

Acts 4:23-31 - Bold Prayer & Spirit Empowerment



Ice Breaker - What stops us speaking boldly about Jesus

1. Before you read the passage recap what has happened in chapter 1-4:22 that leads to this prayer gathering today.

Acts 1, the Risen Jesus ascends to heaven, promising the gift of the Spirit to the church - who will empower them to witnesses to the ends of the earth

Acts 2, the Spirit is poured out, and Peter preaches: Jesus is risen and reigning. Repent and be Baptised - Thousands are converted.

Acts 3, a lame man is healed at the temple gate, and Peter again proclaims Christ. But this brings opposition.

In Acts 4v1-22, Peter and John are arrested, interrogated, and threatened: 'Don't speak in Jesus' name again.

Read Acts 4:23-31

2. Verse 23 says Peter and John "went to their own." What does this tell us about Christian fellowship and community?

"They went to their own" shows that Christian identity is now found in the church—the Spirit-filled body of Christ. Rather than isolating or withdrawing under pressure, or seeking support from people who are 'know their own'. The church as the place where gospel challenges are shared and support is found.

3. In verses 24-26. What stands out about how the believers pray here?

PRAISE and TRUST (in God's Word/sovereignty) before their petition.

They begin by praising God as "Sovereign Lord" and quoting Psalm 2. They do not start with their problems but with praise.

"Sovereign Lord" (a strong title emphasising God's total authority),

Psalm 2 frames their understanding of events. This shows their prayer is shaped by who God is and what He has already revealed in Scripture.

4. Why is praising God's sovereignty important when we face opposition? (v24 and 28)

Knowing that God made all things and rules over all things reminds us that nothing is outside His control—even when things seem chaotic. Verse 28 makes it clear that even the crucifixion happened according to God's plan. That gives us great assurance that our current trials are not meaningless or random.

5. The believers quote Psalm 2 about nations raging against God's anointed. How are they using scripture here and how can that help us? (v26-27)

The "anointed one" in Psalm 2 ultimately refers to Jesus, the Messiah. The believers understand that the rebellion of rulers in their day (like the Sanhedrin, Herod, Pilate) is the same pattern described in Scripture. This shows that God's Word interprets present events.

For us we can see that in our micro examples of life and opposition to faith, are not outside of God's control.

6. Verse 29 is a timeless prayer request. What do they ask for and why?

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They don't ask for protection or comfort—but for boldness to keep speaking God's Word. Their concern is not for safety but for faithfulness. This shows that their confidence is not in circumstances changing, but in God empowering them to remain courageous. They do this because God's Word going out is always the most important thing in life for us and others.

7. How do miracles relate to the gospel and bold witness? (V30) (see Acts 2v22)

Miracles in Acts served as signs to confirm the truth of the gospel message and to point to Jesus' power and reign. The church is not asking for miracles as spectacle, but as a means to confirm the new covenant as they bring the gospel.

8. Verse 31 says the place was shaken and they were filled with the Holy Spirit again. Why do you think they needed the Spirit "again" if they already had Him?

We no longer expect the ground to shake physically, but this shows the ongoing work of the Spirit to empower believers for specific moments of ministry. While all believers have the Spirit, we continually need His fresh help for boldness, clarity, and faithfulness in witness.

This filling is not about receiving a second Spirit, but about being empowered anew.

What is particularly clear is that their prayer for boldness was answered!

9. What can we learn from this passage about praying for boldness to declare Jesus? Think about:

- 'Going to your own people'
- Praise (from scripture)
- Trust from Scripture
- Asking for boldness to declare the Word

Pray together using Acts 4:29-30 as a model, asking God for boldness to speak His Word and for His Spirit to empower you.