



BIBLE RADIO PRODUCTIONS

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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

A2098 ~ Peter Delivered from Prison.

Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.

In 1816, a young black preacher by the name of Charles Bowles preached his first sermon. Although his ministry soon resulted in converts to Christianity, it also resulted in controversy. A mob secretly plotted to attack him at his next worship service and drown him in a nearby lake by tying him to a wooden horse and pushing the horse into the water. However, Charles heard about the plot.

Before the meeting started, the enemy prepared their weapons for warfare while Charles spent the time in prayer to prepare his heart for whatever might happen. The service started and the mob was seated in front of him waiting for a signal to start the attack.

Charles read from Matthew, Chapter 23: "You are nothing but snakes..! How can you escape going to hell?" He preached so intensely that no one dared to move. He finished by saying, "I am informed there are people here who have agreed to carry me to the lake and put me in. I make no resistance. But I have one request – that on the way to the lake, the assembly sing hymns. Glory be to God! Yes, we will have music. Glory to God!"

This was said in his powerful voice with such confidence in God that it went like an electric shock through the congregation and produced an effect on the mob like a lightning bolt falling from heaven. The mob was completely overcome and the men fell down on the floor. Some months later, those men intent on taking his life did meet Charles at the lake, where Charles baptised them as followers of the Lord Jesus.

In today's *Bible Adventure*, the Apostle Peter was under a death sentence in prison again. The last time this happened, an angel brought Peter and his companion John out of the prison. But this time, the guards were confident that Peter would get no chance to escape.

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Peter's trial by Herod was delayed to let the Passover celebrations finish and many visitors in Jerusalem return home to other parts of the country and world. In Acts, Chapter 5, Peter and John had been imprisoned for their preaching at the Temple. On that occasion, God's angel released them from the prison and instructed them to keep on preaching. The prison seemed secure but the prisoners couldn't be found. It was then reported that Peter and John were back preaching again at the Temple. The officials weren't bold enough to arrest them once more but asked them to come before the council. No explanation seemed to be given to the guards as to how the men had escaped.

In Chapter 12, Peter was again locked up in prison with the prospect of being put to death the following day. What was he doing? He was sleeping peacefully with each hand chained to a soldier while guards stood around watching locked doors. There was no way of escape without a miracle from God. Peter wasn't afraid or anxious about what the next day would bring. He trusted that the Lord Jesus knew what He was doing and tomorrow might be the time of Peter's call home to his Master in heaven. Meanwhile the church was praying constantly for Peter.

Once again, God sent an angel to wake Peter up and safely escort him out of the prison. It was all God's doing. The chains fell from Peter's wrists and the prison doors opened by themselves to let the angel and Peter pass through. When they had walked down a street, the angel left Peter to find his own way to Mary's house. Mary was the mother of John Mark.

Peter thought at first that he was having a vision but after being left alone in a familiar street, he realised that God had again saved his life, this time from the hands of Herod. He knocked on the door of Mary's house to interrupt the prayer meeting being held there.

The Lord Jesus said in John, Chapter 5, that His Father is always working and Jesus too, must work. Those who have little knowledge of the Scriptures don't realise and understand that God is very busy at work in the world all the time. Some of that work is related to the prayers of godly people who bring many requests for help for others.

An experiment was done regarding people who had open heart surgery. The patients were divided into two groups. The names of those in one group were given to people who faithfully prayed for them but weren't told details of their problems. The other group was the control group and no one prayed for these patients. It was conclusively proved that the patients prayed for became well quicker and with fewer complications. Some city dwellers will pray every time they hear an ambulance siren. This is a sign that someone is in serious trouble. Asking for God's mercy on the people in the ambulance is one way to help, even if no details at all are known.

There are many accounts of answered prayer. Here's one from the missionary-to-China, Hudson Taylor. After finishing his medical studies, Taylor left England for his first missionary trip to China in 1853. Close to the coast of New Guinea, north of Australia the ship he was travelling in looked like it would become wrecked on the shallow coral reefs. Those on board the ship could see cannibals on the seashore lighting fires and making ready for a feast.

There was no wind and the waves were taking the ship closer and closer to the shore. Four of those on board were Christians and agreed to go to their cabins and pray to God in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to send a breeze immediately. Taylor prayed to the Lord and explained that he was just on his way to China, that God had sent Taylor and he couldn't get there if the ship was wrecked and he was killed. Taylor wanted to ask God for a breeze to save the ship, but he felt so confident about it that he didn't ask.

Taylor went back onto the deck and tried to persuade the chief mate-in-charge to start moving the sails but the godless man refused. When the sails did stir in a slight breeze, the sailors set to work to manage them but a breeze came before they were fully ready. The ship's captain saw that their prayers had been answered and the crew praised God for saving them from near disaster.

Later when Hudson Taylor was writing about this and other such experiences, he said that God had encouraged him to bring every type of need to Him in prayer, and to expect that God would honour the name of the Lord Jesus and give the help which each emergency needed.

Prayer is the lifeline to God for believers as individuals. However, God sets preconditions. In Psalm 66, it says: "If I had not confessed the sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened." If we retain the love of sin in our hearts, sin will spoil the comfort and success of prayer. When believers meet together for a prayer session each one needs to have confessed their own wrongdoing silently before God first.

Jesus said in Mark, Chapter 11: "When you pray and ask for something, believe that you have received it, and you will be given whatever you ask for. And when you stand and pray, forgive anything you may have against anyone, so that your Father in heaven will forgive the wrongs you have done." God wants us to believe in Him and His word. This shows God that we trust Him.

There are a number of different types of prayer listed in the Scriptures. The believers at Mary's house were saying prayers of agreement. In Matthew, Chapter 18, the Lord Jesus said: "Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them." The Lord Jesus also taught us to pray for a blessing for our enemies and not to hate them.

The Apostle Paul in I Timothy, Chapter 2, says: "First of all, then, I urge that petitions, prayers, requests and thanksgiving be offered to God for all people." Some other types of prayer are faith, worship, dedication and intercession.

How do we know that God is listening to us when we pray? In I John 5, it says: "This is the assurance we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know He hears us, whatever we ask, we know we have what we ask of Him." When we read the Bible and we find out if what we are asking is in the will of God, we mix that with our faith, ask in Christ's name and are answered.

Do you keep a prayer diary? While some prayers are answered very quickly, like that one for the safety for the ship Hudson Taylor was travelling in, others might take years to be answered. In a prayer diary, the long-term prayers may be recorded and dated, as well as the date that God answered the prayers. We humans seem to forget so easily and often don't give thanks to God for all that He has done for us.

In the tough times, we need to remember the words of II Corinthians, Chapter 5, Verse 7 – "For we walk by faith, not by sight."

The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.

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