

**Devotional from Pastor Ho**  
**January 13, 2021**

**Acts 12:5**, *“So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church.”*

Chapter by chapter in Acts is filled with the acts of the Holy Spirit through the apostles, which led to the growth of the Word of God or of the church in six stages, which are in turn marked off by 5 key summary statements (see 6:7; 9:31; 12:24; 16:5; 19:20). Yet, only in this chapter is it embedded with some humor. The story began with Herod Agrippa I persecuting the church to win the favor of the Jews by killing James the brother of John. When the next target, Peter, was arrested, it was during the Feast of Unleavened Bread, so the plan was to execute him after the Passover. During the 7-day feast, the church prayed earnestly for him.

The bulk of this chapter dwells on the details during what was intended to be Peter’s last night on earth. That night Peter was sleeping peacefully in-between 2 soldiers, as if undisturbed by what was awaiting him the next day. An angel had to strike him to wake him up, and what happened next felt like a dream to him that he “thought he was seeing a vision.” The guards were all stilled and the gate “opened for them of its own accord.” Peter “came to himself” outside the prison after the angel left him. When he went where many were gathered and praying, and knocked on the door, Rhoda (a servant girl whose name is recorded!) answered the door but didn’t open it. Instead, she ran in to report to the others, who were incredulous. Eventually, they opened the door for Peter, who told them “how the Lord had brought him out of the prison.”

One point for us to consider in this story is that God allowed James to be killed, seemingly without much ado, but when it was Peter’s turn, he supernaturally sent his angel for the rescue. Before we hurry to accuse God of playing favoritism, we should note that the trio Peter, John and his brother James were closest to Jesus out of the Twelve. This is truly a mystery of God’s providence, but this certainly left a deep impression on the early church, as it does today upon us today, so that ancient and modern saints alike could perceive the effectivity of prayers. As we witness a global superpower in turmoil within, and as we perceive a likely persecution upon the church by a new administration, are we making earnest prayers to God as a church?

**Prayer:** Merciful and Mighty Lord, help us to be on our knees as we brace for persecutions that are coming our way. For the sake of our Lord, Amen.

## 何牧師的靈修

2021 年 1 月 13 日

使徒行傳 12 章 5 節：“於是彼得被囚在監裡；教會卻為他切切的禱告神。”

使徒行傳中的一章又一章充滿了聖靈經由使徒們的行動顯出的作為，這導致神的話語或教會的成長，這分六個階段進行用五個標記的主要摘要說明(參考 6:7; 9:31; 12:24; 16:5; 19:20)。但是，只有在這一章中才帶有一些幽默。故事開始於希律王迫害教會，殺了約翰的兄弟雅各，以贏得猶太人的支持。當下一個目標彼得被捉拿時，正是除酵節的時候，因此計劃在逾越節之後處決他。在這 7 天中，教會卻為他切切的禱告。

本章的大部分內容集中在原本應該是彼得在世上的最後一晚的細節。那天晚上，彼得安睡在兩個兵丁當中，彷彿不受第二天等待著發生的事所干擾。一位天使不得不拍他以喚醒他，接下來發生的一切對他來說就像一個夢，他“以為，見了異象”。兵丁們都麻木了，門“自己開了”。天使離開他去以後，彼得在監牢外面“醒悟過來”。當彼得到許多人在聚集和祈禱的地方時，他敲了門，羅大（一個使女的名字被記錄下來！）出來探聽但沒有打開門。她反而跑去向其他人匯報，他們卻不願意相信。最終，他們為彼得打開了門，彼得告訴他們“主怎樣領他出監”。

這故事讓我們思考的一點就是神允許雅各被殺害，好像沒有受多少關注，但當彼得遇難時，祂超自然的差遣天使去拯救彼得。在我們急著去遣責神偏心之前，我們當注意到彼得，約翰和他的兄弟雅各三人是十二門徒中與耶穌最親近的。這實在是神護理的奧秘，但也在初期教會留下深刻的印象，如同在現今的我們，以致古今的聖徒們都可以感受到禱告的果效。當我們見到全球的強國在內亂中，當我們感受到新政府可能會對教會的迫害，我們是否切切的禱告神？

禱告：慈悲大能的主，當我們為即將來臨的迫害做準備時，請幫助我們跪在你的面前。奉我們主的名，阿們。

## 何牧师的灵修

2021年1月13日

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使徒行传中的一章又一章充满了圣灵经由使徒们的行动显出的作为，这导致神的话语或教会的成长，这分六个阶段进行用五个标记的主要摘要说明(参考 6:7; 9:31; 12:24; 16:5; 19:20)。但是，只有在这一章中才带有一些幽默。故事开始于希律王迫害教会，杀了约翰的兄弟雅各，以赢得犹太人的支持。当下一个目标彼得被捉拿时，正是除酵节的时候，因此计划在逾越节之后处决他。在这 7 天中，教会却为他切切的祷告。

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祷告：慈悲大能的主，当我们为即将来临的迫害做准备时，请帮助我们跪在你的面前。奉我们主的名，阿们。