**AN EXECUTION, AN ESCAPE, AND A MISERABLE END**

**Acts 12:1-25**

**THE BIG IDEA: Christians will always find victory whether in this life or the next, but those who oppose God will suffer the consequences.**

**THE SUFFERING OF THIS LIFE IS \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ FOR THE CHRISTIAN**

* *“About that time King Herod violently attacked some who belonged to the church, 2 and he executed James, John’s brother, with the sword. 3 When he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter too, during the Festival of Unleavened Bread. 4 After the arrest, he put him in prison and assigned four squads of four soldiers each to guard him, intending to bring him out to the people after the Passover."* (Acts 12:1-4)
* **When we are serving the Lord in this spiritual battle to proclaim the Gospel we are fighting as victors, not victims.**
* *“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is going to be revealed to us.”* (Romans 8:18)
* *“He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; grief, crying, and pain will be no more, because the previous things have passed away.”* (Revelation 21:4)
* **When you get discouraged, be reminded that Jesus is preparing a place for you to receive you in His timing.**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ IS STILL OUR MOST POWERFUL WEAPON**

* *“So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was praying fervently to God for him.”* (Acts 12:5)
* **Prioritizing prayer gives us access to One who has the power to defeat every evil that comes against us!**
* *“The prayer of a righteous person is very powerful in its effect.”* (James 5:16b)

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ GOD ALWAYS LEADS TO A MISERABLE END**

* *“The assembled people began to shout, ‘It’s the voice of a god and not of a man!’ 23 At once an angel of the Lord struck him because he did not give the glory to God, and he was eaten by worms and died.”* (Acts 12:22-23)
* **There is no happy ending for the one who opposes and rejects the Lord Jesus.**
* *“But the cowards, faithless, detestable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars—their share will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”* (Revelation 21:8)
* **God gives us every opportunity to accept the salvation and forgiveness He so freely offers!**

**GOD’S MISSION TO SPREAD THE GOSPEL TO THE WORLD IS UNSTOPPABLE**

* *“But the word of God spread and multiplied.”* (Acts 12:24)
* **There is no person or power that is strong enough to successfully come against the Lord and His Kingdom work.**

**CONNECT GROUP DISCUSSION**

**ICE-BREAKER:** What is your favorite underdog movie and why?

**START THINKING (Observation):**

* What does Acts 12 teach us about God?
* What was the motivation for King Herod to arrest Peter?
* What do we learn about God’s sovereignty in Acts 12?
* Why did God ultimately take King Herod Agrippa’s life?
* What happened as a result of Stephen’s death, Peter’s persecution and subsequent freedom, and Herod’s death?

**DIGGING DEEPER (Understanding and Application):**

* Why should we as Christians expect opposition when we are faithfully standing on and proclaiming the Gospel?
* How does Acts 12 impact your view of prayer? It’s importance?
* How can we fight against self-exaltation and ensure we are seeking to give God the glory alone?
* How does this passage of Scripture help you when you are facing desperate situations?
* What is your big takeaway from this message?

**LOVING OUTWARD**

* Who in your life needs to hear the truth of the Gospel? How has this message/text affected and/or inspired you to reach them?
* Who are you inviting to Church next Sunday?