

Sermon: **Prayer That Unleashes God's Power (Acts 4:23-31)**

Date: **January 8, 2017**

The book of Acts chronicles the start and growth of the early church. Before he ascended, Jesus commissioned his disciples to take the gospel to Jerusalem, to all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. The book of Acts records how they went about fulfilling that mission. As they stepped out in faith and boldness, the Holy Spirit moved in power time and time again, saving countless souls and adding to their number day by day those who were being saved. The gospel spread like a forest fire. In this week's text, we will see that one of the key components that led to the growth of the early church was prayer. The early church met regularly for corporate prayer where they called upon the name of their Sovereign Lord and pleaded with him to grant them more boldness. Prayer was a priority for the early church, especially in times of persecution. As we study one of their corporate prayers from Acts 4:23-31, we will learn how we too can pray in a way that taps into the supernatural power of God.

What you need for this study: Bible, Notebook, Pen

Individual Bible Study

1. Please read Acts 4:23-31 and ensure that you have listened to the sermon.
 - a. What is the immediate context of this passage? Briefly summarize what has transpired in the book of Acts thus far.
 - b. What was the first action taken by the early church upon hearing Peter and John's report (v. 23-24a)? What can we learn from this example?
 - c. Lookup Acts 1:12-14; 1:23-26; 2:24; and 3:1-3. What do these passages teach us about the priority that the early church put on corporate prayer? Can you find other examples of corporate prayer in the book of Acts?
 - d. Jim Cymbala believes that prayer meetings can be used as a barometer for the church. Do you agree? Why or why not?
 - e. Why is it important that we prioritize church-wide prayer meetings as a small group? Are they a priority for you? If not, how can you better prioritize them?

- f. According to verse 25a, what did the early church believe about the relationship between the human authors of Scripture and the Holy Spirit? How does this verse affirm the doctrine of biblical inspiration?
- g. In the midst of persecution and trials, how can we find comfort and strength in the sovereignty of God?
- h. In response to the persecution they faced, the early church made one primary request of God. What was it (v. 29)?
- i. Why should we regularly desire greater boldness in our lives? What can we do to increase this desire?
- j. How did the early church pray with expectancy (v. 30)? How did God answer their prayer (v. 31)?

Group Discussion Questions

1. How did the Holy Spirit speak to you through the sermon and the Bible study this week?
2. Why is it important that we prioritize corporate prayer as a small group and as a church? How can we better prioritize corporate prayer in our lives?
3. Why must we be mindful of the sovereignty of God when we pray? How can we find comfort and strength in this doctrine when we face persecution or trials?
4. How can we grow a burden for the lost and heart for the gospel such that our first inclination is to pray for boldness when we face opposition toward our faith?
5. How might you be able to “speak the word of God with boldness,” (v. 31) to those around you?

Accountability Question

Who do you want to speak the word of God to with boldness? Be sure to pray together accordingly.