

Devoted and Unshaken: The Book of Acts
“Overcoming Opposition” (#13) Acts 12
Cornerstone Church of Poway
Pastor Ed Turley
July 20th, 2025

Sermon Teaching

Big Idea: When opposition presses in, God's power breaks out through prayer.

How Do You Overcome Opposition?

1. Overcome Opposition With Prayer

About that time King Herod Agrippa began to persecute some believers in the church.

² He had the apostle James (John's brother) killed with a sword. ³ When Herod saw how much this pleased the Jewish people, he also arrested Peter. (This took place during the Passover celebration.) ⁴ Then he imprisoned him, placing him under the guard of four squads of four soldiers each. Herod intended to bring Peter out for public trial after the Passover. ⁵ But while Peter was in prison, the church prayed very earnestly for him.

Acts 12:1-5 (NLT2)

Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.

James 5:16 (NLT2)

2. Trust God's Power Over Circumstances

⁶ The night before Peter was to be placed on trial, he was asleep, fastened with two chains between two soldiers. Others stood guard at the prison gate.

⁷ Suddenly, there was a bright light in the cell, and an angel of the Lord stood before Peter. The angel struck him on the side to awaken him and said, "Quick! Get up!" And the chains fell off his wrists. ⁸ Then the angel told him, "Get dressed and put on your sandals." And he did. "Now put on your coat and follow me," the angel ordered. ⁹ So Peter left the cell, following the angel. But all the time he thought it was a vision. He didn't realize it was actually happening. ¹⁰ They passed the first and second guard posts and came to the iron gate leading to the city, and this opened for them all by itself. So they passed through and started walking down the street, and then the angel suddenly left him.

Acts 12:6-10 (NLT2)

3. Pray Believing God's Purpose Will Prevail in Spite Of Opposition

¹¹ Peter finally came to his senses. "It's really true!" he said. "The Lord has sent his angel and saved me from Herod and from what the Jewish leaders had planned to do to me!"

¹² When he realized this, he went to the home of Mary, the mother of John Mark, where many were gathered for prayer. ¹³ He knocked at the door in the gate, and a servant girl named Rhoda came to open it. ¹⁴ When she recognized Peter's voice, she was so overjoyed that, instead of opening the door, she ran back inside and told everyone, "Peter is standing at the door!" ¹⁵ "You're out of your mind!" they said. When she insisted, they decided, "It must be his angel." ¹⁶ Meanwhile, Peter continued knocking. When they finally opened the door and saw him, they were amazed. ¹⁷ He motioned for them to quiet down and told them how the Lord had led him out of prison. "Tell James and the other brothers what happened," he said. And then he went to another place. **Acts 12:11-17 (NLT2)**

¹⁸ At dawn there was a great commotion among the soldiers about what had happened to Peter. ¹⁹ Herod Agrippa ordered a thorough search for him. When he couldn't be found, **Herod interrogated** the guards and sentenced them to death. Afterward Herod left Judea to stay in Caesarea for a while. ²⁰ Now Herod was very **angry** with the people of Tyre and Sidon. So they sent a delegation to make **peace** with him because their cities were dependent upon Herod's country for food. The delegates won the support of Blastus, Herod's personal assistant, ²¹ and an appointment with Herod was granted. When the day arrived, Herod put on his royal robes, sat on his throne, and made a speech to them. ²² The people gave him a **great ovation**, shouting, "It's the voice of a god, not of a man!" ²³ Instantly, an angel of **the Lord struck Herod with a sickness**, because he accepted the people's worship instead of giving the glory to God. So he was consumed with worms and died. ²⁴ **Meanwhile, the word of God continued to spread, and there were many new believers.** ²⁵ When Barnabas and Saul had finished their mission to Jerusalem, they returned, taking John Mark with them. **Acts 12:18-25 (NLT2)**

- Are you trusting God to open the doors you can't?

My Next Right Step:

- [] Pray for boldness in prayer.
- [] Ask God to break chains and open doors.
- [] Trust God's providence even when answers are delayed.
- [] Follow Jesus in Believer's Baptism July 27 at the Turley's

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Talk It Over

Big Idea: When opposition presses in, God's power breaks out through prayer.

Icebreaker: (5–10 minutes)

“Have you ever locked yourself out of somewhere important—house, car, office? What happened?”

“Share a time you felt stuck in a difficult situation—how did you eventually come through it?”

How Do You Overcome Opposition?

1. Overcome Opposition With Prayer

Read **Acts 12:1–19** and **James 5:16**

What does “earnest prayer” look like in your life or in the life of your church?

How do these verses encourage you to pray even when the situation seems hopeless?

Who or what is God prompting you to pray for earnestly?

2. Trust God’s Power Over Circumstances (Acts 12:6–10)

Why do you think Peter was able to sleep soundly the night before his possible execution?

What are some "chains" people today feel trapped by?

Read **Isaiah 43:1-2** – How does this verse speak into seasons of opposition?

How can we pray for each other in these areas?

Read: **Isaiah 43:1-2**

What comfort does this verse bring in the middle of a storm?

Analogy Discussion: “God doesn’t need keys to open doors—He is the key.”
What doors are you trusting God to open?

3. Pray Believing God’s Purpose Will Prevail in Spite Of Opposition

Read **Acts 12:11-17**

Why do you think the early church was so surprised when Peter showed up at their door?

What does this teach us about how God answers prayer?

Read **Acts 12:18-25**

What do you learn about the fate of those who do evil and are full of pride?

What do you learn about church growth under the pressure of persecution? (24)

Read **Romans 8:31** – How does this truth strengthen your faith in the face of opposition?

What “closed doors” are you currently trusting God to open? How can the group pray with you in that?

Group Prayer Time (10 minutes):

Pray for one another to:

- Persevere in prayer during seasons of pressure.
- Trust in God’s power even when circumstances seem impossible.
- Believe that God's purposes cannot be stopped by any opposition.

Optional Weekly Challenge:

Set aside 10 minutes each day this week for earnest prayer—either for someone facing opposition or for a “locked door” situation in your life.

Share a praise next time you gather.