

Experiencing God Together

“Experiencing God Through Prayer” – Acts 12:1-19
August 31, 2025

Our Sermon Series

40 DAYS OF EXPERIENCING GOD TOGETHER		
A Journey to Encounter the Living God Together		
Date	Message Title	Bible Text
Aug 17	Experiencing God Through Community	Acts 1-2
Aug 24	Experiencing God Through His Word	Psalms 19:7-14
Aug 31	Experiencing God Through Prayer	Acts 12:1-19
Sept 7	Experiencing God Through Worship (Jimmy Needham)	Acts 16:16-34
Sept 14	Experiencing God Through Watching and Obeying	John 5:19-20
Sept 21	Experiencing God Through Faith Sharing	Acts 1:6-11
Sept 28	Experiencing God as a Family	Joshua 24:15

Six Ah-ha's From Acts 12 That Help Me to Experience God Through Prayer

1. Prayer and the sovereignty of God are a mystery (vv.1-2)

- Peter was miraculously rescued by an angel, but James was not! Why??!???
- Four men named James in the New Testament

James, son of Zebedee	Brother of John. One of the 12 apostles. “James the Greater” (elder, older)
James, son of Alphaeus	Another one of the 12 apostles. “James the Less”
James, brother of Jesus	Half-brother of Jesus. Author of James. Leader of the church in Jerusalem. “James the Just” also known as “camel knees.”
James, father of Judas	Father of Apostle Judas (not Iscariot).

- Tertullian: “The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.”
- John Piper: “For the first 300 years of the church, to be a Christian was an act of immense risk to your life and possessions and family. It was a test of what you loved more. And at the extremity of that test was martyrdom. And above that martyrdom was a sovereign God who said there is an appointed number of martyrs (Revelation 6:11). Martyrs have a special role to play in planting and empowering the church. They have a special role to play in shutting the mouth of Satan (Revelation 12:11; Job 1:9-11). Martyrdom is not something accidental. It is not taking God off guard. And it is emphatically not a strategic defeat for the cause of Christ. It may look like defeat. But it is part of a plan in heaven that no human strategist would ever conceive or could ever design. And this plan will triumph for all those who endure to the end by faith in God’s all-sufficient grace.”

- Application #1 – As I wrestle with “unanswered prayers” and tragedies in this life, I choose to...
 - Trust God like Peter sleeping in prison not knowing how his story would end (Acts 12:6).
 - Trust God like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: “Our God is able, our God will, but even if He doesn’t, we will not worship your idol” (Daniel 3:16-18).
 - Be willing to die for my faith in Jesus (Revelation 12:11).
 - Worship God even in the midst of not being able to fully comprehend all that He is doing (Romans 11:33-36).
- Note: We all eventually die! Peter was rescued in Acts 12, but he will eventually be martyred for his faith by the Roman Emperor Nero in 67 AD being hung upside down on a cross.

2. Everyone wants a miracle, but nobody wants a situation that requires one (vv.3-4)

- Peter’s miraculous release from prison by an angel is absolutely amazing and thrilling and fun and faith-building, but it started with his arrest. He was on death row in an impossible-to-escape Alcatraz prison lock-up!!! Who is ready to sign up for THAT??!???
- Attitude during a bear market: “Stocks are on sale!”
- Attitude during difficult situations: “There is an opportunity for a miracle here!”
- **Philippians 2:14** (NLT) – *Do everything without complaining....*
- Application #2 – With God’s help and power, I choose to...
 - Stop complaining.
 - View every difficulty as an opportunity for a miracle.
 - Keep my eyes on Jesus worshipping Him regardless of the earthly outcome.

3. We have a God who responds to the earnest prayers of His church (vv.5-12)

- “earnest” (v.5) = *ektenos* = to stretch out; earnest; intent; fervent. The word combines the ideas of perseverance (“without letting up”) and intensity (fervor, urgently) and is used of great cries of prayer.
- The only other time this word is used for prayer is when Jesus is praying in the Garden of Gethsemane.
- **Luke 22:44** – *And being in an agony Jesus prayed more earnestly; and His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.*
- Verse 12 tells us where the church was praying: Mary’s house (Mary, the mother of John Mark). When Peter was miraculously released from prison by the angel, Peter knew where to go to find the church praying: Mary’s house.
- Application #3 – Oh that my house would be known as the place of prayer!!! Oh that our house (church) would be known as a house of prayer for all nations!!!

