

Standing Bold, as the Nations Rage

Acts 4:23-31

We've been dealing with this particular section of Acts over the last couple of weeks. Although Luke tells us in chapter 2:43 that “...*many wonders and signs were done through the Apostles*”, it's here where we find the **first example** of a very public, supernatural miracle done by the Holy Spirit since the Day of Pentecost.

Bear with me as we touch on it one more time, to bring everything into context.

Over the last couple of weeks, we've looked at these miracle and the surrounding events in depth, and we've realized several things during our journey:

- Peter and John were “simply” on their way to prayer.
 - Luke doesn't tell us, but I believe this was a regular event in their life... not only prayer, but as they were still in Jerusalem, they had the regular opportunity to attend the designated prayer times at the Temple.
- They came to lame man who had regularly been laid at the gate to beg for alms.
- I think we can safely say that neither Peter and John, nor the lame man actually expected the events that happened would take place –
 - I don't think they went out that day, expecting to heal someone
 - But, Peter and John stepped out in BOLD faith
 - Yes, absolutely directed by the Holy Spirit, but it was still a bold step, none the less.
 - But, I don't think they left home that day saying, “*Hey John, remember that lame guy at the Gate called Beautiful? Let's go see if the Lord will heal him today.*”
 - Neither could they have expected the response of the people
 - From Peter's response, we read that the people were getting ready to claim Peter and John as miracle workers.

- The truth is, men of less character would have (and do even today) made themselves the focus, rather than the power of Almighty God alone.
- They probably didn't anticipate the opportunity to share the Gospel with a crowd of thousands
 - When the power of God healed the man, it brought with it the opportunity to share the Gospel with thousands who were in attendance at the Temple that day and at that time.
- I don't think they imagined thousands coming to faith in Christ
 - You never know what God is doing in the hearts of people. When you get a chance to share the hope of the Gospel with one or 1,000, it's God who moves in their hearts and it's God who draws men to Himself.
- They certainly could not have guessed the attitude of and arrest by the Sadducees and Temple Guard
 - For you and I, we need to learn to not be confused or unaware of the attacks of the enemy. Every time God is working in the hearts of people, the enemy gets excited and wants to frustrate the work of the Spirit.
 - It's actually Peter who writes for us in 1 Peter 4
 - ¹² Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; ¹³ but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. ¹⁴ If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified.*

When you step out in faith, you need to be prepared for the attack of the enemy – and the way you do that is by **drawing close to the Lord even now!**

This past Thursday evening, the Board of Elders here at CCCG met for a **time of prayer and discussion**. We met to finalize some things that we feel the Lord is leading us into in the next several weeks and months. The whole Board of Elders were in agreement with where we feel the Lord is leading us. As a Fellowship we are getting ready to step out in faith in some very exciting ministries and moves over the next couple of months.

Not very many of you are privy to the details yet, and I understand that, but let me assure you that **September is going to be an exciting time** for us as a ministry as we to step out in faith in these areas – some will be **very public**, while some will be **behind the scenes**. Some will be **implemented immediately**, while others will need a **process of time to develop and come to fruition**.

And with those multiple steps, there will be **multiple opportunities for the enemy to come against us**:

- 1) To come against the ministry as a whole,
- 2) To come against the leadership in particular,
- 3) And to come against those who are stepping up and actually being involved in these new ministries.

There will be opportunities for each and every one of you to an active part, but it will call for commitment... a deeper commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ and a willingness to seek how and where the Lord wants to use you.

But you need to be aware – **if you are willing to step up and step out in faith, the enemy will be looking to trip you up**. Therefore, ¹² *Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though **some strange thing happened to you***; ¹³ *but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.*

Now, back to Acts. We find that **because of** and **actually through** the **process of the persecution**, God had a **greater plan instore**. In Acts 4, we find that Peter, John and

the lame man were set before **the most powerful men in Israel** and ask that amazing question:

Acts 4

⁷ *"By what power or by what name have you done this?"*

This gave Peter and John an opportunity they would have probably **never had on their own...**

We need to see this very clearly here: their boldness brought about persecution, but their persecution brought on a great opportunity to share the truth of the Gospel. We need to see this and learn from it.

They had the opportunity to share the truth of the Gospel before all these *rulers, elders, and scribes, as well as Annas the high priest, and others*; the most powerful men in all of Judaism at that time.

