

ACTS 12:1-16 "SQUEEZED"

We learn a lot about ourselves when we are being squeezed: In the vise, pressure is on, rock hard place **(FIERY FURNACE, FIERY TRIAL, STORM, FLOOD)**

We can put on a fancy face Sunday finest – sing songs – share scriptures – counsel others on what they should do... **BUT WHEN IT'S US....**

Christians want it easy today. If it's too hard they quit, complain, blame. What they don't realize is that is in the hard stuff and the headwinds that character is shaped God's power.

FROM THE TROUBLE, GOD GIVES YOU THE TESTIMONY. SAY IT..

No one got a testimony from smooth sailing. Don't try to make it hard...

When your life is being squeezed, know that God is about to do something great.

THE EARLY CHURCH WAS BIRTHED IN THE SQUEEZE

Birtherd in the soil of adversity – **NOTHING CAME EASY....**

- **JEWISH REL SYSTEM:** filled zealous persecution – **Think Saul of Tarsus**
- **ROMAN GOV** - politicizing, subjugating, corrupting, killing **EVER SIDE**

Acts 4:23 **Sovereign Lord**, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, ²⁵ who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit, " 'Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples plot in vain? ²⁶ The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed' — ²⁷ for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, ²⁸ to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place. ²⁹ And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to **continue to speak your word with all boldness**, ³⁰ while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus." ³¹ And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, **and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.**

If ever there was a time when we needed to lean into God's sovereignty (**SOVEREIGN LORD**) and the Holy Spirit (empowered for moment). **SHAKE PLACE / FILL US gods ans**

SQUEEZE ON: HEADWINDS STRONG/HARD TIMES HERE: ONCE enjoyed the

Judeo/Christian framework – easy connect the dots to God – passing dream **SECULAR**

SOCIETY: secular does not mean godless - all sorts of false gods worshiped

- **WHY THE GRIEF IS SO GREAT - SOCIETY TURNING UPSIDE DOWN QUICKLY:**
Mob violence, mass shootings, exploitation of our children big business, complete and utter confusion on sexuality and gender, greed, pride, dissolving ethical boundaries technology, justice trampled underfoot – **THIS WEEK - TROUBLE**

Peter: religious / political / personal / prison

GET TO SEEING TROUBLE GOD'S WAY

Guards were demons on assignment – Herod puppet Satan's hands (murder politics)

BIG SHOW 32 arrest sold, 2 guard posts, Iron gate senten Rome - **2 soldiers w/chains**

- Peter's SLEEPING – MAYBE PEACE IN STORM (master slept once)
 - o **CONCEDED - QUIT – DEATHJAMES – IMPOSS GOD DONE.. nobility surr**

BAD MAN 4 JC/no quitter: walkin water – confessing christ the Son Living God – even if the rest of these – swords unsheathed – preaching on Pentecost – raising dead healing sick – rejecting religious conventions – bringing gospel Gentiles.

- **Everyone hits times. NO CLEAR PATH FORWARD – GIVE UP – WRITING WALL**

The writing on the wall doesn't mean anything. Especially if it's not God doing writing.

People's opinions don't define your destiny. - **God's not done until He's done.**

SHIFT IN AWARENESS: The soldiers weren't holding him back they were ushering him into the next great work of God in his life.

- We want it easy – in the light/mountain top/health/prosperity/support others

Darkness: valley, physical struggle, financial battle, **ALONE.....**

FILM – take the picture – negatives in the darkroom – DEVELOPING FOR NEXT

GET UP AND FOLLOW WHEN YOU ARE UNCERTAIN

ANGEL - STANDS NEXT TO HIM – GOD STANDS WITH YOU - dark place

- GOD'S LIGHT will shine in the darkest moments – **NOT EVERYONE CAN SEE IT.**

Sometimes the light that God shines is only meant for you to see. You want others to see.

It's not 4 them it's for you.

- STAGES/STEPS: struck side.. ARISE – GET READY WE ON THE MOVE (lace air1)
 - o GET UP OUT OF IT – THE ILLUSION OF THINGS HOLDING YOU BACK
 - o Operating from a false framework, residual reality (former life)

Things aren't the way they used to be. Not Controlled by circumstances. Managed by your

You will either be a prisoner of your circumstances, or you'll get up and start moving forward with God.

- Despite his uncertainty HE MADE MOVE....**HE DIDN'T GET IT TIL IT DONE**

BEING LED STEP BY STEP IN YOUR UNCERTAINTY IS NOT BAD NORMAL - **FAITH**

2 Corinthians 5:7 We walk by faith not by sight.

You don't have to have all the answers. Figured out. Don't have to be in control.

WHEN YOU'RE MOVING WITH GOD – chains fall off, soldiers are blinded – gates open of their own accord – mountains move and cast into the sea.

Keep moving – when others are doubting / keep moving – when the haters are hating /

keep moving despite the internal struggle.. **When it's the worst God's best is coming**

GET SOME INTERCESSORS – PEOPLE WHO REALLY PRAY – MOST DON'T

- MY MOMENT – got some men – rideordie – same mud same blood.... FEEL THE POWER OF THEIR PRAYERS

PSALM 124 A Song of Ascents. Of David. ¹"If it had not been the LORD who was on our side," Let Israel now say—²"If it had not been the LORD who was on our side, When men rose up against us, ³Then they would have swallowed us alive, When their wrath was kindled against us; ⁴Then the waters would have overwhelmed us, The stream would have gone over our soul; ⁵Then the swollen waters Would have gone over our soul. Our help is in the name of the LORD, Who made heaven and earth.