PARADOX

24But the word of God increased and multiplied.

- A. **Paradoxical** = "But"
- B. **Proclamation** = "the Word of God"
- C. **Proceeds** = "increased & multiplied"

Exegetical Explanations:

- The message & mission of the Messiah miraculously increased & multiplied BECAUSE of persecution!
- “The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church.”
- Tertullian

XI. (v.25) PURPOSED PERSEVERENCE

25 *And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem when they had completed their service, bringing with them John, whose other name was Mark.*

- A. Partners**
- B. Prevail** (“completed their mission”)
- C. Preparing** (“bringing with them...”)

Exegetical Explanations:

- Paul & Barnabas... see how Jesus sent His out...
- Paul & Barnabas came to Jerusalem on mission...
- Paul & Barnabas now head back to Antioch after completing their mission!
- Paul & Barnabas bring John Mark in preparation for their NEXT mission (see Acts 13).

The real Church lives in the midst of spiritual warfare & providential persecution; praying earnestly together, resting in the gifted-peace that passes all understanding; supernaturally empowered to witness - as living proof - of the gospel's relentless love (via personal, persistent proclamation); especially in the midst of the world's problem people and political correctness.

In short, Christ's real Church is a paradoxical portrait of purposed perseverance.

All for God's glory & all by His grace.
Amen!

Let's Pray!