

Ministry of The Holy Spirit
Prayer for Boldness
Acts 4:23-37

Last time...Peter and John's Adventure in Faith was met with worldly resistance as they
faced the intimidation of wicked men with the boldness of the Holy Spirit
The Religious establishment were threatened by these two whom they recognized as
having been with Jesus...just as they were threatened by Jesus Himself
When threatened, the children of the devil made threats

This time...the Church's response to the hostility and the threats

We are still in Acts 4

v23 they went to their own company:

Peter and John...and the healed man?...are released from custody and leave the
hostile environment of the religious establishment and make a beeline the
friendly environment of their

- "acquaintances"
- "family" (Matt 12:46-50)
- fellow sojourners (Heb 11:13)
- the Church, a Body of like-minded people

There, they de-brief everyone on what had happened and what the Who's Who
of the Jews had said...v7, v18

They issued to Peter and John, and therefore to the Church, a

- Cease and Desist Order
- Restraining Order
- threat of bodily harm for disobedience

v24a they lifted up their voice to God:

After Peter and John reported...a prayer meeting broke out!

All turned their faces and their voices to heaven, to the Throne Room of God
(Heb 4:16) with one accord

"in one accord"...unanimous

- the *m.o.* of the early Church
- in sync with the mind of the Head of the Body

The Church did NOT

- march on the capitol/Temple to protest “gov’t” policies
- hold a demonstration demanding their civil rights
- launch a hunger strike

The Church responded to the threat of censorship and violence against them properly, in a Christ-like manner

Their 1st thought and 1st action was to go directly to their 1st Line of Defense

v24b-30

Let’s look at their prayer by its components

v24b Lord...God...made:

The first component of their prayer: the Address

It is vital to be clear about the One to Whom we are praying

Lord God...Supreme and Absolute Ruler, the all-knowing, all-seeing, ever-present God of AI&J

- their power and authority (v7, 10-12)
- before Whom they stood (v19)

has made...Creator

- of the universe
 - in 6 days
 - by His Word
- heaven
 - 1st – the atmosphere/sky...filled with thousands of unique species of birds
 - 2nd – outer space...filled with innumerable stars and planets, all declaring the glory of the Creator (Ps 19:1)
- the earth...filled with millions of unique species of living creatures
- the sea...filled with hundreds of thousands of species of unique living creatures

How can anyone watch “Planet Earth” and not see the creative genius and power of the Living God?

How can they rationally attribute the universe to a process called evolution?

v25-27 they servant David...they holy child Jesus:

The second component of their prayer: Acknowledgement of the Sovereignty of the Creator God

The Creator

- knows everything
- sees everything
- is never surprised
- does not have or need a Plan B
- does not hope for the best but plan for the worst
- always Bigger than anything any of His creatures ever face
- has our best interest in heart

In the truth of Who our Creator is, we have comfort and strength

And how do we know the Lord God is our Creator?

He has given us His Word to reveal Himself to us

And how do we know it is His Word rather than man's word?

He tells us things long before they ever happen

He inhabits eternity (Is 57:15), in the absence of time

(time is a dimension of the universe He created)

Man, a created being, is trapped in space and time and cannot see one minute into the future; man can use his God-given intelligence to make projections and predictions about the future but does not know with certainty

On the other hand, God does not make projections or predictions,

He categorically declares what is certain to happen in the future

The Church prays accordingly, praying the inspired words of God spoken/recorded by David in Ps 2:1-2

Why did the

- heathen rage...the Gentiles violently rebel
- the people imagine vain things...the Jews go after the gods/idols of the Gentiles and reject their God

The kings of the earth...Gentiles...stood up

The rulers...of the Jews...gathered together with the Gentile kings

against..."We will not have this man to reign over us"

(Parable of the Pounds, Luke 19:14)

The Lord...God, Acts 10:36

His Christ/Anointed One/Messiah/Savior

For of a truth...beyond any question, certain and plain meaning of
Ps 2:1-2

against Thy holy child Jesus...pure and blameless Child/Servant
(same Gr word used of David in v25)

Whom thou have anointed...Your Christ

both...(Herod Antipas + Pontius Pilate + the Gentiles/Roman Empire) +
the people of Israel

Who are the “Christ killers”?

- Jews AND Gentiles
For the Gentiles (Gentile-dominated Church) to
blame the Jews is both
unbiblical/unGodly and demonic
- Neither...John 10:17-18 and Is 53:10

Note: Let's read Ps 2:1-2

Notice the verbs are present tense

The Church prayed in the past tense...did, stood, gathered

Did they misquote God?

No, for the words of God were fulfilled just as the Church prayed in v27

In the ministry of Jesus Christ

In the ministry of the Holy Spirit (via the Church/Body of Christ)

Why are the verbs present tense in Ps 2?

- Ps 2 is prophetic
 - speaking of things yet future
 - near fulfillment (v27, 1000 years after recorded) and
far fulfillment (DoL)
 - the fulfillments bear witness of Who is speaking
- time for I AM that I AM is continually present tense

v28 to do whatsoever...determined before:

The third component of their prayer: Acknowledgment that the Sovereign
Creator God has a perfect plan being revealed with perfect timing

What “happened” to Jesus,
and what “happened” to Peter and John,
(and what will “happen to all such who shall live Godly lives in Jesus Christ),
at the hands of hostile/unbelieving Gentiles and Jews
did so by the predeterminate foreknowledge and will of the all-knowing sovereign
Creator God (Acts 2:23)

The Creator has a will and He makes choices
Man, created in the image of God, has a God-given free will to make choices
Man is finite in knowledge and strength, God is Infinite in both
Man must choose to trust himself or to trust his Maker

God tells man in advance what is going to happen...His will being done...
so man might consider his choices...to be with God or against God...
and choose wisely (Deut 30:19-20)

God, the Creator Who sees the beginning of time and the end of time and all time
in between, knows all choices of all men

Knowing and using the free will choices of men, God accomplishes His perfect
will

Note: This is NOT Fatalism.

An inevitable, “not involved” predetermination

What is going to happen is going to happen no matter what I do
and I cannot change it; I am powerless and my choices are
inconsequential

e.g. I’m going to get coronavirus or I’m not, it doesn’t matter what
I do or don’t do so I’m going to do what I want to do

If it is God’s will/choice that I get coronavirus, I am going to
get it no matter what I do, so I am going to ignore the
common sense advice of my doctor

The Foreknowledge of the Sovereign God is not Fatalism

Man plays an active and will-ful role in the plan of God...[Acts 2:23](#)

God does not impose His will on man and make every choice for man;

He has given us a brain/mind and expects us to use it (Is 1:18)

Man chooses and is responsible for his choices

The Almighty knows all the choices

v29-30 behold...grant...stretching...by the name:

The fourth component of their prayer: having Addressed, Acknowledged, and
Acknowledged, the Church Asks

As they were taught to

Matt 21:22 And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer,
believing, ye shall receive

John 15:7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye
shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you

behold their threatenings...regard the Jewish religious leaders’ threats/vain thing

- Cease and Desist Order from doing as You have commanded us
- Restraining Order...from speaking in the name of Jesus Christ
- bodily harm for disobedience...which is all they can do

and grant unto Your servants...give to us boldness to speak Your Word
(to obey You and not hostile man...that we all v19-20)
“frank directness” and “assurance”
to speak God’s Word...eternal Truth (John 17:17, Matt 24:35),
not our personal opinions or arguments or debates

They did not ask God to help them do their will, they asked for God
to help them do God’s will
They went boldly to the Father for His help that they could speak boldly
to men about the Father’s Son, Jesus
the truth which to be established by...

stretching forth Your hand

- to heal...blind eyes and hard hearts (by rebellion and unbelief) healed
We cannot reach You but You can reach us and all mankind
- signs and wonders may be done by
 - You
 - Your power
 - The Name of your pure blameless Child/Servant Jesus
 - NOT vain things!

Is this a prayer based on fear of man?

No, it is based on faith in God and in His written Word

Deut 26:8 the LORD brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and
with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with
signs, and with wonders

Jer 27:5 I have made the earth, the man and the beast that *are* upon the
ground, by my great power and by my outstretched arm

Is 51:7 Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose
heart *is* my law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye
afraid of their revilings

Did the Lord Creator God hear their prayer?

Did He answer?

v31 when they had prayed:

The Church prayed according to God's will (revealed in His Word)

God answered immediately!

1. The place was shaken...the place the Church was gathered,
the place of the prayer meeting that broke out
(not the entire city)
2. They (the entire company/Church) were all filled with the Holy Ghost
3. They spoke the Word of God with boldness...outside their gathering
place to those who needed to hear the words of the Sovereign
Creator God

Rom 12:14 Bless them which persecute you: bless, and
curse not

Rom 12:17 Recompense to no man evil for evil

Rom 12:21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with
good

The Father hears the prayers of His children

- 1 John 3:22 And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we
keep his commandments, and do those things that are
pleasing in his sight.

This Church can bear testimony that God hears our prayers!

He answers in His perfect way and in His perfect time

- Jer 33:3 Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great
and mighty things, which thou knowest not.

Sometimes, He answers immediately

- Is 65:24 And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will
answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.

