
*Witness Unhindered:
“Power for the Powerless”
Acts 12: 1-24*

Thoughts to Shape and Spark Discussion:

“And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.” - 1 Corinthians 2: 1-5

“If God were not angry at injustice and deception and did not make a final end to violence, that God would not be worthy of worship . . . If I don’t believe that there is a God who will eventually put all things right, I will take up the sword and will be sucked into the endless vortex of retaliation. Only if I am sure that there’s a God who will right all wrongs and settle all accounts perfectly do I have the power to refrain.” - Miroslav Volf

*“Why is power a gift? Because power is for flourishing. When power is used well, people and the whole cosmos come more alive to what they were meant to be. And flourishing is the test of power . . . I pray that when you put [this book] down, you will be one step closer to the flourishing for which you were created, and that as we, together, make something of the world, the cosmos itself would groan a bit less and sing a bit more, as the whole creation awaits the revealing of the children of God.” - Andy Crouch, *Playing God**

Themes and Questions to Guide Reflection and Response:

- What from the Scripture passage or the sermon made an impression upon you? Are there lingering questions to be answered or rabbit trails to be followed for you?
- Where have you experienced powerlessness in your life - relationally? Emotionally? Medically? Financially? Vocationally? Spiritually?
 - What did you turn to for strength or help?
 - What “worked”, and what did not? Why?
- How are you tempted to ignore or minimize your powerlessness? What provides a sense of strength and capability for you?
 - Why are we typically allergic to admitting our need for help or owning our powerlessness?
 - What are you asking to deliver you, empower you, save you?
- Why did the believers bow the knee in prayer to God and ask for his power?
 - Are you quick to pray? What gets in the way of bowing the knee in humble reliance upon divine grace for you?
- There is a tension between God’s deliverance of Peter and James’ demise in the passage.
 - How does the ultimate Deliverance of Jesus’ triumphant return help us endure and make sense of the atrocities we suffer with no apparent deliverance from God?
- Herod meets a swift and decisive judgment from God for his blasphemy.
 - How does God’s judgment function both as a warning and an encouragement?