

“Bend the Church, Save the People!”

Acts 4.23-31

Thrill to BELONG to church that is Vibrant and Growing

People in Jerusalem saw Power of Healing, Preaching, Changed Lives

Ch 1 Prayer Mting 120 waiting 4 H.S. > Ch 4 Nearly 10,000! Spirit-filled

Ch 3 Begins w KIND Gesture: Lame man Most tried Avoid “Look at Us!”

Ap P & J: We’re Just POOR Pastors > Guy we WORK For is LOADED

3.6-8 Peter said, “I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!” 7 And he took him by the right hand and raised him up, and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. 8 And leaping up, he stood and began to walk, and entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. 9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God, Acts 3.6-9

Shouts of JOY fill Temple > Soon JOY turns to JEALOUSY

4.2 the Sadducees...greatly annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead.

Uneducated Followers of DEAD MAN named Jesus > Threat Authority

Same SANHEDRIN that Murdered Messiah try Muzzle His Messengers

Sense of URGENCY > Existence of Infant Church is under THREAT

Warned if KEEP PREACHING they’ll be heading to PRISON

Peter & John return Friendly Territory after Overnight Trenches of Battle

Great Concentration of POWER > PRAYER Mtg w LIVING GOD

Lack of PRAYER in Church in General > Kalahikiola Specifically

Think God is UNCONCERNED / Can HANDLE it By Ourselves

When DO NOT Pray you are PRACTICAL Atheists

“You do not have, because you do not ask.”

James 4.2

1. Pray Together

v. 24 “when they heard it, they lifted their voices TOGETHER to God”

POWER of Unity in Prayer > Jesus: “I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them”
Matthew 18.18-20

v. 23 “they went to their friends” Sense of Belonging UNITES, Connects

FRIENDS from All Around Roman World > Began at PENTECOST

2.9-11 Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt, Libya, Cyrene, Rome...Cretans and Arabians....

Church of God all CULTURES, COLORS, CITIZENSHIPS

8 yrs in Africa – Many X's ONLY White Boy in Room – Not Spoken

Life TOGETHER in Christ is our Defining Identity

Spontaneous Cry “Abba, Father!” – Hearts linked to God / One Another

“All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer” Acts 1.14

“if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land” 2 Chronicles 7.14

2. Pray Together to the Lord

Most of the WORDS in this Prayer Describing & Delighting in God

NOT DEMANDING Requests of this God

God's Greatness Shapes their Intercession > Big God does Big Things!

“the people who know their God shall stand firm and take action” Daniel 11.32

v. 24 “Sovereign Lord...” > DESPOT > Absolute Master > NO Other

TITLE 100's X's OT / 3 X's NT: Lk 2 Simeon / Rev 6 Saints ‘how long?’

P & J > Just saw Chief Leaders of Israel in their Finest Robes and POMP

Thru Prayer they GAZE Higher to Sovereign God > Unrivaled RULER

They are Mere DUST compared to Great Creator & Sustainer of Universe

Not ABSTRACT Theology > Fully DEPEND on God for Everything

LIFT Up our Voices to ALMIGHTY God – Maker of UNIVERSE

“Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh. Is anything too hard for me?” Jeremiah 32.27

God MADE Everything in Macro & Micro Universe – All we see through TELESCOPE and MICROSCOPE – Designed, Built, Maintained by God

Angel Gabriel to Virgin Mary “For nothing will be impossible with God” Luke 1.37

Paul: “Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us” Ephesians 3.20

Abraham: “Is anything too hard for the Lord?” Genesis 18.14

“You are the Lord, you alone. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; and you preserve all of them; and the host of heaven worships you.” Nehemiah 9.6

“All your works shall give thanks to you, O Lord, and all your saints shall bless you! They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom and tell of your power, to make known to the children of man your mighty deeds, and the glorious splendor of your kingdom. Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations” Ps 145.10-13

3. Pray Together to the Lord guided by Scripture

Sovereignty of God revealed in WORDS recorded in a BOOK

v. 25 “the mouth of our father David...said by the Holy Spirit”

words of man AND Word of God > Superintended by Holy Spirit

Psalm 2 – was 1000 yrs old! – David about 1000 yrs BEFORE Jesus

Some say we NEED a Fresh Word – BEYOND the Bible

DANGEROUS – Opens to Abuse of Authority – Man-Centered Faith

ANCIENT Psalm of David, his struggles THEN > became ALIVE

Holy Spirit AUTHOR of Word now APPLIES them to Living Church

Psalm 2 > Revolt of NATIONS against the Lord and His Christ

David’s day > New King Crowned > Vassals & Princes to SUBMIT

Some REFUSED to Bow to New Ruler > God only LAUGHED

Psalm 2 exalts TRIUMPH of God v. 4 “he who sits in the heavens laughs”

God DISMISSES every Human Attempt to Dethrone or Dismiss Him

Utter Foolishness of Resisting God – U’R Arms too Short to Box w GOD

God is LORD over ALL – Even His ENEMIES

vs. 27,28 for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.

