



Daily Devotions from Lutheran Hour Ministries

"Those in Prison"

January 15, 2022

Hebrew 13:3 - Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body.



In Acts 12:1, we read, "About that time Herod the king laid violent hands on some who belonged to the church." Before this, Herod put James, the brother of John, to death. The Bible says when Herod saw that James' death pleased the Jews, he arrested Peter, putting him in prison under the watch of guards.

In Acts 12 we learn about Peter's imprisonment. More than this, we learn of a visiting angel who leads Peter outside of the city to safety. Shortly thereafter, the rescued apostle is reunited with a praying group of believers who were stunned to see him (see Acts 12:1-17).

Sadly, the persecution of Christians continues to this day, all around the world. Prayers for these people are as needed now as they were for the imprisoned apostle two thousand years ago. But be alert! Our cunning spiritual foe will try to derail your prayers with all sorts of excuses and reasons *not* to pray, even belittling your character and condemning you for your failures.

Being aware of this, remember that the Heavenly Father wants you to pray fervently and frequently. (Here, "the best defense is a good offense" is most certainly true.) God hears your prayers. Through your sincere, Christ-centered petitions, prisoners will be consoled and strengthened. Hope will come to some very desolate places. The light of Christ's love will make another day bearable. God not only promises to hear our prayers, but He also promises to answer them (see John 14:13-14; Mark 11:24).

This is the great comfort that we can participate in on behalf of those who are in prison and suffering, especially those oppressed for their Christian faith. Jesus Himself tells us how critical it is for us to look after each other in this regard (see Matthew 25:31-46).

Each time we see the cross on which Jesus died, our Heavenly Father reminds us that it was through this instrument that He offers us His divine comfort and forgiveness. The cross vividly declares that God has forgiven all of our sins. The ransom has been paid through Jesus' blood; the gates to a new life are now wide open through His resurrection

from the dead.

Dear friends of Lutheran Hour Ministries, pray! Pray for those who are in prison throughout the world. And when you pray, pray with absolute confidence in the promises of God. Exercise the gift of faith God is offering you. Consider again the story of when first-century believers prayed for Peter in prison: an angel appeared, chains fell off, a gate swung open, and the apostle was set free.

Take time to pray and remember those in prison as though you were there in prison with them.

THE PRAYER: Heavenly Father, remind us to pray for those in prison around the world. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

From "Remember the Suffering," a sermon excerpt from Rev. Dr. Wallace Schulz, former Speaker of **The Lutheran Hour**

Reflection Questions:

1. How do you think you would handle it if you were incarcerated for your Christian faith?
2. Why is it important when praying for those in prison to envision ourselves in prison, too?
3. Can you name three places in the world right now where people are locked up for their faith?

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