

# Peter continued knocking

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[ 0 : 00 ] We shall read the portion of God's Word in the Acts of the Apostles, and in the twelfth chapter.

The twelfth chapter in the Acts of the Apostles.

Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church, and to kill Jesus the brother of John with his sword.

And because he said please the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter and Saul. Then were the days of unleavened bread, and when he apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four courtrooms of soldiers to keep him, intending he was arrested to bring him forth to the people.

Peter therefore was kept in prison, but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.

[ 1 : 42 ] And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was lifted between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and a caper before the door kept the prison.

And the way the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in prison. And his weight pitted on his head, and raised a lap, saying, Arouse up quickly, and his chains fell off his hands. And the angel said unto him, Arise up, and he gave thyself and bowed on his hands. And so he did. And he said unto him, Pass thy garment about thee and follow me.

And he went out and followed him, and wished not that it was true, which was done by the angel that taught his son, issue.

When they were passed the first and the second world, they came unto the world, and gave that little unto the city, which opened to them of his own accord.

[ 2 : 49 ] And he went out, and passed, and he went straight, and forthwith the angel departed from him. And when Peter was coming to his son, he said, Now you know of your surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered him unto the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews.

And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John, whose son in this mark, when all were gathered together praying.

And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a thousand came to Hushkin, named Rhoda. And when she knew Peter's face, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran round and told her Peter stood before the gate.

And they said unto her, Now what moment? But she constantly heard that it was in her soul. Then he said, It is his hidden room.

But Peter caught too walking, and when they had opened the door, and saw them, they were astonished.

[ 4 : 11 ] But he, back on to them with his hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, Go show these things unto James, and to the brethren.

And he departed, and went into another place. Now as soon as it was still, there was no small still among the soldiers, what became Peter.

And when Herod had sought for him, and found him out, he exiled the keepers, and commanded that they should be put to death. And he went down from Judea to Caesarea, and there aboard.

And Herod was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon. But they came with him, according to him, and having made pastors, the king's children in their field, desired peace, because their country was nourished by the king's country.

And upon a set day, herald arrayed in royal apparel, sent him to the throne, and made an arusion after them. And the people gave a shout, And he said, See, it is the voice of a god, and not of a man.

[ 5 : 35 ] And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory. And he was eaten in worms, and gave up the ghost.

But the word of God grew and multiplied. And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, And when they had finished that ministry, I took with them John, whose son of the name was smirk. But it is turning to the portion of scripture we have read together. The Acts of the Apostles on the 12th chapter.

And we shall read again at the 16th verse.

The scriptures are from God, and they are therefore so rich, that various lessons can be gathered in the same portion.

[ 7 : 10 ] And this chapter, which we have in connection with the deliverance of the Apostle Peter, is one of these, which can be used in edifying the people of God down through the ages in various ways.

And supposing a person had predicted at that time, that the angel from heaven was to visit Jerusalem, and also to visit one house, or one building, and only one man in the city.

And quite sure that no one would assume or think that it would be the strongest prison he could find anywhere.

So is the providence of God so very mysterious, that it is only when it comes to pass, that we can say, truly, it was the Lord's doing, and marvelous in our eyes.

There are several lessons to be gathered from the deliverance of Peter. And I would briefly look at the teaching that is connected with it, with the incident itself.

[ 8 : 53 ] It could be first applied to the state in which the sinner is by his sinfulness, that he is in a person.

And secondly, we can consider the way by which a sinner can be delivered from that imprisonment.

And thirdly, we can consider that there are difficulties and trials in life from which it would be foolish of us to expect an angel or a miraculous deliverance of this kind.

And there are cases where the Lord has already endowed us with sufficient wisdom and sufficient strength to do certain things.

Now let us first consider this as a state of a sin. And I am quite sure that our sin in our midst, even in the very midst of the church, and under the preaching of the gospel, who are still under the condemnation of their sin, and they are imprisoned in a condition from which they themselves cannot escape.

[ 10 : 39 ] And they might be in a very same altitude to these things as Peter was imprisoned.

In prison, we have Peter in prison, not as a sinner, but because he was declaring the gospel of Jesus Christ, which delivers a person from the state of sin, from the imprisonment in which they are by nature.

Peter and James and John were leaders among the apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ. And this instance took place at Easter.

Peter and it was at Easter. You remember that the Lord Jesus Christ was put to death. And no doubt the apostles would be reminding the people at this time again, because it was a festival of the Jews, they were commanded to remember the Passover.

