

A prayer answered – Acts 12: 12 – 17



As the account of Peter’s deliverance continues, so does the comical element in the story. He went to the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark, who was later to write the Gospel that bears his name. A number of the believers had gathered there to pray. When Peter knocked at the outer gate a maid called Rhoda went to answer. In her joy and astonishment at hearing his voice, she omitted to open the gate and let him in, and simply ran back into the room to tell everyone that he was there.

What was their reaction? Total disbelief. “You’re out of your mind!” they said. Rhoda continued to insist that it was indeed Peter standing at the gate, while

he continued knocking. At last someone decided to go and see for himself. Sure enough, there was Peter, and at last they let him in.

We often find things funny because they ring true, and remind us of ourselves. That is the case, I think, with this story. No doubt the band of believers gathered in the house had been praying fervently that Peter might be freed, but when it happened, they couldn’t believe it. Do you sometimes offer prayers, not really daring to believe that they will be answered? I know I do. No wonder we are surprised if the things we pray for actually come to pass.

A prayer:

O Lord, hear our prayers, not according to the poverty of our asking but according to the richness of your grace, so that our lives may conform to those desires which accord with your will; through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN. (Reinhold Niebuhr, 1892 – 1971)

- Rev John Barnett

Image: *Peter Returns, woodcut, Johann Christoph Weigel, 1695.*