

God is Mysterious & Faith is Necessary

I. Announce:

- A. **Slide1 QR code:** for **songs & Keynote** if you're not close enough to TV's. [can get up]
- B. **Slide2 Food Drive:** **Mon**, 27th, 9-11am. Murr Comm Food Bank. **Needs:** *non-perishable & lots of Cereal.*
- C. **Slide3 Coffee w/Kelly:** every Tuesday online.
- D. **Slide4 Wed Night Study:** **here in the Quad**, as we wrap up the Our Father. Jason will tackle, *forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.*
- E. **Slide5 Sun Night Prayer:** kicking back up **next Sun 6:30-7:30pm** right out here.
- F. **Slide6 Water Fill Station:** bring a chair (if you want) & **water bottle**. [saved **14,000 plastic bottles** by using the one inside]
- G. **Slide7 Finances:** I want to continue to **thank you** for your **tremendous generosity** during these difficult financial times. Thank you for *being* the church and **giving generously** to care for the family of God and beyond. [**foyer open if need to drop off**]
- H. **Slide8 Ps:** We are excited to be offering a **Calvary kids** portion of our service. **Starting next Sat eve** we will all be meeting together for worship at **7:00pm**, **then** the *elementary aged kids* will be dismissed to have an **age appropriate lesson, activities, and game.**
- I. **Prayer:**

II. **Slide9 Intro:** *God is Mysterious & Faith is Necessary*

- A. Herod touches off another round of *persecution*. This one as much **political** as **religious**.
- B. **Man has only 2 opportunities in this life: Self-Exaltation or God-Exaltation.**
 1. Ps:1:6 *For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the ungodly shall perish.*
 2. We meet here one **Living a Self-Exalting Life (Herod);** another **Living a God-Exalting Life (Peter).**

C. Why is this Important to us? **Faith** is fundamentally **God-Exalting**. **Glory seeking** is fundamentally **Self-Exalting**...and **the 2 can't fit into one person**.

D. **Outline**. 3 things: *A Tale of Two Lives*. - *A Battle of Good vs. Evil*. and *Life is Messy, God is Mysterious, & Faith is Necessary*. [Read ch.]

III. Slide10/11a **A TALE OF TWO LIVES** Self-Exaltation (Herod) vs. God-Exaltation (Peter)

A. **HEROD**

B. This chapter **begins** with **Herod killing James**, **ends** with **God killing Herod**.

1. If you oppose God...you loose (How often? every time!)

2. The 2nd commandment is seen clearly here, *I the Lord God am a jealous God*.

C. If your goal is to *seek your own glory*...you **can't** be a Christian. A Christian is one who **seeks God's glory**. [This should become your *life driving purpose*]

1. God is committed to His own **Name, Reputation, Glory, & Fame**.

D. God lets Herod's pride **and** self-centeredness **and** self-exaltation *go all the way to the end*, so that **we can see where all Our Pride is going**, **and** why we should **crucify it** as soon as we see it rear its *ugly head*.

E. **He who exalts himself will be humbled and he who humbles himself will be exalted**.

1. **Herod** is to be *put down* for the *treason* of his **self-exaltation**, in the place **Slide11b of God-exaltation**. [so it's...*death by worm*]

F. **Slide12** The Historian Josephus wrote in his *Antiquities of the Jews* 19:8:2. **Agrippa** came to Caesarea, where there was a festival for him. On the 2nd day he put on a garment *made entirely of silver* and came into the theater early in the morning, at which time *the silver of his garment* reflecting the sun's rays shone so resplendently as to spread a horror on those gazing at him. Presently his flatterers exclaimed that **he was a god**, adding, *'Be merciful to us; for although till now we have revered you only as a man, henceforth we will regard you as superior to mortal nature.'* **But** the king neither rebuked them nor rejected their impious flattery. However, as he looked up, he saw **an owl** and immediately understood that this bird was the messenger of **ill tidings**. Suddenly and violently a severe pain arose in his stomach.

Therefore he looked at his friends and said, ‘I, whom you call a god, am commanded now to leave this life; while Providence thus reproves the lying words you just now said to me.’ After 5 days, exhausted by the stomach pain, he died, aged 53.

G.It’s the ultimate **sin** to think, ***I did it all!***

1. **Are we** stealing Glory from God? Are we attributing to Him every **good thing** in our life? Every **good gift** that we have? Every **ability or talent** that we possess? Every **good deed** that we do?
2. **Do you** make much of **Jesus** or much of **yourself**? Do you work to **honor** Christ? Does your **relationships** exalt Christ? Does your **temper** honor Christ?

H.If we all desired to **make much** of the name reputation of Jesus...it would cause us to ***pray different, think different, act different.***

1. This mindset would transform our entire ***life, thoughts, attitudes, speech, parenting, dating, finances.***

I. **Slide13,14 PETER**

J. I’m sure **Peter** is anticipating a similar fate to that of **James** as he awaits his trial.

K. Peter was totally ***passive*** throughout the entire incident. His escape was truly...a ***deliverance!***

1. Peter couldn’t tell ***a Liam Neesen, Pierce Brosnan, or Jason Bourne story*** of ***knocking out guards, sneaking past security cameras, or kicking down the gate.***
2. This was ***a God thing & to Him be the glory*** (see 17).

