**The Power of Prayer - Peter Delivered From Prison**

**(Acts 12: 1-17)**

Like most Christians I know that prayer is important. I also know that we are expected to pray because Jesus says in Luke 11:2, “. . . **when** you pray, say. . .” and in Mark 11:24, “. . . whatever things you desire **when** you pray. . . .” From this I know that praying is a matter of “when” and not “if” – it is not optional for Christians.

Believers have a God-given powerful weapon and a solid defense in prayer. Prayer gets God involved in our situations, so we are not left defenseless prey for the enemy.

Peter’s prison escape story opened my understanding to both the power of prayer and the necessity for prayer. In this story Herod had killed the disciple James, the brother of John, and saw that it pleased the crowd. Some believe the Christian community was not expecting James to be killed. They were shocked. James is thought to be the first of the twelve apostles martyred for his faith. With Peter imprisoned the Christians knew that Herod would kill him too, "but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him." (Acts 12:5.)

The night before Herod planned to execute Peter, while he lie chained between two soldiers, the angel of the Lord came into the prison cell. The angel woke Peter up and the chains fell off his hands. The angel led Peter out of the cell, past all the guards, out of the prison gates, and into the city streets. Peter then realizes that it was God who had sent His angel to deliver him from death at the hands of Herod. (Acts 12:11.).

This story tells how God sent an angel to release Peter as a direct answer to the unceasing prayers of the church for him. We also learn that no chains, no guards, no soldiers, no cell, no prison, no gates can stop God. NOTHING ON EARTH CAN MATCH THE POWER OF GOD. Therefore, if we do not doubt but believe and act, imagine what great things God can do through our prayers!

John Wesley said, “God does nothing but in answer to prayer.” Probably the most obvious example of this is God’s desire to save the lost. He is not willing for any to perish, but that all should come to repentance. However, if we do not repent in prayer, we are prisoners to sin and on the way to hell.

LET US BELIEVE, PRAY AND ALLOW GOD TO GET INVOLVED AND CHANGE SITUATIONS IN OUR LIVES AND IN THE WORLD. “The effectual and fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” (James 5:16.) “And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.” (Matthew 21:22.) “Ask, and it shall be given you . . . .” (Matthew 7:7.) “Pray without ceasing.” (1 Thessalonians 5:17.) “The Lord is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous.” (Proverbs 15:29.) “Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me.” (Psalm 66:20.).

Karleen Rutherford

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 Karleen relocated to San Francisco in 2017, after living and working in Germany for 30 years. She met Jesus at age 18, however, it was through many challenging experiences including marrying at an early age, becoming a mother and living life far away from the support of family that she recognized the presence, the faithfulness and the power of God and the Holy Spirit in special ways that rooted and grounded her faith.

Karleen was an elder and mentor at Word of Faith Intl. Church (WOIC, Berlin) for 15 years. She is currently caretaker for her 94year old father. Her mission statement is Isaiah 43, and one of her favorite verses is Colossians 1:21-23, “And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in his sight: if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard . . . .”