

God's merciful deliverances (Quality: Very good)

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Date: 28 May 2008

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[0 : 00] If you please to help me, I would direct you prayerfully to the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 12, and reading verse 16.

But Peter continued knocking, and when they had opened the door and saw him, they were astonished.

This remarkable account of Peter being put in prison by Herod, the wicked Herod, and when we think of how he was surrounded by these four Quantonians of soldiers to keep him, and Peter therefore was kept in prison.

And all how we see here, prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him, for him, and no doubt himself also was known what it was to pray in his time of need.

What a precious gift is prayer, and when that prayer of necessity Here was Peter well aware that he was no doubt to be killed as James, the brother of John, with the sword, as was being the case through this wicked Herod.

[1 : 33] We see here then the value of real prayer, indicted by the Lord. And so he came to himself when he was brought through the prison, the angel of the Lord, and that angel of the Lord, that encamps round about you and me, and exercises you and me from time to time, to go again those seven times in wrestling prayer.

We come to those situations which seem often impossible, impossible for us to see this thing delivered from us, or some affliction, or some way made, where there seems to be no way.

And all to have that living faith, whereby we could still commit our way unto the Lord. to call upon me, as he says, in the day of trouble.

And what a great trouble this is in Providence sometimes. A great mountain before us. There's some river to cross, some pathway that we've not known heretofore.

And how shall I continue? And how can I overcome this difficulty that seems to encompass me about? Well, what a mercy if a light ever shines into your soul.

[3 : 25] As we look at this spiritually, the welfare of your soul and mine, and the necessity of feeling to be a prisoner.

But a prisoner with hope. By faith, we are prisoners of hope. And we look to the Lord like Peter, who had already had this damsel come to harken that it was he.

She knew Peter's voice. And so it is with the Lord. He knows your voice. He knows the burden that you bring to him.

And oh, what it's glorifying him, isn't it, to acknowledge him in your ways and commit these hard things. He said, bring these hard things to me and I will hear them.

We need more faith, you know, I believe, at times, to believe that he is a prayer, hearing, answering God. Where should we be had not the Lord in his mercy heard and answered their poor groanings?

[4 : 42] And there are groanings oftentimes. We're in such captivity. But the Lord tells us in the psalmist, he has ascended on high, he's led captivity captive.

He's able to break down these iron bars and these brazen gates that seem to fence you in the inn. And so we have this account here, don't we, this miraculous deliverance of Peter from the prison.

And no doubt he was to lie there until it suited Herod to have him killed. And so you and I often may feel what will the end of these things be in our little lives?

as you're cast down. Yet through mercy, we have a little hope if we are believers. We have been brought up in this way.

We have, not that that's profitable, but in one sense, because it's something personal you feel to need. You want the Lord to show you that he is mindful of you in your distresses.

[5 : 55] and he alone can deliver you out of your troubles. And so Peter continued knocking.

But what a word this is then. It isn't having a matter of prayer now with a real burden. He won't wait, pray once and leave it, or twice and leave it.

there'll be a continual error unto the throne of grace, Lord, to appear to me and for me. I am such a state of mind, I know not what to do.

Lord, do come and help me to believe and trust thee for thy faithfulness. Grant those healing virtues and those touches that a poor sinner might be enabled to see that thou dost still open the door.

what is a door? A door of mercy. He's a merciful God and we need him to shine into our hearts with that living faith.

[7 : 02] And so like the angel shined into the prison and you in their darkness and suddenly the Lord that comes, the messenger from the new covenant, comes and speaks a word, takes his word and seals it upon your soul and you feel that sweet moment that the door has been opened.

The door of mercy that stands open all day to the poor and needy that not, by the way, we've certainly got to be made to feel our poverty and our need of him. Our single eye might be full of that light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus.

What a refuge, what a mercy then. and so you see that when they had opened the door and saw him they were astonished. And you know you'll drink the wine of astonishment at times.

You'll be astonished, you'll be amazed at the wonders God alone can do. I know unbelieving people, dear friends, cannot believe that God reigns.

But you will. when the Lord shows you these signs, you've been long waiting, long crying for the God of heaven to come and help you.

[8 : 20] So that example here of Peter continued knocking. And at that set time, the Lord raises a poor sinner up, sets him or her at gospel liberty, and they go on their way rejoicing, believing they have had a visit from the Son of Man and the Son of Righteousness, who is able to restore unto you those healing mercies and those comforting hopes that he is mindful of you in your pathway.

And so he had to declare unto them how the Lord had brought him out of prison. It isn't what you and I think we can do, especially in the religious field.

We can do nothing unless the Lord indicts prayer, unless he shows us what to do. And this is, I feel, where many are mistaken today.

They think have some right, some gift. But it's the spirit of truth is the gift, the spirit of faith. And now we need the Lord to give us that faith to break through these iron bars and these brazen gates, to grant the blessing from on high, for him to open the windows of heaven and pour down a blessing such as there shall not be room enough to receive it, but to rend the heart of marble of your heart and mine and bring you into that peaceful moment when Jesus himself draws near, comforts your heart, tells you that all this has been done for you, his suffering, his intense suffering on Calvary's tree, gospel liberty.

So Peter continued knocking and I believe you will find that there's a way made for you where there seemed to be no way as you're given that grace to honour him and serve him with reverence and godly fear.

[10 : 25] And you see it won't be a great show because here was Peter revealing himself to these other disciples and to his brethren.

but he beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace. He didn't want a great show in this religion, but he was acknowledging with him within.

He didn't want to tell the world, but he wanted to tell his brethren of these wonderful things that the Lord had done for his soul and also made that way of escape and spared his life.

And oh, how solemnly Herod, you know, oh, we see here the solemn death of Herod, Herod arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne and made an oration unto them.

And the people gave a shout, saying, it is the voice of a God and not a man. And immediately he was struck down. Oh, Father solemnly, you see, he was touching one of the Lord's anointed.

[11 : 37] Though you and I may feel and fear being persecuted and tried by the enemies of the truth, oh, how, you know, the Lord can remove them.

Those stones of stumbling, those rocks of offense, oh, solemnly, thing, isn't it, when we are brought to realize the solemn power of God.

And you see, those that want to destroy you, those that want to mock you, those that want to laugh you amid a scorn, oh, how we realize the solemnity of God, that cuts this and that one down, that has touched the Lord's anointed.

And so we do have to pray, don't we, Lord, keep me, keep me from evil, but ever keep me knocking upon the door, that I pray daily to be kept by the power of God, kept faithful to thy word, kept faithful in my walk and my conduct, that I live honestly and honorably and uprightly before men, and ever desiring for that closer walk with God, that calm with heavenly frame, that light that shines upon the road, that leads us to the Lamb.

You see here then the purposes of God, this blessed Peter who was enabled and as we read later on of his epistles, how that he knew what it was to walk by faith and not by sight.

[13 : 21] And so as we would look to the Lord to loose us and let us go, we need him to set us at gospel liberty, we need him to speak to our hearts, to guide us by his counsel, we need him, he's more needful by father, nor his comforts are, and I believe we should be in those situations at times when he is the most needful thing that we need, as it was with Peter I believe, but the angel was sent, and the Lord doesn't leave his people comfortless, as they have given that grace to honour him, so he will honour them, and they pray that they are not left to despise him or bring shame upon his dear head.

And so you see how the Lord he had appointed this way of escape you see when the Lord's people have need, his goodness will find it a way.

And when such as Peter were in that state, or how he set before him an open door, no man could shut it. It cost the lives of those jailers, the keepers, but you see this is the way the Lord removes those obstacles in our way, those that are opposed to us and against the truth.

And all how we need the Lord to continually keep us humble, make us to tremble at the thoughts of what he is able to do, his almighty power, can arrest, can remove, move, and take away those offending parties that might have offended you and me.

And not that we would willingly see them departed, but it's God's sovereignty. And so we have to pray without ceasing, Lord, help me still to knock upon mercy's door, because if anyone needs mercy, it's me, and you'll feel it personally, I believe, through life's journey, looking unto Jesus, realizing what a great sacrifice he has made to open up a new and living way for such sinners as you and me, and still keep looking and still keep knocking, that the Lord would open the windows of heaven, pour down a blessing, to enrich your soul and mine with tokens of his love.

[16 : 08] And we need our bosoms to glow with love to this dear Redeemer, who has redeemed his sheep from the curse of the broken Lord. And those sheep of his, as we often refer to it, they hear his voice, and they follow him.

And so Peter was called for the work, and yet he came to this place where they shut him up in prison because of the preaching of the word.

And we see here, but after this the angel of the Lord smote Herod, and he was eating the worms and gave it to the ghost, but the word of God grew and multiplied.