▪ **9 WAYS TO “GO TO MARY’S HOUSE” AT GRACE FELLOWSHIP:**

- **Prayer Altar** – Come to the prayer altar every Sunday. Cup your hands to ask one of us to pray with you.
- **Yellow Sheet Prayer Requests** – Every Sunday, fill out a prayer request on the back of the connection card. Every Sunday, take full ownership of someone else’s prayer request printed on Page 2 of your worship guide.
- **Community Prayer Center** – Grace Fellowship’s Prayer Room that we have given to the whole city as a place of prayer. Come and pray during “business hours.” There are over 25 hours of live worship and prayer meetings (Audience of One) each week. You can even get an access code and pray 24/7 in the Moravian Room! Info at WhatIsGrace.org/Prayer
- **Healing Prayer** – The 4th Sunday of every month, soaking healing prayer is available for you in the Prayer Center from 10:45am to Noon.
- **Prophecy Room** – The 2nd Sunday of every month, prayer ministers are available to listen and speak a word to you in the Prayer Center from 10:45am to 12Noon.
- **Prayer Wall** – Take the Prayer Wall Challenge! Go to the prayer wall on our website where you can post a prayer or pray for requests that have been posted. Go to WhatIsGrace.org/ and click “Pray Here.”
- **Prayer Groups** – Multiple prayer groups meet in the Prayer Center to pray for widows, sex trafficking, our nation, our UPGs, and more. Info at WhatIsGrace.org/Prayer
- **Night of Worship** – Sunday, September 7, at 6:00pm in the Cinco Ranch Worship Center.
- **Seasons of Prayer** – Consider how you and your family can participate in two special prayer opportunities during our 40 Days of Experiencing God Together: Global Week of Prayer (Sept 1-7) and Ten Days of Unified Prayer (Sept 22-Oct 2). Info at WhatIsGrace.org/Prayer

▪ **9 PRAYER QUOTES THAT MOTIVATE ME TO PRAY EARNESTLY:**

- Hudson Taylor – “When we work, we work. When we pray, God works!”
- Terry Teykl – “God can accomplish more in 5 seconds (if we will ask Him) than we can accomplish in 50 years!!”
- William Temple – “When I pray, coincidences happen.”
- E.M. Bounds – “Prayer can do anything God can do.”
- Corrie ten Boom: “Is prayer your steering wheel or your spare tire?”
- Martin Luther – “I have so much to do today that I must spend the first three hours in prayer.”
- Martin Lloyd-Jones – “Always respond to every impulse to pray.”
- Oswald Chambers – “Prayer does not fit us for the greater work; prayer *is* the greater work.”
- Samuel Chadwick – “The one concern of the devil is to keep Christians from praying. He fears nothing from prayerless studies, prayerless work, and prayerless religion. Satan laughs at our toil, mocks at our wisdom, but satan trembles when he sees the weakest Christian on his knees.”

▪ **JIM’S 7 PERSONAL PRAYER HABITS:**

- (1) **First Prayer** – The first words out of my mouth when I wake up every day are a prayer of confession, Spirit-filling, and surrender of my day.
- (2) **Time with God** – I spend 40-60 minutes every morning in concentrated time with God reading His Word, journaling, and praying.

- (3) **Practice His Presence** – I talk to God conversationally throughout my day as I would to a friend asking for His help and leading, cracking jokes, adoring Him, and enjoying Him.
- (4) **Pray With Others** – I pray with other people just every chance I get: “Can I pray with you right now?” I join corporate prayer gatherings just every chance I get. I text a prayer just every chance I get.
- (5) **Ask For Prayer** – I ask others to pray for me just every chance that I get (2 Corinthians 1:11).
- (6) **Pause at 4:00** – My watch vibrates every day at 4pm reminding me to pause and be with Jesus.
- (7) **Pray with Lisa** – I pray with Lisa every day.

4. Angels are real! (vv.7-15)

- Joan Anderson: “There is real power in prayer. We can trust that God’s intense, personal love for us means that He sends His angels to our assistance.”
- The language in v.15 is interesting: “It is his angel!” Evidently, we all have a guardian angel who is assigned to us (Matthew 18:10).
- Application #4 – Do not pray or talk to your angel (pray only to God) but rest assured that God responds to your prayers by dispatching angels. Call your heavenly 911 every day – multiple times per day.

5. We are able to see miracles when we come to ourselves (v.11)

- At first, Peter did not realize that he was in the middle of a miracle until he “came to himself” (v.11). This is the same expression used of the prodigal son waking up in pig slop, and he “came to himself” and started heading home to his father (Luke 15:17).
- Application #5 – What miracle might you be in the middle of and not even be aware of it?

6. God answers even mustard seed faith prayers (vv.12-17)

- The lack of faith of the people praying at Mary’s house as almost comical: “Are you out of your mind?!” (v.15)
- Hudson Taylor: “You do not need a great faith, but faith in a great God.”
- Rowland Bingham: “I do not have a great deal of faith, but I have had a little faith in a great God, and that great God would not let His causes fail.”
- **Matthew 18:20** – *Truly, I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, “Move from here to there,” and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you.*
- My mustard seed baggie in my Bible at home.
- Application #6 – With God’s help, I will persevere in my mustard seed faith prayers even if it takes 70 years! Even if I don’t see the answer until after I die!