

"There is death, there is life" Acts 12:1-12

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1It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them. **2**He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword. **3**When he saw that this met with approval among the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also. This happened during the Festival of Unleavened Bread. **4**After arresting him, he put him in prison, handing him over to be guarded by four squads of four soldiers each. Herod intended to bring him out for public trial after the Passover.

5So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him.

6The night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries stood guard at the entrance. **7**Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. "Quick, get up!" he said, and the chains fell off Peter's wrists.

8Then the angel said to him, "Put on your clothes and sandals." And Peter did so. "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me," the angel told him. **9**Peter followed him out of the prison, but he had no idea that what the angel was doing was really happening; he thought he was seeing a vision. **10**They passed the first and second guards and came to the iron gate leading to the city. It opened for them by itself, and they went through it. When they had walked the length of one street, suddenly the angel left him.

11Then Peter came to himself and said, "Now I know without a doubt that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from Herod's clutches and from everything the Jewish people were hoping would happen."

12When this had dawned on him, he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying.

Hallelujah!

I talked a little with my daughter.

Hey. Is God really there?

If there is a God, why doesn't he listen to my prayers?

I pray to God for what I want, but God never gives me.

I'm praying a lot, but God won't give me. Santa will give me a present.

Doesn't God like me?
Because God created us, right?
And if you pray, God will give it to you, right?
Why doesn't God listen to my prayers?
I'm saying I love God.

So I said.

If you keep praying loudly every week in the front seat of the church, you may be given it.
And my daughter says, but it's Corona, I can't go every week.

Well, let's get into the main subject aside from that story.
Corona has killed more than 15,000 people in Japan.
And in the world, more than 4.4 million people have died.
In World War II, Japan killed 3.1 million people in six years and 64 million people worldwide.
In Corona, the virus afflicts people all over the world, but in war, people afflict people.
It was a worship service that reminded me of the anniversary of the end of the war last week,
but we want to create peace.

In this article as well, there are people who die and people who live.

Peter lives in the death of James.

I read the commentary, but it was concluded that there was a divine will beyond human knowledge.

However, in the continuation, it is written as follows.

In verse 5, the church offered an enthusiastic prayer for him.

That's why Peter was saved. The power of prayer is great, so let us join in prayer. And other commentaries and preachers' sermons described the same thing.

Dedicated prayer will save life! !

By the way, did the church not pray eagerly for James when he was captured?

Was James killed with a sword because he didn't have a keen prayer?

If there was an ardent prayer, why did James die?

If we try to find this answer, we cannot find it.

So who was this person named James?

James is said to be the son of Zebedee and the brother of John.

I think that James had emotional words and deeds so much that he was said to be a child of thunder with John.

Peter, James and John. These three were so close to Jesus that they were said to be Jesus' aides.

There are several passages in the Bible where Jesus called these three people and went with them.

1. a scene to revive a 12-year-old daughter who manages a synagogue
- 2, a high mountain climbed to meet the great old Moses,
3. These three people went to the important scene of the prayer of Gethsemane, the place where they went to pray before the crucifixion.

Among the 12 disciples, James had a lot of days spent with Jesus as well as Peter, and I think he knew what Jesus was cherishing.

And when Jesus died on the cross, James and John's mother Mary were there. This is James who was an important person. As many as Peter would have prayed when James was captured.

They know that a Christian named Stephen was killed by stoning about eight years ago, so I think they prayed more.

However, despite many of those prayers, James died.

Sin causes us to die. But the Lord guides us no matter what the path is.

When the body dies, it's over. However, faith is inherited even when a person dies.

A person's way of life affects the people involved, even when he or she dies.

I think there was sorrow with James' death. That is why I think the church also offered a prayer of sorrow. I think his brother John and his mother Mary were both sad.

What kind of person did John change into after this event?

An emotional man who is said to be a child of thunder has grown into a person who talks about love.

John's Gospel, John's Letters 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and John's Apocalypse, he has written five books that are indispensable to the Bible.

The Gospel of John is said to have been written around 70 AD, and James's death is said to be around 43 AD, so it is a Gospel written after James's death. He was then exiled, where he is said to be written around the apocalypse. The Gospel of John states that we live even if we die, that Jesus is a child of God, that Jesus is our light, our Savior, and our way to the kingdom of heaven. It is written powerfully. Through James's death, he found out with the help of the Holy Spirit that the Lord Jesus was the way and led us to heaven, even in sorrow, and resumed in the kingdom of heaven. I think I have found hope.

