

November 18, 2018

Morning Overview

Lesson: *The Angel in Prison*

Lesson Objective:

In our story today, we continue to see God’s people – the Church – endure persecution for preaching the Good News. This time it comes at the hands of Herod in a socio-political alliance with the Jews. However, Peter’s incarceration and ill-treatment is no match for the power of God. God does what only God can, whereas Peter is completely helpless. God delivers Peter from the certain death by the angel of the Lord. While Peter’s story is true, it also embodies a deeper, spiritual significance. All people are bound and captive by their sins and completely unable to escape. Only God can come and rescue us from captivity and death, and we in response to our rescue by God, just like Peter, should acknowledge the miracle of rescue with gratitude to the Lord.

Teaching Summary:

- God’s promises do not change despite circumstances, people and even our inability to believe them. God keeps His promises even when we do not trust Him or follow His commands.
- God has promised to always be with His people. He is with us through the presence of the Holy Spirit.
- The Church is growing, but also experiencing persecution. Because of the persecution, followers of Jesus scatter.
- The scattered Church takes the Good News and tells others about Jesus.
- Herod begins to persecute the church to appease the Jewish people.
- Herod has James killed and Peter put in prison. Peter is chained and well guarded.
- God rescues Peter by sending an angel of the Lord to bring him out of prison.
- Peter, in amazement, acknowledges that God rescued him and shows gratitude for it.
- Peter goes to the house of Mary where he shares what happened to him.

Scripture: Acts 12:1-19

Story: Vos Child’s Story Bible, Pages 349-351

Scripture Memory for November:

And He (Jesus) commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that He (Jesus) is the One appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. *Acts 10:42 (ESV)*

Craft: Angel

Supplies: Cardstock angel, verse sticker, magnet, gold crayons, markers

Instructions:

1. Place sticker on front of angel
2. Color angel as desired
3. Place magnet on back of angel



Story

Transition

Boys and girls, today in our story Peter is in big trouble. BIG TROUBLE. But the Lord is completely in control and only He can rescue Peter. Let's find out how Peter got in trouble and how the Lord rescues him.

The Church Is Growing

The Church was growing. The Bible tells us every day more and more people believed the Good News! They believed that God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to rescue us from our sins and He rose from the dead! More and more people believed in Jesus – the Church was growing! But as the Church grew, there were people that wanted to hurt and even kill followers of Jesus. Followers of Jesus had to run, hide and live in different places and cities. As they scattered they took the Good News with them and told others.

Not everyone wanted the Good News to be told. The Apostles even went to jail sometimes when they did tell people about Jesus.

The Angel in Prison

While the Good News was preached, King Herod began to do terrible things to the followers of Jesus. Herod ordered James, the brother of John, to be killed by the sword. Herod knew if he kept hurting followers of Jesus it would make powerful people happy. So, Herod decided to arrest Peter too.

After Herod arrested Peter, he put him in jail and had 16 soldiers guard him! Herod planned to bring Peter before the people for trial after the Passover Feast. So, Peter was kept in jail. But the church prayed to God often for him.

The night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter was sleeping. Peter was chained up inside of his jail cell and there were two soldiers on either side of him. There were also more soldiers guarding the door to the jail. Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared in the jail cell! The angel appeared as a bright light shining in the room.

The angel reached down, touched Peter on the side and woke him up. The angel said, "Hurry! Get up!" And the chains fell off Peter's hands. The angel said to him, "Get dressed and put on your sandals." And so Peter did this. Then the angel said, "Put on your coat and follow me." So the angel went out, and Peter followed him. Peter did not know if what the angel was doing was real. He thought he might be seeing a vision or dreaming. They went past the first and the second guard. They came to a big iron gate that separated the jail from the city. The gate opened itself for them. They went through the gate and walked down a street. And the angel suddenly left him.

Then Peter realized what had happened. He thought, "Now I know that the Lord really sent his angel to me. He rescued me from Herod and from all the things the Jewish people thought would happen."

When he realized this, he went to the home of Mary. She was the mother of John. (John was also called Mark.) Many people were gathered there to pray for Peter. Peter knocked on the door. A servant girl named Rhoda answered the door. She recognized Peter's voice, and she was very happy. She even forgot to open the door. She ran inside and told the group, "Peter is at the door!"

They said to her, "You are crazy!" But she kept on saying that it was true. So, they said, "It must be Peter's angel."

Peter continued to knock. When they finally opened the door, the people in the house saw Peter and were amazed. Peter made a sign with his hand to tell them to be quiet (like a "sshing" sound). Peter explained how the Lord led him out of the jail. And he said, "Tell James and the other believers what happened." Then he left to go to another place.

The next day the soldiers were very upset. They wondered what had happened to Peter. Herod looked everywhere for Peter but could not find him. Herod decided to punish the soldiers for losing Peter.

Questions for Review with Younger Children

Have children answer “yes” or “no.”

- Is the Church growing – adding more and more people? (Yes)
- Did Herod hurt the followers of Jesus? (Yes)
- Did Herod have Peter arrested? (Yes)
- Did Herod put Peter in jail? (Yes)
- Did Herod have 16 soldiers guarding Peter? (Yes)
- Did an angel of the Lord come and rescue Peter? (Yes)
- Did Peter leave town? (No; he went to the home of Mary)
- Peter did not tell anyone how he escaped. (No; he told everyone in the house what happened)

Questions for Review with Older Children

- Name some of the people in our story today.
- What did it mean for God to rescue Peter? (Only God can rescue Peter; Peter had no control of it).
- How did Peter react once he was out of jail? (He recognized that only God could rescue Him; Peter was grateful)
- What is the Good News?