SPREAD their Situation out before the LORD > Trusting Him to Act

YOU have DESIGNED this Moment > You can DELIVER Us from it!

Lay their DESIRES at God’s Feet > Laser Focus on God’s GLORY!

“Prayer is asking God for what He has already promised” Martin Luther

4. Pray Together to the Lord guided by Scripture with Confidence

v. 29 And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness,

Not Focus on our TROUBLES > Make us SAFE, Hide Us! – Escape!

Did NOT Pray for PROTECTION > Asked God for POWER

World NEEDS > WORD and Our WITNESS > Scriptures & SIGNS

Prayer bigger than PERSONAL Needs > Concern for WORLD

SAFEST Place we can be is in CENTER of God's Will Serving HIM

Belief in God's Sovereignty AND Human Responsibility

“Pray as though everything depends on God, work as if everything depends on You!” Augustine

Jesus taught us to Pray “Our Father in Heaven, May Your Name be Great!

May your Kingdom Come, May You will be Done...then Daily Bread!”

If you Believe in 1st vs of Bible > Nothing w God is IMPOSSIBLE

In the beginning OUR God by Spoken WORD Created Heaven & Earth

“Do not pray for easy lives, pray to be stronger in the Lord. Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers. Pray for powers equal to your tasks.”
Phillips Brooks

v. 30 “your holy servant Jesus” Suffering Servant prophesied by Isaiah

Son of Man who came NOT to Be Served, but SERVE & Give His LIFE

5. God's Answer to : Prayer Together to the Lord guided by Scripture with Confidence – 3 things God did...

1) v. 31 “place in which they were gathered together was shaken”

PLACE they met was SHAKEN by His Awesome POWER

ECHOES of Pentecost Day in Jerusalem > Wind, Flames, Languages

NOT New Pentecost > Once for All Event > NEW Filling of Spirit

God ESTABLISHING New Covenant, New Kingdom, New ISRAEL

“If we take Scripture as our guide we will avoid opposite extremes. We will neither describe miracles as ‘never happening,’ nor as ‘everyday occurrences’...When a healing miracle is claimed we will expect it to resemble those in the Gospels and the Acts and so to be the instantaneous and complete cure of an organic condition, without the use of medical or surgical means, inviting investigation and persuading even unbelievers” John Stott

2) v. 31 “they were all filled with the Holy Spirit”

How will Church GO OUT and Tell Others > PUSHED by God’s Power

Welsh revival of 1904–05 > 100,000 people were converted in WALES

Convictions for drunkenness 1902 to 1907 > 50% Reduction

Movement spread to Scotland & England: 1 Million converted in Britain Awakening swept to Europe, Americas, India, Africa and Asia

Motto of Welsh Revival: “Bend the Church and Save the People”

For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? 1 Peter 4.17

3) v. 31 “continued to speak the word of God with boldness”

TRUST was in WORD of God delivered by SPIRIT of God

Great POWER & Great GRACE – God building Great CHURCH

Lead to Great INGATHERING of Men & Women to Follow Jesus

M. LUTHER asked how Reformation he Launched transformed Europe:

“I simply taught and preached God’s Word; otherwise I did nothing. And while I slept or drank Wittenburg beer with my friends Philip & Amsdorf ...the Word so greatly weakened the Papacy that never a Prince/Emperor inflicted such damage upon it. I did nothing. The Word did it all.”

Apostle Peter: “Let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well... And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” Acts 4.10-12

Acts 4.²³When they were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them. ²⁴And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, “Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, ²⁵who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit, “‘Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples plot in vain? ²⁶The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed—²⁷for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, ²⁸to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place. ²⁹And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with

all boldness, ³⁰ while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” ³¹ And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.

Congregational Prayer

“Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them,” you are unchanging through all ages in all places, and here with us now. Even today “the nations rage, and the peoples plot in vain. The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers gather together, against the Lord and against his Anointed” Wars rage in many places, including Israel, Gaza, Ukraine, Yemen, Syria, Nigeria, and Myanmar. Persecution afflicts your Church in dozens of nations today. “Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”

Call upon the Lord from your heart.

Lord, help us hear your voice by the Scriptures spoken “through the mouth of your servants by the Holy Spirit.” Help us to trust that You will “do whatever your hand and your plan have predestined to take place.” Your plans are perfect. Lord if you want to shake this place, help us to hold on to You! And by your grace, “fill us with the Holy Spirit” so that we might “continue to speak the word of God with boldness.” Amen and amen.