Not a sister, the Passover of mine. And no faithful Jew would overlook that or wash that during that week. It was a week that was consecrated to God to remind them of the way in which they were delivered from Egypt by killing and lamb and sprinkling its blood upon the doorposts and the lintels of their homes.

[ 12 : 23 ] And it was clearly stated to them that no other remedy, however strong their houses would be, and how bad and locked every door and window would be, that nothing in the world could deliver them from the passing angel of death, but the blood on the door.

And that is a lesson for all times to the Church of Christ. And Peter and John and James were great preachers and at the anniversary of the death of Christ, the second anniversary, there no doubt declared that Christ was actually the Passover man and that nothing could save the Jews unless his blood was appeared to them.

That is the death of Christ and received as their substitute and that he had died on their behalf, nothing else could deliver them.

The Jews, though they were the Church of Christ, they were under the same condemnation as the reason, unless they received the Lord Jesus Christ.

And this only is true concerning you, though you are in an evangelical church and hearing many sermons, one of itself will not save anyone unless it is used by the Spirit of God to lead you into Christ.

[14:04] Now, James and John were great preachers because when you read the Gospel according to John, you will notice the tenderness with which he reads and that he was a very loving apostle and they called him the loving apostle.

But he was named, James, his brother and himself were called the sons of thunder and he was called the Lord because of their preaching.

It was John who came to Christ when the Samaritans wouldn't allow Christ into their cities, that asked Christ, shall we call fire from heaven upon them, as Elijah did.

And Christ said to them, you don't know the spirit you are of. They didn't come to destroy but to see him. So we see that James must have been a terrific and a thunderous preacher and the people were attending and gathering and Herod put him to death and when he saw that this delighted the Jews he went on to pick the next best and Peter was imprisoned and we read what he intended to take him out after Easter.

He wouldn't put him to death during the festival days but immediately after. And here was the last day of the festivities of the Jews for the Passover and he was going to take him out the next day.

[15:54] Now Peter is in prison and we know it's clearly stated for our education how he was tied in the inner prison.

There were 16 soldiers guarding him, guarding one man. And who was Herod afraid of when he put so many and put Peter in such condition he was laid flanked on the floor on the on the on the on the floor of the prison and his feet in the stocks and each hand turned to a soldier and two soldiers standing outside the door of the prison and Peter in the inner prison.

And they were relieved for hours about 16 soldiers detained for nothing else but to attend to this man an apostle of Christ a man who they knew would do no harm.

And do you think he was that Herod was afraid that the other disciples or other Christians would invade the prison and deliver Peter by force?

I don't think so. It wasn't to guard him against against his own folk against the Christians at all. He knew sufficient of the Christian religion that they wouldn't do that.

[17:30] But he was thrown to guard him from any spiritual power that he was to be kept that even heaven couldn't take him out of his hands.

And he was going to take him out the next day. Now if you knew for certainty that you were to be put to death and to murder how would you spend the night before?

How would you could you really lie on the floor on a hard concrete floor and sleep?

Well, some of the Covenanters did that. Mr. Guthrie and another hunter with him was imprisoned tried and imprisoned and ordered to be hanged in Edinburgh on a certain day.

And on the morning of that day Mr. Guthrie woke up and then called to his friend and he said, up he said, arise, he was asleep too.

[18:45] Remember, there was great work before us this day. Both of us were to be hanged publicly and they were allowed to speak from the scaffold.

and Mr. Cuthy said that many a time he went up the steps of his pulpit with greater fear than going up the steps of the scaffold. That was a martyr, a Scottish martyr and Peter was reconciled to God. He was at peace with God, he was in the hands of God and he had this full confidence if God meant to allow them to kill him, he knew that he would be immediately that same day with Christ in paradise. Death had no fear whatsoever for him and he slept as soundly as he ever did on the night before he was to be put to death. Now once again this illustration of the state of the unbeliever, it is quite amazing in midst of all dangers and in the midst of the type of life we live today that the sinner can continue day after day, year after year without any fear of death. He puts death so far away, he feels so well and so strong and he puts death out of his mind altogether, he tries to entertain himself as if he were, as if he were, want to die at home.

Now that is a part of the great delusion of sin. It kills and dumps our minds and our hearts about what we are. We are reminded by the word of God, we are reminded by the pictures of the scriptures, we are reminded on the right hand and on the left that the whole human race is under condemnation. We have sinned and every sin, one single sin, denies the wrath and the curse of God, not only in this life but forever. And yet that will not move the sinner to cry unto God for forgiveness.

Now then what is so fearful about sin? What is sin? It's difficult to describe it but God's law governs all things. We might not see it as a person, we have never heard it being, being, of it, the way it is written in the scriptures.

