

**Sermon ~ December 20, 2020 by Pastor D. Benoit**

**Text: Acts 12: 1-19 (Read All)**

Key Verse, Acts 12: 11, "Peter . . . said, "Now I know for certain that **The LORD** has sent **HIS Angel**, and has delivered me from the hand of Herod and from all..."

**Title: "Say Amen to JESUS!"**

There is a lot in an "Amen." Meaning, "it is so" or "so be it". In **The SCRIPTURES**, when **JESUS** said, "Verily verily" or "Truly truly" in the Aramaic tongue, it meant "Amen amen!" Leading off with "Amen," not only implied, what follows is True, BUT, **The Person** making the statement has firsthand knowledge and authority, that it is True!

**"Say Amen to JESUS!"**

I find that one can have "zeal" without "**Faith in GOD!**" Out text shows the difference between "the Amen of **Faith in GOD**" and "having zeal: energy, enthusiasm, passion, without **Faith in GOD.**"

**GOD in HIS WISDOM** wants **HIS people** (You/I) to participate in what **HE** is doing!

**GOD** is impressing on us, that when danger threatens **HIS purposes** or **HIS people**, "it is a call to *Pray!*"

**GOD** will hear our *Prayer* and answer it and "make people free," when **HE** would not have done otherwise!

**GOD** is teaching us a lesson, that we're not to take "the events of our Day" for granted, as though there is nothing, we could do about them!

*Prayer* becomes a mighty, powerful, thrust on our part to change events.

*Prayer* is the natural response of a heart that is "dependent" upon **GOD!**

If you (I) are really counting upon **GOD** to do something, then we will "pray" about it!

We will *trust* **GOD**; we will *tell* (communicate) with **GOD**; we will *call* and *call* and *call* again upon **GOD**! If we are not "*counting on HIM,*" we will not *pray!* The basic motive of *Prayer* is a sense of *dependance* on **GOD!!!**

**"Say Amen to JESUS!"**

**JESUS** is The Unstoppable Gospel! Since **JESUS** is **IMMANUEL**, that is, **GOD with us**, no force can stop the spread of **HIS Gospel!** Whether **GOD Almighty**, delivers us from COVID-19, persecution or whether we die for our **Faith in HIM**, commit yourself with me, for the furtherance of **The Gospel!**

**"Say Amen to JESUS!"**

In the text, see King Herod, he represents the subtle, fearful and overwhelming power of the Devil. He's in opposition to **The Church** and the Fellowship of Prayer. This is the reminder, that whenever Satan comes in like a flood, **The SPIRIT of The LORD** lifts up a standard against him. The Devil's single purpose in every age is to silence **The Voice of The Gospel**, but **GOD'S Mighty** answer is always *The Working Power of Prayer*.

Notice,

The People at Prayer. "Peter . . . came to the house of Mary . . . where many were gathered together *praying*." (v. 12) Remember, Satan had already done his best to incarcerate Peter the evangelist and to silence the message of life in the city of Jerusalem. **GOD'S** response was to draw together a simple group of men and women to *pray*.

There was the Mary group. It was at "...the house of *Mary* the mother of John ... where many were gathered together *praying*." (v. 12) *Mary* represents the influential people, for it appears she was a woman of comparative wealth and influence. Her house was roomy, large enough for **The Church** to meet for *prayer*, Bible Study and fellowship. A place for **The Church** to grow.

There was the Rhoda class. "As Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a girl named *Rhoda* came to answer" (v. 13). *Rhoda* whose name means "*rose*," represents the insignificant people.

*Rhoda* is a *servant* who answers the door. What a combination, a *fragrant rose* and a *servant life*! Point: while **GOD** certainly uses *influential people*, **HE** never despises *insignificant people*. The *prayers* of **Rhoda** were just as effective and acceptable as those of *Mary*.

There is the Many class. The "*many*" represent the inconspicuous people. These are the *unnamed common people* who hear **JESUS** gladly, respond to **HIS** messages, some "*born*" into **The Church** and some '*join*' the Church-house. Point: the world puts us in classes, BUT with **GOD**, "there is no respect of persons." (Romans 2: 11) **GOD** sees without distinction of class, race, or sex: just people at *prayer*.

