

## Resurrection Rescue

### Introduction

- In name of risen, living, gloriously reigning victor, sin, death, hell. Risen, indeed! Easter not day (eggs, candy, ham dinner with family) but season: focus on res, blessings. (Easter, I wasn't there, sick; happy to be back, together share joy of res.)
- Focus for sermon, 1<sup>st</sup> L, Ac 12; event 10 years after rose; rode donkey, inst HC, nailed to cross, burst tomb; rescued whole world from sin by rising; since resurrection rescue (RR).

### Peter's Resurrection Rescue

- 10 later, **vs. 1-3b**. Peter in jail. Same know, love; flair for dramatic: walked water; cut off Malchus' ear; swore didn't know Jesus. 10 later drama following. Fellow Christians being martyred, death for believing, incl friend James. Now in jail, too, facing same fate.
- Peter's been in jail before. In Acts 5, all apostles thrown in jail; angel lets out. Doesn't look like that now. Soldiers at door; chained to R/L. Going nowhere! People were praying; **vs. 5**. But by looks of it, Peter spending last night on earth in that prison.
- How think you'd make it through night if knew next day die? Here's how Peter: **vs. 6a**. Sleeping! Reminds of Jesus, asleep in boat during storm; completely trusted God's care. Here Peter completely trusts Jesus' RR. Knew Jesus lived, died, rose for him; sins forgiven, eternal life, even if about to lose life next day.
- Not what God had in mind. **Vs. 7-10**. There's Peter, middle of jail cell, middle of night, pitch black. Shackles cold, heavy; no one's going anywhere. Everyone's sleeping, even guards. Suddenly, bright light; someone smacks Peter on shoulder. "Get up, quick; put clothes on; follow up." Know how is when first wake; groggy, don't know what's going on. That's Peter; thinks dream. So follows stranger out of cell, into city. Not talking; just walking. Still not sure if real. Then stranger suddenly gone; Peter's alone; hits him: **vs. 11**. No dream; was a RR. Resurrected LJ rescued Peter from prison.

### Your Resurrection Rescue

- Do you, in your own life, for whatever reason, ever feel imprisoned? Ever feel trapped, stuck, chained up in bad situation can't get out of? Peter was in jail; maybe you've never. Sometimes feel imprisoned, like no way out, things only getting worse.
- Maybe relationships in family starting to fall apart; strained between spouse, children, parents – feel stuck. Maybe financial burden dragging down: debt, lousy job, can't afford anything more than bare minimum – feel stuck. Maybe health: not healthy, doctors aren't sure what to do; or someone you love isn't healthy – feel stuck.
- I think we've all felt this way, in own lives, for all kinds reasons. What happens? Doubt God; doubt love; wonder why putting through this; if even cares. When troubles come our way, they feel like chains; we feel trapped; we need a rescue.
- Peter may have felt same way when in jail. But remember what helped him sleep that night? Wasn't idea of earthly rescue; he thought was as good as dead. Peter had peace because knew he already had been rescued! There in prison cell, Peter knew LJC had risen from dead to rescue him from sin, death, hell. Knew his Savior had given life on cross to forgive sins. Peter was there in upper room (Gospel – Lk 24) on ES when Jesus: "**Peace be with you.**" Peter had peace because knew already rescued. A RR took place on Easter Sunday morning; Peter rescued for eternity.
- Same true for you; Jesus rose from dead for you! Your Savior paid for your sins on cross; delivered you from death; burst from his tomb in order to burst you out of dark prison cell of sin. Jesus has rescued you by his resurrection. That's a life-changing verdict of freedom: Satan's shackles have fallen from your hands, feet; your prison cell open; Savior has rescued you. RR.

- That RR helps you (me) deal with situations in life that make us feel trapped, like strained relationships, bad finances, poor health. Jesus' res gives hope to hopeless situations. Doesn't nec mean hopeless situations comp go away. Jesus rescued Peter from jail, but didn't James; martyred; in month, see Stephen martyred. So res of Jesus doesn't solve all earthly problems. In fact, Jesus: **"Whoever wants to be my disciples must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me" (Mt 16:24).**
- But cross we'll never ever have to bear – punishment for our sins. Jesus already bore that cross for us; then rescued us by rising from dead. Nothing can change that! God's love for you will never change. And when situations arise in life that make you feel trapped, Jesus comes, says, "I have freed you, rescued you! Look in my tomb – I'm not there! I'm more powerful than death, so I'm more powerful than your problems. I got Peter out of jail. And if it's best for you, I'll get you out of this trouble, too. Either way, I'm on your side. Trust me: I died for you, rose for you; rescued you."

### *Conclusion*

- That night Peter got out, something funny: Peter to friend's; knocks; servant girl Rhoda; finally in. That night Peter was rescued. But about 10 years earlier when truly rescued; we.
- I pray that empty tomb of Easter would always drive away all your doubts, especially when you feel trapped and helpless, and lead you to trust all the more every day in Jesus RR.

### **Acts 12:1-11**

It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them. <sup>2</sup> He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword. <sup>3</sup> When he saw that this met with approval among the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also. This happened during the Festival of Unleavened Bread. <sup>4</sup> After arresting him, he put him in prison, handing him over to be guarded by four squads of four soldiers each. Herod intended to bring him out for public trial after the Passover.

<sup>5</sup> So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him.

<sup>6</sup> The night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries stood guard at the entrance. <sup>7</sup> Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. "Quick, get up!" he said, and the chains fell off Peter's wrists.

<sup>8</sup> Then the angel said to him, "Put on your clothes and sandals." And Peter did so. "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me," the angel told him. <sup>9</sup> Peter followed him out of the prison, but he had no idea that what the angel was doing was really happening; he thought he was seeing a vision. <sup>10</sup> They passed the first and second guards and came to the iron gate leading to the city. It opened for them by itself, and they went through it. When they had walked the length of one street, suddenly the angel left him.

<sup>11</sup> Then Peter came to himself and said, "Now I know without a doubt that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from Herod's clutches and from everything the Jewish people were hoping would happen."