God's law is part of his nature. It is the way in which he acts against wrongdoing. However it is one or an angel of whatever it is, it is this very nature reacts immediately against wrongdoing. It is a revulsion that he feels against sin that is right against his own nature. And he can't but react like that against it.

[ 22 : 38 ] And if no other provision was made, God would destroy every sinner immediately. The kind of destruction that we think of in death. Because what we call death is only partial death.

death is also partial death. Where are the soul? Where are, as some of you know that death is used for the body, but it's also used for the soul. The soul of man is constituted in a way that it cannot die. God has created it in that way.

But it will never die. So though the body and soul may be separated, the soul will continue either in eternal bliss with God or will be condemned and cast where the angels are.

And they are neither in condemnation. They are the powers of darkness. They are who will be lamentation forever and ever.

Now that is the state of the sinner. He is bound by law and he is bound by justice. God has condemned him and he cannot escape out of it.

[ 24 : 00 ] There he is. There is no remedy for the sinner but in one way alone. There will know that heaven is given whereby that any help or deliverance can come to the sinner but through God himself.

That is the state. That is the state. But you don't believe it. You think that you can part from your sin, that you can justify yourself, that you can be changed over any time you need.

And you would rather leave it to the last day of your life. And then ask God to take it to heaven. And you can't have it that way. Though God made a disorder.

They are under condemnation of unity. They don't need to wait to the judgment seat of Christ when he comes again.

You know, God said to him, that you can't do that. Our hands are tied by chains that no human being and no pope and no minister or no elder can open the chains that ties the hands of the sinner.

[ 25 : 31 ] and our feet are in the stalk. And you see, these two things being true of us, we can't do anything. You can hardly do anything without your hands.

And you can't walk. You can hardly do anything if your feet are in the stalks. You're bound, hand and foot. And even worse, you're asleep.

That is the state of the sinner. It's just vividly described in the state of Peter as he is in the prison. He is in a prison.

And the condemnation has gone forth already. And it's only a matter of time till it will be executed. Now, the deliverance was miraculous.

And the deliverance of every sin is miraculous. It doesn't mean that nobody is brought out of sin. It's one of the greatest mystery in the world.

[ 26 : 40 ] God has only one way whereby he can deliver sinners. God has only one way whereby he can deliver sinners.

God has only one way whereby he can deliver sinners.

And it is through the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. He sent the Lord Jesus Christ into the world to open a way of access to sinners to come into God.

And for God to go out to sinners and invite them to come into this door. And the door is the Lord Jesus Christ.

In all that he did, in the obedience he gave to the Lord, in the sacrificial death he endured. And in all that he did, he was glorifying the Lord, the Father, and giving perfect obedience in the room and in the place of sinners.

[ 28 : 06 ] And he was glorifying the Lord. And he was glorifying the Lord. And he was glorifying the Lord. In his walk through life, in his obedience, you see, he was glorified.

He was glorified. He was glorified. He was glorified. backed even to the sinner. In his condition. He was completely holy. He was God because he was tin so you don't.

He was the eternal son of God at the same time. I can't wait to try to explain how he could have kept God of men and his manhood in such low condition.

But that's how he was. He was the Lord of glory and appeared in the likeness of sinful man. That's how the scripture describes it. He was and it was because he was to give perfect obedience to the law of God. Now you know what the law of God is.

It's summary of it is in the tenth commandment. But Christ summarized the Ten Commandments into two. To love the Lord with all thy might and to love thy neighbor as thyself. That is the sin of the law. And you can see how high that law is.

[ 29 : 27 ] To love thy neighbor as thyself. Who could do that? And to love the Lord with all thy might.

Right? We are willing to examine ourselves, to examine our feelings and what our heart is. To see how infinitely short we come of that. Well, in the case of Peter, he was asleep.

He was tired. He was unable to do anything for himself. And so are you. You cannot do anything for yourself. In this deliverance out of the prison in which the law of God has placed everyone who has sinned.

And we are sinful by nature. And the first thing that the angel of God that came through the closed doors and came into the inner prison was to shine there.

Light came into the prison. And it would appear that those who were chained to Peter would be sitting beside him.

[ 30 : 50 ] And the very light that came into the prison. And the very light that came into prison, shine in prison, might have put them to sleep. That, sometime that is what the gospel of Christ does to sinners. Did you ever see anyone sleeping in the church?

And there was an instance told by one of the great divines in England of a lady who couldn't sleep. And they had turned all kinds of sleeping medicines to her and she couldn't sleep.