The Purpose of Prayer. "...many were gathered together *praying*." (v. 12) See, *the Unity in Prayer*... any differences that might have separated people from one another were now completely lost in *the Unity* of the *purpose of prayer*. See also, *the Prevailing in Prayer*... It is the *prayer* of self-denial—the *prayer* that spells death to anything that would interfere with the finding and fulfilling of **GOD'S purpose**. See, *The Power of Prayer*, "...the iron gate...opened...of its own accord..." (v. 10) Remember James, had been beheaded; Peter for the third time is arrested and put into prison (under maximum security); a guard chained to his right-hand, one to his left-hand and 14 soldiers guarding the prison.

As soon as **The Church** heard about Peter's imprisonment they gathered for *prayer* (v. 5) They cried out to **GOD**, "**LORD**, not Peter too." Herod had the power of the sword, BUT, **The Church** had *prayer*, "which is the only true power the powerless possess." They (like we) did not know what **GOD** will do next, BUT, they *prayed*, 'free Peter, spare his life.'

The Lesson: *Prayer* does not change **GOD**, though sometimes **GOD** seems to change because of our *prayer*, BUT our *praying* changes us. *Prayer* changes us to *trust* that **GOD is Good** and that **GOD is SOVEREIGN!**

See Peter, in this matter, "The night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter was *sleeping*...

How could he? It's his power of **Faith in GOD**. His soul was at rest *in The SOVEREIGNTY of GOD*; he *believed* that **GOD** was with him; *Peace* that surpasses all understanding flooded his soul, and he falls asleep. Peter knew *in WHOM HE believed! The Truth he believed*, gave him the *values* he held and that resulted in a *behavior* of resting in **GOD!**

Herod may have had plans, BUT, he did not know what **GOD** would do in response to a *praying Church*.

**GOD'S Angel** came to Peter, and said, "Quick get up!" Peter thinks he's having a *dream* or a *vision*. Peter is bound by chains, and shackled to two soldiers. Two more soldiers are keeping watch. Twelve more soldiers are there to spot the others throughout the day and night. And, Peter gets up; the chains fall from his wrist; **The Angel** and Peter pass by the guards, and as they come to an iron gate, it opens, by itself.

Peter comes to the house where **The Church** is *praying* and he knocks on the door. The door is locked, for fear of the persecutors. *Rhoda*, the servant girl comes to the door and realizes it Peter. In her excitement, she does not even open up the door and leaves Peter standing there as she turns to the others and shouts "Peter is at the door!"

They don't believe it. But when Peter keeps on knocking, they realize that it is Peter and that **GOD** had freed him from prison.

**"Say Amen to JESUS!"**

**JESUS** was Peter's *Angel*, **WHO** released him from prison.

**JESUS** is **The POWER** in our *Prayers* and **The Answered** before **GOD** to our prayers!

This means **Church**, we need be **Faithful in Prayer!** Because **JESUS** our **The Strength** when we are powerless!

**Pray Church! Pray Believing in GOD!** **JESUS** can walk through quadrans of soldiers and their chains; Herod's and the Devil; Pandemics and Death... Don't have "zeal" but no **Faith in GOD!** **GOD** wants to bring us to the place where we will take hold of **HIM** in a living way!

Let **The Church** say **Amen (JESUS)**, Let **The Church** say **Amen (JESUS)**,  
**GOD** has spoken, so let **The Church** say **Amen (JESUS)!**  
Let **The Church**, let'em say **Amen (JESUS)**,  
If you believe **The WORD**, let the whole **Church** say **Amen**.  
**GOD** has spoken, so let **The Church** say **Amen (JESUS)!**

Lift your hands, lift your hands, **GOD** has spoken, so let **The Church** say **Amen (JESUS)**,  
Oh, thank **YOU LORD**, **GOD** has spoken, so let **The Church** say **Amen (JESUS)!**

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