And this is something that concerns us in our day, as to the word growing and being multiplied, where it seems to, as we view it, as we view it, seems to get limited and altered and changed by man, but the word of the Lord will endure unto the end.

This is the word by which the gospel is preached unto you, and though all flesh is as grass, the grass wither, and the flower faded, the word of the Lord shall stand.

[17 : 20] And so we look to the Lord to grant us that exercise in wrestling prayer, to continue knocking, and to, as we said earlier, to go again those seven times, to see that size, that cloud, the size of a man's hand.

And oh, wouldn't we rejoice in these parts to see more of the rain clouds, the rain clouds drop in that rain upon these parts of the earth that are so parched.

We know God is a sovereign, rain to fall upon one city and not on another, but he is after all too wise to be mistaken, too good to be unkind, where he causes the rain and the dew to come.

But all to be found and ever pressing to the throne of grace, calling upon him, casting your care and your burden upon him, living that life of faith by prayer, waiting and watching daily the posts of his doors, Lord, show me what I have to do.

When everything else fails to be found waiting upon the Lord, to be given that spirit of courage to still continue, to still continue, he said, be of good courage, be of good courage, and he will strengthen your weak hands and mine, strengthen the weak hands, confirm the feeble knees, say, never fearful not, fear not, all these fear nots, they need applying to yourself, we need to meditate upon this prayer, the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man, availing of you, you need that righteousness, we've got to die, shall we have that imputed righteousness of Christ, ere we die, what a great need to be knocking for this, to give him no rest until he establishes your praise in the earth, to establish and settle you in the truth as it is in

[19 : 43] Jesus, to feel this, thou, oh Christ, art all I want, one of all our wants, is Christ, should I say at the head of the list, I want to speak with reverence, I want to speak with reverence, is it, thou, oh Christ, art all I want, all in, all in thee I find, we need to be there, we need him to increase, we must decrease, we need then to continue knocking for this, knocking upon mercy's door, ah, we look then and see the Lord and realise how needful he is to grant you that grace, yes, we shan't be blowing the trumpet at this corner of the street, will we, but we need the Lord, don't we, to open that door, for him to say I have set before an open door and no man can shut it, what a mercy, that way to heaven, not the way that seemeth right, in the other ways of death, that way that the

Lord has ordained for you and me to walk in, who tells us plainly, I am the way, the truth and the life, no man cometh unto the Father but by me, but all that the Father given me shall come, you know, you won't hold back when you're all brought into these situations at times, why you groan being, but I believe he squeezes prayer to your soul, and it will the Lord help me, we read it Sunday, Lord help me, deep seated troubles, things that seem impossible for you and me, and it feels impossible for you and me to continue at times, but there's still that errand to the throne of grace, casting all your care upon him for he caring for you, and why has he applied this desire to your soul?

because he has a love toward you, when we think of the love of Christ, how great it is, and having loved his own what are in the world, he loved them to the end, and he will love you to the end, because he's loved you eternally, privileged soul, chosen vessels, bought with a price, loved with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness he's draw them, it's a darksome path for Peter, it was a tribulation for him, it must have been very fearful to him in the flesh, but he had that faith, and he was obedient to the angel, and the messenger of the covenant came, and are not his angels ministering spirits, we read, they're ministering spirits, we read of in Hebrews, and this is our mercy, ministering spirits, to minister under the people that

God has chosen, and eternally loved, and all, if you've had a little touch and a little taste, you'll go again, you want more of these visits, more frequent, let thy visits be, and let them longer last, make haste, O God, you ventured us, ask him, make haste, O God, I am in such a state of mind, I know not what to do, but I would lift up mine eyes unto thee, and knock, knock on mercy's door, and plead that thou wouldst open the door, and come in and suck with me, and me with thee, that's what we need, don't we, that close contact with the Lord, that union and communion with him from off the mercy seat, and oh, it's a prayer without ceasing, praying, when, when wilt thou come,

Lord, and confirm my soul with a real sign following, thou knowest my desires, fulfill those righteous desires, and he will fulfill the desires of the righteous, and ye not fail them, nor forsake them, in spite of your trials and mine, in spite of the enemy of your souls, that comes in like a flood, the Lord comes at that appointed hour, and makes a way of escape for you where there seemed to be no way, and he said, thy shoes shall be on as brass, as thy days demand, so shall thy strength be, it's a mighty battle, fighting the good fight of faith, that we might lay hold on eternal life, but remember this, the battle is not yours, it's God, stand still and see the salvation of your God, see the deliverances, see the escapes you've had in life's journey, when you've looked back and said, you know,

