

When It Looks Like God Is Failing

Text: Acts 12 v 1-5

Introduction: From Jerusalem to Antioch Acts 11v23 / When Barnabas saw grace. Church was growing - gospel seemed unstoppable

Then came Acts 12. This is one of the most honest and difficult moments in Acts.

Have you ever prayed.....and heaven seemed silent?

Point 1 — Faith is tested when God doesn't meet our expectations

Acts 12 begins with loss.

James... One of Jesus 'closest friends.

Sometimes God disappoints our expectations... without abandoning His purposes.

The church almost certainly prayed for James.

There is a difference between God not answering the way I hoped and God not being faithful.

Sometimes we confuse those.

Point 2 — We usually judge God in the middle of the story

Acts 12:24

“But the word of God grew and multiplied.”

Notice what Luke does.

James dies. Peter is imprisoned. Herod attacks.

BUT... The Word grows.

Luke is teaching us something.

Never judge God from the middle chapter.

**Many of us are trying to interpret our lives from Chapter 12...
while God is already writing Chapter 13.**

Point 3 — Mature faith keeps praying after disappointment

One verse amazes me.

Acts 12:5 “So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer was made...”

Think about that. James has already died.

If I had been there... I might have said...

“Why pray anymore?” “It didn’t work.” But they prayed anyway.

That is mature faith.

Faith doesn’t say... “I got what I wanted or deserved.”

Faith says... “I still trust who God is.”

Sometimes prayer changes circumstances. Sometimes prayer changes us.

Sometimes both.

Point 4 — Don’t let the tragedy of James make you miss Peter knocking at your door

The church were praying... but they could no longer believe.

Why?

Perhaps because James had just died.

One unanswered prayer... had shaped every expectation afterward.

They could not recognize the miracle, because they were still grieving yesterday’s loss.

Some people are living in the shadow of James.

The breakthrough is at the door... but disappointment refuses to open it.

Conclusion

Perhaps today you feel like... James died. Your prayer wasn't answered.

"Has God failed?" Acts 12 answers... No.

The Word still grows. The Kingdom still advances.

God is still writing. **You are simply living in the middle chapter.**

Ministry Time

Some of you have been living with "James."

A disappointment. A prayer that wasn't answered.

A grief you've never released. A door that closed.

A dream that died. And because James died... you cannot hear Peter knocking.

Today the Father is saying, "I have not forgotten you."

Acts 12:24: "But the word of God grew and multiplied."

"Your James is not the final sentence over your life. Your Peter may already be knocking.

And above all, God's Word continues to grow and multiply.

When it looks like God is failing, remember—you are reading one chapter, but God is writing the whole story."