

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



# Shepherd's Path

## A Shepherd's Personal Devotions

### A Miraculous Church Series, Lesson 57

**Lesson Title:** A Miraculous Escape - Peter

**Take Home Point:** In tough times, call on God to rescue you.

#### **Warm-Up:**

I recently had the opportunity to spend several months overseas for my job. As I was making preparations to live in a foreign country, I was given phone numbers and addresses of people to reach in case I needed help. Do you think I was given the contact information for the governor of the state I was leaving, or perhaps my local automobile assistance organization? Of course not! I obtained the U.S. embassy information for the country in which I would be residing. On the other hand, if my car broke down on the road, would I attempt to reach the U.S. ambassador for a foreign nation? No, that wouldn't do me any good at all. I would call my auto assistance club or perhaps 911 in an emergency. In each situation, I would call on those who had the authority and power to secure my rescue.

**Read:** Acts 12:1-18; 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 12:7-10

#### **Observation (What happened?):**

Why did Herod arrest Peter for trial?

What was the church doing while Peter was imprisoned?

#### **Interpretation (What does it mean?):**

What purpose do you think God had in rescuing Peter even though James had been martyred?

What does it mean that God's "power is strongest when you are weak?"

#### **Insight:**

Immediately after this event, Peter drops from sight in Luke's narrative. He is mentioned only once more in Acts, encouraging the believers to accept God's grace extended to Gentiles. He continued to spread the gospel; the New Testament includes two letters he wrote to Jew and Gentile Christians alike. Why, after his miraculous escape, does the focus shift so dramatically away from the man most visible as the leader of the new sect? We don't know for certain, but we do know that Peter continued to be used by God. He still led the church (Acts 15:7), he made mistakes (Galatians 2:11-16), he lived as hard as he could for the Lord and encouraged others to do the same (1 and 2 Peter). He was martyred by being crucified upside-down because he believed he was not worthy to die in the same way as his Lord. He recognized God's rescue and wrote of it: *"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade..."* (1 Peter 1:3-4 NIV)

#### **Application (What does it mean to me?):**

From what prison do you need to be rescued? How are you praying about it?

What weakness do you need to give to God so you can experience his power and strength?