L.(7,8) **Peter was fast asleep**: the angel has to ***knock him in the side & grab him*** to get him up. [talk about ***touched by an angel***] [he was so out of it...vs.9]

1. **Peters 3 sleeping times**: At Mnt of Trans (saw His Glory, **but** didn’t hear about His departure, Lk.9:33). In Gethsemane (wasn’t able to stay awake 1 hour, **result** ***no strength during his own trial***). Now here (success).

2. Deep, perfect, sweet peace on **the very night** of *his execution*. **duty done/** pure conscience.

IV. Slide15a **A BATTLE OF GOOD VERSUS EVIL** *a battle of Prayer*

A. **Good/Evil** have always been in conflict, since the fall.

1. Yet there is **a limit** as to **the sea**, **so** to **the power of evil**.

2. Job 38:11 **I said, this far you may come** (waters edge), **but no farther, And here your proud waves must stop.** [Oceanside: **why does it stop rt there?** God. **Why does He stop it?** Grace]

B. Slide15b (5) A **4-point** teaching on **prayer**: the prayer was **earnest**/intense/fervent (not casual). It was **not vague**, it was **for him**/Peter. It was **to God** (they were in *genuine contact* with the living God). It was **communal**, **by the church**.

1. The believer is **not** called to an **isolated life** (*Our Father...*).

2. 16 guards **or** 16,000 guards these men/women would have still **prayed him out**.

C. **You're out of your mind** (12) - *the thing we're praying about actually happened, right!*

1. Ever been guilty of expecting **less than a complete answer** to prayer?

a) **Pray believing**. *Like the church prayer meeting that was praying for rain, and only 1 member brought an umbrella.*

2. God is not wanting **great men/women**, **but** He is wanting men/women that will **dare to prove the greatness of their God**.

D. It was the **fervent prayer** of the church that led to Peter's release. [even though imperfect]

1. Slide16 **"The angel** fetched Peter out of prison, **but** it was **prayer** that fetched the angel."

E. (16) It is always right to **pray**, **even if** your *faith is so weak* you are surprised when the answer comes.

1. Keep knocking – **God opens doors**.

2. **Maybe** they didn't expect deliverance **because** of James situation. **Also**, 3rd strike/imprisonment. He was surrounded by guards. Passover feast was coming need to kill by sword asap.

3. Maybe prayed, *comfort him Lord, may he not suffer, give him ability to endure the pain, help him to witness to others, but not for his deliverance.*
(Maybe they did, & just were so shocked)

F. What *seemingly impossible* door are **you** knocking at right now?

1. Might this change how you knock/pray?

G. C.H. Spurgeon imagine prayer this way: you see the men in the **belfry**/bell tower sometimes down below with **the ropes**. They pull them, and if you have no ears, that is all you know about it. **But** the bells are ringing **up there**. They are talking and discussing sweet music up aloft in the tower. And our prayers do, as it were, ring the bells of heaven.

1. The Christians in our story, *despite their weak faith*, offered **clock-tower prayers** on Peter's behalf.

2. What **characteristics** of their prayers made them **effective**?

a) **Earnest prayer** (5), **many together praying** (12). [come pray w/me next Sun night]

V. Slide17 **LIFE IS MESSY. GOD IS MYSTERIOUS. FAITH IS NECESSARY.** *James/Peter*

A. Why does God let James die & Peter live? [3 questions]

1. *The will of the Lord is always wise & good*, but it is not always **predictable**.
2. God spares **Peter**, but allows **James** to die (1st apostle to die, his bro Jn the last).
3. *Maybe God didn't like James as much?* Ha, **no**, he was in the *top apostolic tier*. [chosen to see his Transfig, witness Jesus' suffering in the garden. God simply allowed him to *drink of the cup of Christ* that he inadvertently ask for]

B. Why does God wait to spare Peter at the last minute? (6a)

1. (6) **When Herod was about to bring him out...God is never too late.**

C. Why does God allow Herod to kill James, *but* not permit him to act like a god?

1. Deut 29:29 *The **secret** things belong to the Lord our God, but the things **revealed** belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law.*

- D. I hope this helps **us** to back off thinking we know everything that **God is doing, will do, or wants done...in someone's life.** [like Job's friends]
- E. **So we go on. Not knowing** what will befall us. **But knowing Christ!**
1. **Whether in life or death. Whether in suffering or in service.**
 - a) **For Peter**, to live was Christ. **For James**, to die was gain.
 2. **Christ at all times. Christ in all circumstances. Christ at all costs. Christ for all our actualities. Christ for all our possibilities.**
 3. There is no lock God can't pick...**Trust Him!**