Last week we looked at Peter's message. But for this morning, we need to remember, his response focused in on these final words, found in verse 11 and 12. Peter *filled with the Holy Spirit* quoted from Psalm 118 –

¹¹ *This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.'*

¹² *Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.*

As we saw last week, the leaders of Israel didn't know what to do with them, so they warned them and threatened them, then sent them away. That brings us to today's passage beginning in verse Acts 4:23 –

Acts 4

²³ *And being let go, they went to their own companions and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. ²⁴ So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: "Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them, ²⁵ who by the mouth of Your servant David have said: (Psalm 2:1-2)*

'Why did the nations rage, and the people plot vain things?

²⁶ *The kings of the earth took their stand,
And the rulers were gathered together against the LORD
and against His Christ.'*

²⁷ "For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, **whom You anointed**, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together ²⁸ to do whatever **Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done.**

As they quoted from Psalm 2:1-2, they saw the prophetic connection with what was taking place at this very time.

In Psalm 2:1 we read –

¹ *Why do the nations (Greek: the ethnos) rage, and the people (Greek: the laos) plot a vain thing?*

Here in Acts 4:27, they relate it to –

the Gentiles (Greek: the ethnos) and the people (Greek: the laos) of Israel,

Back in Psalm 2:2 we read

² *The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together*

Here in Acts 4:27, they relate it to –

Herod, the “King” of the region and Pilate, the “ruler” of the region, *taking counsel together.*

All of these had come together: the Gentiles and the Jews; the Kings and the Rulers. As Psalm 118:2 says, they all

“...took counsel together, against the LORD and against His Anointed...”

“...against the LORD...” The word used in verse 2 which is translated as LORD in your Bibles, should be shown as all capital letters. It is the Hebrew word *yhwh* (yeh-ho-vaw´) (the) self-*Existent* or Eternal; *Jehovah*.

“...against His Anointed...” Anointed is actually the Hebrew word: *Mashiyach* (maw-shee'-akh), or in the Greek it's the word *Christos* (khris-tos'). It is our word Messiah or Christ.

As they put Psalm 2 together with the events of their day, they saw the exact correlation between this Old Testament Psalm and the events of their day and they cried out before the Lord...

*²⁹ "Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that **with all boldness they may speak Your word,** ³⁰ **by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus.** ³¹ And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were **all filled with the Holy Spirit,** and they spoke the Word of God with boldness.*

What an amazing **Spirit filled attitude** these all have: *they (all) raised their voice to God with one accord...*

And as they raised their voices, they **weren't having a pity party.** There were no Eeyores in the bunch:

"Oh me. Oh my. Things are going to get tough now."



No, there was actually a time of almost elation and excitement as they gave praise to the Lord for all that was happening.

They didn't pray for release from persecution, they prayed for boldness in the face of persecution.

They didn't pray to be able to escape the watchful eyes of the religious rulers; no, they prayed and asked the Lord to *stretch out His hand to bring more miraculous healings.* They saw the power of this one miracle and they wanted to see more lives changed by the Power of God's Hand.

They asked the Lord to grant them miraculous *signs and wonders through the name of Jesus Christ.*

Not for the show..., not for any fame of their own..., but that through these **signs and wonders,**

the **Power of God** might be **demonstrated...**

as a **verification of the Word of God...**

to give them **greater opportunity** to proclaim the **Message of God...**
and **Salvation** through **Jesus Christ**.

*³¹ And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were **all filled with the Holy Spirit**, and they spoke the Word of God with boldness.*

Once again a shaking took place. Once again they were filled with the Holy Spirit. And even in the midst of the warnings and threats, they left that room, went out into their community and *they spoke the Word of God with boldness.*

And God continued to add to the church. Not through a growth campaign, but by the message of the saints, filled with the Holy Spirit and speaking out the Word of God in boldness.

As we close, I want to take you back to Psalm 2. One of the things these Jewish Believers also knew, was the ending of this Psalm as well as the beginning. Listen to what Psalm 2:10-11 declare –

Psalm 2

*¹⁰ Now therefore, **be wise, O kings**; be instructed, you **judges of the earth**. ¹¹ Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. ¹² **Kiss the Son**, lest He be angry, and you perish in the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.*

To *Kiss the Son*, is to worship the Son. The message remains just as true today as it did around three thousand years ago when David wrote these words.

It remains just as true today as it did around 2 thousand years ago when the Church spoke of this Psalm in reference to the situation they found themselves in.

Kiss the Son

Worship the Son..., do you know Jesus Christ as your Lord? Why would you wait for His anger and wrath to be kindled against you? When He stands ready to “*bless all those who put their trust in Him.*”