[25 : 21] I might have been severely injured or killed on that occasion, but the Lord delivered you, the Lord was your protector, preserver and keeper, and you wonder sometimes why and wherefore the Lord was so mindful of you, such a rebellious wretch, but he had a purpose, he has a purpose for each of his people, to put them in the prison house, put them in the stocks, make them conscious, that only the Lord can deliver them, it's thy whole dependence on me fixed, great at all thy worthless schemes of mine to mix, but venture to be not, oh how we have to pray don't we, for the Lord and his mercy, to grant us this opening of the door, to make that way for you, you see it's a way of access isn't it a door, way of access, the entrance of his word too is he opens the door of your heart and applies the word with power and it'll stick fast, if the

Lord applies the word it'll stick fast, you may lose the sweetness and the power of it, but you read it again, and he puts you in remembrance as you remember that spot and that place where he spake to your soul, it was the Lord speaking, he says this is the way walk in it when you turn to the right or to the left, oh what a glorious sovereign protector we have, unseen, yet ever at hand, may we ever trust him then for his faithfulness, may we ever remember that there is a throne of grace, and when most we need his helping hand his friend is always near, with heaven and earth his command he waits to answer prayer, so we have needed patience for him to answer that prayer, that great mountain before you that he's able to make a play, and so we pray do we not without ceasing that he would show us what we have to do, and when they'd opened the door and saw him they were astonished, and you'll be astonished

I believe sometimes that the deliverances you've had, if you're one of the Lord's people, you look back and see, acknowledge all the way the Lord your God has led you to prove you to know what's in your heart whether you keep his commandments or no, and you've had to go haven't you in the strength of the Lord, and what power does he give, and as you honour him so he honours you, and so you have to wait for the Lord to be gracious, to confirm yourself, to uphold you by his spirit, and all have this exercise or to continue knocking, there will be a continuance of these errands of the throne of grace, so I said earlier you won't pray once and leave it there, the matter weighs so heavily upon your conscience that you cannot but keep crying, you may not open your mouth but you're continually knocking upon the door of mercy because you're looking to the Lord, oh Lord in mercy do appear, you go on crying Lord make a way, he puts prayer, he puts words in your mouth what you are to ask him for, and oh what a privilege that is, and when you get the answers, why it'll melt the hardest heart down when the Lord answers some petition, you wanted the Lord to make it plain, crooked things straight, rough places plain, darkness like before you,

Peter would know that language wouldn't he, but through mercy he was brought through, and oh how he was enabled to, he said go and show these things unto James who had bred him, and he departed and went into another place, so you see, all for the purpose and the purpose of the gospel, was Peter brought through that exercise, and so with you and me, all brought into those situations, that you might praise and bless him, and speak well of him, in the wonders that God alone has done, and you trust will yet do for your never dying soul, to teach you to do his will, and lead you in these plain paths, because of your enemies, what a saviour he is, and what a mercy, and as I say, the solemnity at the end of this chapter, when Herod was struck down, acting as though he was God, cut down in a moment of time, and as they said, it was a voice of a

God and not of a man, and immediately the angel spoke to him because he gave not God the glory, or where we ever want to give God the glory, in our poor attempts to speak to you, and also your walk and your conduct, as you realise what a sinner you are, and come so short daily, but unto you therefore that fear my name, shall the son of righteousness arise with healing in his will, and this is all you pray for, Lord may I hear thy voice, may I hear thy pardoning voice, may I know that my sins are pardoned, may I know that the blood of Christ has cleansed me from all sin, and help me to walk in thy fear, and humble myself before the almighty God, that I might be exalted in due time, casting all my care upon him.

[31 : 42] Let's look to Jesus, kind and strong, mercy, joy my power. But Peter continued knocking, and when they had opened the door and saw him, they were astonished.

May the Lord cause you and me to have eyes to see that he does hear, does answer prayer, as we would commit our way to him, trust also in him, and find him bringing it to pass, those ips that concern you and me, which are as mountains before you, and to know that he says, I am the Lord I change now, therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.

Here we believe it. May the Lord bless our few remarks and pardon all of this. For his name's sake, Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.