

HOW TO KEEP THE REBELLION GOING

Series: "REBELLION AGAINST THE STATUS QUO", Part 4 of 4

Sunday, January 23, 2022 at 9:00 and 11:00 AM

Text: Acts 12:1-24

Big Idea: We keep the rebellion going by earnestly praying to God about all the status quo-type issues that need to change.

1. THE STATUS QUO.

Acts 12:1-5a, It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them. ² He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword. ³ When he saw that this pleased the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also. This happened during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. ⁴ After arresting him, he put him in prison, handing him over to be guarded by four squads of four soldiers each. Herod intended to bring him out for public trial after the Passover.

⁵ So Peter was kept in prison.

Acts 12:5-11, "So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him.

⁶ The night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries stood guard at the entrance. ⁷ Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. "Quick, get up!" he said, and the chains fell off Peter's wrists.

⁸ Then the angel said to him, "Put on your clothes and sandals." And Peter did so. "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me," the angel told him. ⁹ Peter followed him out of the prison, but he had no idea that what the angel was doing was really happening; he thought he was seeing a vision. ¹⁰ They passed the first and second guards and came to the iron gate leading to the city. It opened for them by itself, and they went through it. When they had walked the length of one street, suddenly the angel left him.

¹¹ Then Peter came to himself and said, "Now I know without a doubt that the Lord sent his angel and rescued me from Herod's clutches and from everything the Jewish people were anticipating."

Acts 12:5b, "... but the church was earnestly praying to God for him.

2. THEIR REBELLIOUS PRAYERS.

A. Their prayers were urgent.

Acts 12:6a, "The night before Herod was to bring him to trial."

B. They were united and harmonious about their goal.

Acts 12:12b, "... where many people had gathered and were praying."

C. They were specific.

D. They were earnest.

Acts 12:5b, "... but the church was **earnestly praying** to God for him."

E. They prayed to God.

Acts 12:5, "So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying **to God** for him."

2 Chronicles 20:12, "O our God, will you not judge them? For we have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. **We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you.**"

3. FINAL OBSERVATIONS.

A. Although God answered dramatically, some awful things still happened.

Acts 12:18-19, "In the morning, there was no small commotion among the soldiers as to what had become of Peter. ¹⁹After Herod had a thorough search made for him and did not find him, he cross-examined the guards and ordered that they be executed."

Joshua 24:15b, c, "Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve ... as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."

B. God does some pretty cool things even when His people aren't great models of faith.

Acts 12:12-14, "When this had dawned on him, he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying.¹³ Peter knocked at the outer entrance, and a servant girl named Rhoda came to answer the door.¹⁴ When she recognized Peter's voice, she was so overjoyed she ran back without opening it and exclaimed, "Peter is at the door!"

Acts 12:15-16, "You're out of your mind," they told her. {Rhoda, Peter can't be at the door because we're praying for Peter's release from prison, remember? } When she kept insisting that it was so, they said, "It must be his angel."

¹⁶ But Peter kept on knocking, and when they opened the door and saw him, they were astonished."

C. No matter how bleak the status quo looks, nothing can keep Jesus from building His Church.

Acts 12:21-24, "On the appointed day Herod, wearing his royal robes, sat on his throne and delivered a public address to the people.²² They shouted, "This is the voice of a god, not of a man."²³ Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died.

²⁴ **But the word of God continued to increase and spread."**