

Acts 4:23–31

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: ‘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.

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.

Where Do Turn When Trouble Comes? **Acts 4:21-31**

INTRO

Think about where these people were when they prayed. The baby church was born at Pentecost. It experienced a growth spurt which meant it had to deal with 3,000 baby Christians. Now Peter and John go to the temple and heal a man who was lame from birth and the fall out is many are converted, the temple authorities are enraged and they threaten Peter, John, and the rest of the church not speak anymore in the name of Jesus. What do you do if you are Peter, John and the early church? Do you call all the other churches to ask them to pray? Wait, there aren't any other churches. We gather a voting block to politically challenge this command. Nope, we are a minority and cannot undermine these authorities because Rome is behind them. This leaves two other alternatives: panic or prayer.

They prayed. We will look at the nature of this prayer and then consider the result of their prayer.

I. The Lord Who Still Rules (v. 23-28)

II. Their Request (v. 29-31)

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Acts 4:23-24 *“And being let go, they went to their own companions and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. 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.’”*

A. With nowhere else to turn where do you go? They ran into the presence of the living God. Here is a great example of **Proverbs 18:10**.

“The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe.”

They ran into the character of God. What part of God’s character became their refuge?

1. First, they reminded themselves God is sovereign. He rules over heaven and earth and is greater than the Roman Empire. They did this first in their address: The ESV translates the beginning of their prayer like this, ***“Sovereign Lord.”*** The Greek word is *despotes*. Our God is the despot of the universe. He gets what He wants, and He is absolutely good, holy, and righteous and no sin is in Him at all. Nothing can happen that He does not allow.

2. They remembered He made everything in creation.

“You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them”

When you think your God is too small go look at the creation He made out of nothing and think about what kind of power it takes to make a tree or any other living thing. He made it. He sustains it. That is the Lord of Glory to whom we pray.

B. *Second, they talked about how God was and is over all events in time.*

Acts 4:25-28 *“Who by the mouth of Your servant David have said: ‘Why did the nations rage, And the people plot vain things? The kings of the earth took their stand, and the rulers were gathered together Against the LORD and against His Christ.’ 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 to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done.”*

1. The God to whom they prayed predicted this kind of trouble for His people in **Psalm 2**. God uttered this prophecy through the mouth of David. God’s word is always true and it will never fail.

2. Second, God was not inactive when the rulers, the Gentiles, and the Jewish people put Jesus to death. When they acted, they could only do, ***“whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done.”*** Where the people who put Jesus to death on the cross out of God’s control? No. God was not victimized. This was a vital part of God’s eternal plan of redemption.

3. The obvious application for these beleaguered believers was that just as God was in control of the rampaging powers set against Christ, He was in control over the powers of the government officials who threatened them.

II. Their Request (v. 29-31)

Acts 4:29–31 “Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus.” 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.”

A. Their request is not that God would wipe out the opposition. Many times God’s will is for us to go through the valley so we know of His protection in crisis. Their first request was for God to take note of the threats against them. ***“Now, Lord, look on their threats.”*** Do you remember when Isaiah spread the letter from Sennacherib before the LORD in the temple?

Isaiah 37:17 “Incline Your ear, O LORD, and hear; open Your eyes, O LORD, and see; and hear all the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to reproach the living God.”

B. Their second request was,

“Grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word.”

They were concerned that God not let the Authorities threats intimidate them. They knew proper boldness in speaking the Word of God has to be empowered by God. They were afraid of forfeiting God’s blessing.

C. God answered their prayer.

“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”

We found them threatened with extinction and they were the only believers on planet earth. Because God honored this prayer, the salvation they proclaimed would dominate the world. Many churches would be born all over the Roman Empire which reach down to our church today.

When we are afraid because the politicians play with our lives, we must not forget these brave believers and their prayer for boldness. God has not gone out of business. Do we have the spiritual guts to pray this kind of prayer?

I Know Who Holds Tomorrow