

# The Power of a Praying Church

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**SCRIPTURE READINGS;** Acts 4:23-31 (niv)

Psalm 2

In the Scripture reading from Acts 4, we can see that Peter and John had been preaching boldly about Jesus Christ and were being threatened by the religious leaders of their day. The Jewish leaders warned them quite strongly, not to preach about Jesus again. In fact the leaders of the day didn't just want to simply threaten them, but end their lives.

After further threats they let them go. Here, these early Christians have begun to taste the persecution that is to come. Persecution that will soon get worse and will soon result in death for many of them.

After Peter and John were released from their interrogation by the religious leaders, they return to the church. As Peter and John returned to them, they didn't forget to acknowledge them, their suffering or persecution. And more importantly the attack to the faith of Jesus Christ. They heard the testimony of what happened to them and collectively lifted up their voices in prayer.

Luke tells us, Verse 24 *When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. "Sovereign Lord," they said, "you made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and everything in them."*

The spontaneous response of God's people was to pray. We can notice some important points about prayer from this reading, to encourage us all to be a people of prayer. Their praying together was an expression of their unity with one another and they were united in their vision for their lives and what should be prayed for. We can see the importance of gathering as a church to pray, and we can see the importance of being unified in offering kingdom-centered prayers.

We can also see and take great courage and strength, from their first response and this type of praying together as a model for us today as they remembered the Sovereignty of God the Father (Acts 4 : 24b-26) and see this kind of praying that God delights to answer.

They go on to quote part of (Psalm 2:1) And the psalm says, verse 1 *"Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain? They plot and make war against the Lord; they refuse to acknowledge him as the one, true God. But all of that is useless. Why? For the early Christians, the sovereignty of God was not just a point of doctrine. It wasn't just some point to endlessly debate. No, it was a rock upon which to build their lives. Our God is sovereign, He is in control.*

Their prayer, is a model for us as we see that they, began with praise for the sovereign reign of God, and his saving plan in Christ. Only *then* do they even mention their trouble; only then did they actually *ask* for something. Look at what they ask for – Verses 29 – 30 *"Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus."*

What do they pray for? Let's look together. They pray that God would empower them for ministry. Specifically, that God would empower them to have boldness and courage in sharing Christ. That God would bring glory to his holy servant, Jesus.

Reading these verses again afresh, is a reminder, blessing and brings encouragement to keep this kind of Kingdom priority in our prayers.

*Let us be concerned for the glory of Christ* – to see His Name known and embraced with faith – and pray for those things to happen, God will answer our prayers.

*Pray remembering God's sovereignty.* Pray remembering, being comforted and strengthened knowing that God is in control. That even in the midst terrible things, both personally, in community, in the Church, and globally God is working out His plan to save sinners.

*Pray in such a way that Jesus is exalted.* Pray the language of Scripture back to God. Above all difficulty and problems, remember and give thanks for the salvation he has provided in Christ.

*And pray for God to empower you by his Holy Spirit* – to give you courage and boldness – to take every opportunity you can to share Jesus.

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Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins  
and will raise up the age-old foundations;  
you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls,  
Restorer of Streets with Dwellings. (Isaiah 58:12)