And at last she said, I will with her medicine bring me to the parish church where I used to sleep. And they brought her to the parish church and she did.

And she has many powers. If men would be at the end of the world, are all there but concern their own salvation.

And here, the watchers here in prison watching Peter, they must have slept too. The first thing, the light came, the night of the glorious gospel is still shining on us.

[ 32 : 09 ] And we will sleep under it. And they are concerned over it. It brings no light. The head of the thousand trees and wood, they cannot see anything.

But remember this. There is no salvation for anyone when there is no gospel. There is no record of anyone being saved apart from the gospel.

And we might treat it and we might wish that it was destroyed in the midst. So that the new generation would have the freedom to sin. And do what they like and enjoy themselves.

That the gospel is a dead thing that spines the joy and makes life to be so happy.

The gospel is especially the kind of gospel that we get in scriptures. There is a gospel that tells you that there is no trials, no difficulties in the gospel.

[ 33 : 19 ] That it is just something to get you free easily without any trials at all. Cast all your cares away and you will be all right.

And that is not the gospel that we have. Because we are saved. And to follow the Lord Jesus Christ through a sinful world.

We will meet with the powers of evil. We will meet with the difficulties of our own common mind.

And we will meet with all the kinds of trials.

We will meet with all the things that we have in the world. But you see, the light of the gospel is the only means by which we can be delivered from the imprisonment of sin and of God upon us in that sin.

And the next thing that we have, how light shined in the prison. In the darkness there was no window or anything, or any light during the night.

[ 34 : 21 ] And the light shined in the prison. And the next thing was the angel smokes the side of Peter. And that is indicative really of conviction of sin.

That is the first thing that you will realize in your salvation. That you have sinned and come assured of the glory of God. And until we realize that we are sinners, the gospel has no meaning for us. It's such an interesting story. The angel spoke the side of Peter. And it, as I said, was the beginning. It is sinners. He came to sin. And apart from knowing that we are sinners, the gospel is meaningless. Because it is provided by God.

It is the only way by which we can be saved. And the next thing that they smokes the side of Peter and said to him, Arise quickly.

[ 35 : 40 ] And the chains fell off his hands. And the words of the angel. He had to enlist them himself, no one else, but rise up quickly.

Now do you see the mystery of this? As I was telling you, your hands are bound, your feet are in the dark, you're in the imprisonment.

And here the word of God tells you to arise. Now how can the word of God tell a person who is dead in trespasses and sin?

Who is bound hand and feet by the simpleness of the vision and by the law of God? How can he arise? When faith comes by hearing.

And hearing itself comes by the word of God. It is the word of God that can give us the hearing near and the understanding root.

[ 36 : 44 ] And it creates faith in us. And we respond to God's word. God arrives at once. And the person arises from the state in which he is by nature.

And he becomes a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. And you see at once he said, Gave thyself and bind on thy sandals.

Now that is a preparation for work. The Jews had clothes, long and loose clothes. And they had a girdle when they were going to work or to run or to walk hurriedly.

By which they could gird their vest. And that there would be no hindrance in their clothes from when they were working.

And the engine commands them to do so. There is work for him to do. And the work immediately is to follow the engine. To escape out of the dungeon.

[ 37 : 54 ] To come out from the condemnation of the Lord. And he said, follow me. And he got up.

Put down his sandals. Put down his outer clothes. And walked and followed the engine. Till he came to the big iron gate that was on the wall of the city.

And which opened to them of its own accord. Now one hundred, a built-in by an invisible power.

And if you become a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ.

You will find various things in the way. Perhaps one of the most difficult gates that might be in your way. Would be to come to the weekly prayer meeting.

Oh that gate. It's so strong and so impossible for you to open it. And you dare not go.

[ 39 : 00 ] Supposing you would desire with all your heart to go. Then you are afraid that people will say, oh he is a convert. He has changed.

And you don't feel the change. Peter didn't feel the change. He still thought he was dreaming. And he thought he was seeing a wonderful dream. Until the angel departed.

And when the angel departed. He came to a scene. And he said, the Lord has delivered me.

Not the angel. But the Lord has delivered me. Can you find yourself? Can you understand these things in your own personal life? Can you understand these things in your own personal experience? Well if you do.

You will have works of a saved soul. And the angel didn't give him any more instruction.

[ 40 : 00 ] He didn't tell him where to go or what to do. All of the angel was sent to do. He did it. He opened his bonds. He led him over prison.

And he let him loose on the streets of Jerusalem. And he came as if it were by instinct. To the house of Mark. Where a continual prayer was made there on his behalf.

