

Voices: Prayer is powerful—then and now

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What is prayer? How do you know Jesus hears you? How do you know there is power in your prayer?

I struggled with these questions because I wasn't sure if God was hearing my prayers to him. I just thought, "Maybe if I keep praying, God surely will hear me at some point, right?"

My mind was so busy with all these thoughts and worries, but in the clearing of my mind, God reminded me he heard me the entire time. My mind just wasn't quiet enough to hear him speak back.

As I began to pray and let God control the things I blocked from him, I felt chains fall off as soon as I said, "It's yours."

Prayer is a conversation with God. If we are talking to him but focused on something else, then we are not paying attention to what he speaks back. How can we access God's power if we are not talking to and hearing from the One where all power flows?

The story of Peter and prayer

Acts 12:1-19 is a story about the power of prayer.

Herod was killing Christians. He killed James the brother of John, and he imprisoned Peter, one of Jesus' disciples. After James was killed and Peter was imprisoned, the church earnestly prayed for Peter.

What does earnestly praying look like? It may be emotional, stressed and

shouted prayers, or it could be quiet, eager prayer.

The people could have prayed by themselves, or they could have been praying together as a church. Regardless, the church resorted to prayer because they knew how powerful prayer is.

The very night before Herod planned to torture Peter in front of the people, Peter slept between two soldiers, his wrists bound in chains, and sentries guarding the door of the prison.

Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared, a light shined within the cell, and the angel struck Peter on his side and woke him saying, “Get up quickly!”

The chains fell off Peter’s hands, and the angel said to him, “Dress yourself, and put on your sandals.”

Peter’s peace while others prayed

Can you imagine knowing and experiencing what Peter went through? Being able to sleep in that situation shows where Peter’s mind was—completely quiet, his heart content. Why? Because Peter was serving the Lord. He knew regardless of what might happen to him, he was doing the Lord’s will.

Peter followed the angel, but he didn’t know what was happening. He thought he was seeing a vision. They passed the first and second guard, and they came to the iron gate leading into the city. The gate opened on its own accord. They went out, came to a street, and immediately the angel left him.

When Peter came to himself, he said, “Now I am sure that the Lord has sent his angel to rescue me from the hand of evil.”

When Peter realized what happened, he went to Mary’s house. He stood

and knocked on the door of the gateway. A servant girl named Rhoda came to answer. She recognized Peter's voice, and she was so overjoyed that she forgot to let him inside. Rhoda ran and reported that Peter was standing at the gate. When the people opened the gate, they were amazed.

The power of prayer for you

Prayer brought Peter out of something that seemed impossible. There was no promise Peter would be rescued the night before he was going to be killed.

The church could've planned to break Peter out of prison, but they knew they wouldn't succeed. The people believed prayer was more powerful than anything they do otherwise to help Peter.

The miraculous story of Peter's escape is an answer to prayer. Nobody knew what was going to happen the night before Peter's death, but they trusted the Lord's plan for Peter's life. The Lord knew Peter would remain faithful to him, even if he faced death.

Even when you think you are surrounded, there is power in your prayer.

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