Dan 9

v32 one heart...one soul...all things common:

The Church was one...like-minded

- was of one heart...the heart of God, one with the Father and the Son,
as Jesus prayed in John 17:20-23
- was of one soul..."breath", Spirit...Holy Spirit
1 Cor 12:13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body,
whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be*
bond or free; and have been all made to drink into
one Spirit

- had all things common
common-ism
commune-ism
stewards, not owners (Ps 24:1)
Acts 2:44-45

i.e. the Church faithfully carried on, unmoved by the threats of the religious leaders

We are given another look into the nature of the fellowship of the early Church... and perhaps a glimpse into the nature of the Mill Reign of Christ (Ps 2:9)

v33 great power...great grace:

Given leadership responsibility in the early Church –
the (11 at the moment) Apostles

Endued with power from on High, and with all boldness, the Apostles led the charge in being faithful to the calling of witnessing of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Central Truth of what God has done and promised to whosoever would believe

And the gracious Lord God poured out exceedingly His grace upon all of them
The early Church was faithful and blessed!

v34-35 lacked...need:

And the early Church took care of each other

With eyes on eternity,
mindful that man comes into the world naked and leaves the world naked,
those who had possessions sold them and brought the proceeds of the sales to the apostles for equitable distribution to all those in need

Rom 12:13 Distributing to the necessity of saints

Gal 6:10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all
men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith

Selling and bringing the proceeds will become an issue in Ch 5

Distribution according to need (perceived or real) will be an issue in Ch 6

So this common-ism kind of fellowship is problematic when double-minded man (Gal 5:17, Matt 6:24) is involved

Therefore, this might well be a glimpse into the kingdom of God on earth when we are no longer burdened by our flesh

v36-37 Barnabas:

One of the people who was pure in heart regarding the fellowship of common-ism was a Levite named Barnabas

He will play a roll in the “Acts 1:8” of the Church

His consolation/encouragement will be used by the Lord in a mighty way...
in the ministry of the 12th apostle, the Apostle to the Gentiles

Application

The world did not “fall into the lap” of the early Church

Their testimony was received/believed by some and rejected/opposed by most
The early Church faced the intimidation and threats of those to whom they were sent

How does the response of the early Church to the hostility it faced speak to us today?

The Church is the light of the world and the salt of the earth (Matt 5:13-16)

The Church is restraining evil in the world (2 Thes 2:6-7)

The Church is persecuted all over the world, as it has always been, and will continue to be

Matt 10:16-22

Some Gov’t actions in USA during this coronavirus event are seen as hostile to the Church,
intended or otherwise (for we cannot know the hearts/motives of people)

CA: Governor banned (declared illegal) all church gatherings,
Federal Court judge upheld

IL: Governor declares that churches may be prohibited from meeting for more than a
year (public gatherings of more than 50 people), per the recommendation of
scientists (anti-Bible, its own religion)

VA: Fined a church \$2500 for holding a 16-person service on Palm Sunday

USA: The Constitution and Constitutional rights (Freedom of Religion) been suspended
by a virus

Sound public health policy?

Perhaps. Medical doctors are divided (don’t know, have opinions)
Sweden is an example to the contrary

Fear?

Certainly. Fear does not come from the Spirit of God.
Something less visible and more sinister?

Possible. Various political, financial, and ideological agendas
have much to gain in this massive, unique event

What should the restricted/quarantined Church do during coronavirus?

What should the persecuted Church throughout the world do?

1st thought and 1st action: go to our 1st Line of Defense

A prayer meeting should break out!

The early Church did not

- storm the capital in protest
- organize demonstrations with placards and signs demanding their civil rights
- become social activists
- act based on projections or predictions of man

They

- prayed to the King of the universe
- stood on their faith in God and in His written Word
- spoke the Word of God with boldness, filled with the Holy Spirit
- were spiritual activists
- were Christ-like

2 Cor 10:3-5 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh:
(For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ

Eph 6:10-12 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*

1 Cor 10:11 Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

2 Chron 20:1-24...the Moabites and the Ammonites were threatening Judah, and a prayer meeting broke out...and God answered!

2 Kings 19:15-36...the Assyrians were threatening Judah, and a prayer meeting broke out...and God answered!

So, facing intimidation and threats in the world, do we the Church flee or fight?

Fight!

Pray

Bless

Goodness

Love (Matt 5:43-48)

And do not fret!

Our Creator

- knows everything
- sees everything
- is never surprised
- does not have or need a Plan B
- does not hope for the best but plan for the worst
- always Bigger than anything any of His creatures ever face
- has our best interest in heart

Our Father hears our prayers

He answers our prayers...in His perfect way and in His perfect time,
not in our imperfect way and in our imperfect time

We cannot possibly know all the “How”s, “When”s, “Where”s, “What”s and
“Why”s that go into a perfect answer to our prayer

We can only cling to our Sovereign Creator, Who

- does know all those things
- uses all things for the good of His children
- does have our best interest in heart, as so evidently seen by the
Resurrection of Jesus Christ

Pray

Our 1st Line of Defense

The Church is built on the profession of faith, not on social activism

Pray believing, not fretting

Pray expecting

Pray without ceasing

What the world, what USA needs: The Word of God boldly proclaimed

What every believer needs every morning: boldness and the power of God