We might say that the prayer continued after the death of James and Peter being arrested. That the persecution had started on the brightest Christians first.

And so forth. They were praying continually in that house. And Peter came to that house. And they were closed in.

The gate was locked there. And no angel came to deliver him.

[ 41 : 07 ] Now here we have the Christian life. All that is required of us to do.

And Peter. Here is another example. He comes to the gate of an ordinary house. A person who has been delivered.

Out from the inner prison. And the big gate entering into the city. Opened up its own accord. And now he comes to a small gate. Leading to a ordinary house.

And he knocks. Where? He begins to knock. And nobody is coming. And he cannot get in. And he is knocking and knocking and knocking.

And he cannot get in. And why? Can he call him an angel? Can he pray? And stand there and pray? No. He is not standing there and praying for an angel.

[ 42 : 11 ] An angel had delivered him. But this is something that you can do. Or another person can do for you. And God has endowed us with wisdom. And with energy.

And God has endowed us with wisdom. And with energy. And with various blessings. That we are commanded to do. We are commanded.

We are appealing to do all that you can. And there are many things you can do. You could have gone to death instead of coming to church.

But he has told you where to find him. And what to do concerning the salvation. And you need not be waiting for a miracle. But read.

Turn to the word of life. And consider it. Just many are reading the word of God.

[ 43 : 14 ] And they read it hurriedly through. And wait not far to see. What it sees. I was walking a year or two back.

In the city of Haddonboro. And I met a man on the street. And he stopped me. And asked me a very interesting question.

He said. How can I become a Christian? I was brought up a Muslim. And I am not happy in it.

And I was sorry that I did not take his name and address with me. I spent quite a while on the street. Talking to this big handsome looking man. And I asked him. I said.

[ 44 : 11 ] Have you got a Bible? If not. I said. That is the first thing that you have to do. And he had an attached case with him.

And he opened it. And to go to a new Bible. So I knew then that he was actually a seeker. But I knew I just told him simply.

I said. I cannot. I cannot tell you to be a Christian at all. Nor anyone else. I said. You have.

To go to the Lord Jesus Christ himself. He is speaking in his word. And I said. If you have. I am going to give you a piece of advice. Open it at the Gospel according to John.

The first chapter. Read the first verse. And stop. And the second. And go on like that. Don't worry over it. Think what every verse there says.

[ 45 : 15 ] And keep on reading. Till you come on to the fourth chapter. Reading slowly. And you will understand there. What the Lord Jesus Christ is.

And how he saves sinners. How he saves the Jews. How he saves Nicodemus. How he saves Nicodemus. A very educated lawyer.

And how he saves an ignorant woman. Who was given over you might say to sin. Sin dominated a lie.

And it's by the same way. He led each one of them. To behold himself. That he was the savior. And that is how you can find it also. You will turn to the scriptures. Hear what he says. Christ said the great decrees. I am he.

I am the one who was to be sent. I am the one that was declared. Through the whole of the Old Testament. I am seen there in the shadows.

[ 46 : 25 ] And I am seen in the prophecies. And I am now come. Here I am. Fulfilling the law. as declared and you turn to your Bible and read it slowly and go along and read it and hear that the word is to you. It's for everyone who can listen and hear the word of God and don't expect an angel or anything else but this is the message. The word can create.

It can create a new heart within you. It can bring faith into your soul and immediately you have this faith. Faith in Jesus Christ is become in that soul, that faith exercise upon Christ or unite you to Christ.

And immediately you are united to Christ, God declares you a righteous person. You are justified. Not because you are reading the Bible and you did this or that.

It is because you are united to Christ and what Christ has done, his life and his death is applied to you. And therefore there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.

God is just in justifying the believer because he believes in Christ and is united to him. And you become immediately along with him, an heir, a joint heir with Christ of an eternal inheritance.

[ 48 : 18 ] An inheritance undefiled and that shall not fade away. And surely if anything is worth striving for, it is not that you might become a joint heir with Christ of an eternal inheritance of glory and blessedness.

Well, now is the accepted time. Now is the day of salvation. If you are in salvation. If you hear his voice, harden not your heart.

May the Lord bless his own world. Let us pray. Eternal God, thou art the Lord God Almighty.

Thou art able to do more than we are able to ask good things. And may it praise thee to bless thy own world. For although we will speak with the tongues of men and of angels, we shall be like tinkling brass that can sound, that can bring any life or any help.

But thou art able to speak a word in season. And may it praise thee to do so. And do tear for us now and help us to sing thy praises in parting.

[ 49 : 39 ] And then shall be the glory now and forevermore. Amen.