Through the death of someone close to us, like him, we can rely on hope beyond the sadness of death. That is why we show up in our way of life in order to feed on that person's death. We will take over the faith.

Jesus had a similar experience.

Jesus healed many people.

But when John the Baptist died, the Lord did not bring John the Baptist back to life.

If Jesus, I think he was able to come back to life. But he didn't do that.

What did Jesus do when he heard of John's death?

It says at Matthew 14:13:

13When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. **14**When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sickness.

I wonder why Jesus could have prayed for sorrow and rested. But the Lord healed them.

I think this action of Jesus was to keep John in his own heart.

In Luke chapter 7, when John was in prison, John's disciples came to Jesus and delivered the message that John had entrusted to him.

John 7: 20-23

20"You are demon-possessed," the crowd answered. "Who is trying to kill you?"

21Jesus said to them, "I did one miracle, and you are all amazed. **22**Yet, because Moses gave you circumcision (though actually it did not come from Moses, but from the patriarchs), you circumcise a boy on the Sabbath. **23**Now if a boy can be circumcised on the Sabbath so that the law of Moses may not be broken, why are you angry with me for healing a man's whole body on the Sabbath? **24**Stop judging by mere appearances, but instead judge correctly."

After John's death, Jesus went to a lonely place, thought of John, and put it in the hands of God.

And he remembered what he had told him and reached out to the crowd in front of him to fulfill his mission. John's death became a springboard on the way to Jesus' cross.

In the same way, James' death was an opportunity for John to know the heart of Jesus. When John recalled the days he spent with James, Jesus was there. When I remembered Jesus vividly, there was James. And when John recalled Jesus' words, he knew more clearly that there was a point beyond death, and I think he had hope. James' death and life became a stepping stone for John's love evangelist.

2. The church cannot be alone. The church exerts its power with gatherings. The church says it is for the world and for others. It is for the sadness of others and for the salvation of others.

Just as Jesus was sent to the world, as Jesus snuggled up to the weak.
Just as Jesus wore weaknesses and died for those who had weaknesses.
The church is also dispatched to the world.
That is why the church can be close and pray for others.
Church prayer is good to pray alone, but it is also good to pray with others.

¹²When this had dawned on him, he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying.

May Peter be led to the Lord at the same time as Peter's liberation.

Perhaps they remembered what James and Peter had left for us and prayed for the Lord's guidance to the souls of James and Peter.

When John the Baptist died, Jesus did not revive him.
He did not lead him out of prison.
However, through the imprisonment of John the Baptist, the ministry of Jesus began.
With John's death, Jesus set out on the way to the cross.

Even when a wonderful believer named Stephen was imprisoned, he was not derived from prison.

And, through the death of Stephen, Paul, who wanted to persecute Christianity, became an opportunity to be born as a great evangelist.

Did James' death also affect anyone?

Through the death of James, the heart of the church became a more praying group. I think James was a prayer as the background for the church that became a more enthusiastic prayer group.

Through the death of Jesus, the disciples felt sadness, and with the resurrection of Jesus, they remembered the way of life of Jesus and realized that they could live beyond death and spread it to the world. ..

Through the death and resurrection of Jesus, we may have the hope of living even if we die.

The death of a person affects someone.

The world says that when a person dies, it becomes nothing, when a person dies, it's all over.

But Christianity says that death can also be beneficial.

Recalling the lives of the dead, we say that we can inherit our faith and live so that we can share our lives when we are resurrected.

I will talk about a woman. She was the first woman in the Bible distribution group to become the branch chief.

In her family, her husband was also the representative of a Bible distribution group. But only her son was not a Christian. Her husband dies and she also dies. Her dementia begins five years before she dies.

But she didn't stop praying. She kept praying for the salvation of her son and for her ministry. But she ended her life without seeing her son become a Christian. But after she died and had her funeral, her son went to church. And he became a Christian. He donated 10 million yen to the church as an interest-free loan for children so that people suffering from poverty could have more opportunities to study.

She died, but when the church remembered her living testimony in the form of a funeral and prayed, the soul of her son, for whom she had been praying, was led to God.

That Peter lived. That James died. This is something that only God can know.

However, even if there is something unreasonable due to the attack of sin and the attack of Corona,

We can benefit from death because there is death and resurrection of Christ.

It's really sad that someone close to us dies.

We cry when we remember that person because we have memories of living together.

There will be no such person in the future.

He has no fun, no joy, no nostalgia, no recollections, no one in a relieved place.

We want to touch you. we want to meet you.

Why and why we wanted to be a little closer. we wanted to exchange the final greeting.

Such feelings spring up

But the attack of sin is unreasonable, abrupt, and tries to pull away everything we were touching.

But the Bible promises. The Bible tells us that death does not separate us from the love of Christ, no matter what.

James died and Peter lived. It's an unclear event. It is a questionable event. However, through this event, the church grew into a church that prays enthusiastically, and Christianity spread and grew more worldwide. And back to my first story, in a conversation with my daughter, I said: God gives us the world and gives us a lot of invisible things.

We can't see the air, but we can breathe it. We can't see love either. We can't see faith either. We have no hope of becoming like this in the future. But God gives love, faith, and hope to our hearts. Jesus also gave it to me.

Your father, mom and people around me tell you something that Aru-chan can't see, so Aru-chan feels happy and glad, and in the future you want to marry like your father and mom. And you will know the specific feelings of regret.

Your father, mom, Aru-chan, and everyone have the role of conveying the invisible gifts that God has given us.

We can't even see dead people. But we have the role of conveying the love of the dead, the hope, and the faith.

Let us grow as we pray, remembering those who were called to heaven and walking with those who walked in the valley of death like Peter.

Finally, King Herod Agrippa I, who killed James, died at the end of this chapter 12. In Chapter 12, there is the death of James, and the death of Herod, who killed James.

Herod was struck by the messenger of the Lord. The Bible says he was eaten by insects. According to historian Josephus, the owl then stopped at King Herod, suffering from a stinging pain in his heart, suffering from abdominal pain, and died after five days of critical condition.

King Herod, who killed James, was a man who loved status and honor. The more people tried to worship him as a god, the more he ruled and showed strength. But Herod was killed because he did not glorify God.

We may also have a heart like Herod.

We think this achievement is because we did it

We tend to stick to my position and power.

We care about the reputation and status of the people around us.

We want people's approval rating
We wish there were no threatening beings
Isn't it possible to overlap such a figure with us somehow?
The Gospel of John, whose brother James was killed, says:

16For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. **17**For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

Gospel of John 3: 16-17

God to save King Herod
He sent Jesus.

Even if the messenger of the Lord beats King Herod
God loves King Herod.

There is no limit to God's love.
I don't know if he is in heaven.
However, there is no doubt that he was one who was loved by God .
So in the Gospel of John, he wrote that no one who believes in Him would perish
and that he would have eternal life
Now
It was written in Josephus as follows.

"He admitted that an owl remained on the rope overhead. Obviously it was the joy of the past and the precursor of the coming disaster. The moment he realized it. He felt a stinging pain in his heart, and the severe pain spread throughout his body, and then a tightening pain hit his stomach.

So he wrote and said to his friends.

"I was seen as a god in your eyes, but now it's almost as if I was ordered to die. The goddess of fate has already argued against the false words you called to me earlier. I have been sentenced to death now, called immortality by you. I must accept this decree as God's will. When I think about it, my life is blessed and wonderful. It was a thing. "

While saying this, he suffered even more severe pain. "

— "Jewish Ancient Magazine 6 (Chikuma Gakugei Bunko)" by Flavius Josephus

Herod was also a human being.

Even though he was a king
I thought he was mediocre.

That is why he bears the burden of being a king and has shown off his hard work so as not to be considered mediocre. You can see Herod living as a human being.

But at his end, he said, his life was blessed.

It's the object of God's love.

Summarize.

James's death, Herod's death, and Peter lives. As a result, Christianity became more widespread in the world.

There was a time when Peter hid somewhere so that he would not be exposed to Herod after he was saved, but I think he was alive in the love of the Lord and prayed for the church.

There may be unreasonable things in the world. But we want to continue to be prayers who are close to that sadness. And we want to take over the faith of the deceased and make use of it, including regret and joy.

Although it is a situation where we cannot gather, let's pray to our dear Jesus who also wraps up death as a people gathered by faith.

Pray.

¹²When this had dawned on him, he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying.