

# king's chapel

## *Community Group Discussion Guide*

Week of March 2, 2014

**This Week's Focus:** God's sovereignty over life and death is affirmed through James' death, Peter's deliverance and Herod's destruction and judgment.

**This Week's Text:** Acts 12

*Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his Anointed, saying, "Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us." He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision. **Psalm 2:1-4***

*"Peter's experience reacquainted the embattled church with the true nature of her strength: no matter how grim life might appear, God and his angels are present and ministering, and he can deliver us anytime he sees fit! **R. Kent Hughes***

*I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. **Jesus Christ***

**Related Texts:** Acts 4:27-28, 4:36-37; Deuteronomy 32:39; Matthew 20:20-23; Daniel 2:21, 4:17, 4:28-37; Proverbs 21:1; Psalm 33:10-11

### **Observations and Questions for Discussion:**

- How has God spoken to you regarding the sermon and/or text?
- What do verses 1-3 tell us about Herod? What seems to motivate him?
- What do we know about James? What can we learn about God who allowed his execution?
- God is sovereign and good, yet the world doesn't seem to reflect this reality. Life often seems chaotic and cruel.
  - When are you tempted to doubt God's goodness and sovereignty over the world?
  - When are you tempted to doubt God's goodness and sovereignty over your own life?
  - How do you handle these situations? What helps you to get through them?

- Why do you think Luke includes this passage in his narrative? What point does it serve?
- God does not give us explicit reasons why he spared Peter but allowed James to die.
  - What reasons for God's actions are not possible?
- What does Peter's deep sleep on the eve of his execution tell us about his faith?
- If you were imprisoned and expecting to be martyred the very next day, how do you think you would spend your last night in jail?
- Are you able to rest in God's sovereignty and goodness, regardless of the outcome of your circumstances in life?
- Discuss the scene in verses 12-17. How do you imagine this scene? What's humorous or ironic about it?
- Before we judge, let's relate. Have you ever prayed, even fervently, and then were utterly amazed when God answered your prayer?
- Why do you think Peter fled Jerusalem rather than return to the synagogues and streets witnessing about Christ as he had done before in Acts 4 and 5?
- Read Isaiah 42:8. Discuss Herod's self-exaltation.
- Are there ways in which we are guilty of robbing God of His glory?
- Discuss the contrast of Herod's destruction with verse 24: "But the word of God increased."
  - What do you think Luke wants to show or teach us about God, the Church, our witness, and our community?

### **Gospel Celebration:**

- God's sovereignty provided for our salvation.
- The Gospel reassures us that whether in life or death, we are victorious through Christ!

### **Prayer Focus:**

- Be open and willing to share Christ with whomever God calls you to.
- Rest in His love and sovereignty.

### **Next Week's Text:** Acts 13:1-12