

N U R T U R E  
**F A I T H**  
with  
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When the Door Remains Closed

**READ:** Acts 12:16 (Common English Bible)

*“Meanwhile, Peter remained outside, knocking at the gate.”*

**MEDITATE:**

Here is a story for everyone; a story of someone who tried and failed, but refused to give up. Peter was one of Jesus’ disciples. At a critical hour, he failed Jesus by denying him three times. But Jesus never failed Peter. Following Jesus’ resurrection, his continued embrace and love for Peter launched Peter into a preaching ministry of considerable zeal and devotion. Up and down the countryside, Peter gave witness to the power of the risen Christ to change lives. Peter’s primary exhibit for his testimony was his own life. Soon he found himself enmeshed by hostile forces and, finally, preached himself into prison.

Prayers were made for Peter by the Christian communities that he started and were now growing, as a result of his preaching. One night an angel came to Peter, placed the prison guard into a deep sleep, released the chains from Peter’s hands, and opened the prison doors. An important detail of this miracle story is that the angel instructed Peter to place on his sandals. The angel was able to place the guard into a slumber, release Peter’s hands from the chains that held him, and open the prison doors. Yet, the angel holds Peter responsible for placing on his own shoes. Apparent in this small detail is that God will always do what we cannot do, but God will not do for us what we can do. Peter was capable of placing upon his feet his shoes.

Peter, now freed from prison, goes out into the dark, hiding in the thickness of the night from Roman soldiers, and makes his way to a home where he hoped to be received and cared for. When Peter knocked at the outer gate, a female servant went to answer. Recognizing Peter, and overcome with surprise and joy, the servant runs back into the house with the grand announcement of Peter’s release. Yet, in her amazement and delight, she forgets to open the gate and let Peter into the residence. *“Meanwhile, Peter remained outside, knocking at the gate.”*

Peter does not shrug his shoulders and walk back into the night, commenting, “It’s no use.” Peter continues to knock. Peter is resilient. He will not give in or give up. By his persistence, Peter reveals the grandeur of his trust in God’s continuing presence and care. Many of us will stand – at some moment of our life – before a closed door. The closed door may be a job opportunity that never materializes, a romantic relationship that is never found, or an illness that lingers – health seemingly more and more elusive. Before that closed door, life asks, “Will you continue to trust God in the face of bitterness and disappointment?” Peter stands before a closed door unafraid, determined to see it through. His strength is located in God’s fidelity, demonstrated in his past. That same strength is available to us when we stand before a door that is closed.

