

Praying the Believers' Prayer

(Series: Reimagining Church; Message Thirteen)

Acts 4:23-31

A. The greatest action we can take in any situation is to pray

B. It is time to bring praying boldly for people's souls back

THE DISCIPLES' PRAYER

A. We followed Peter and John into the Temple to pray

1. They healed a lame man: *"In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, get up and walk!"*

2. Then Peter got up and said, *"God did it! The God of our Fathers!"*

B. The religious leaders had Peter and John arrested and thrown into prison

1. They asked, *"On whose authority are you doing and saying these things?"*

"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12)

2. The religious leaders decide to warn them not to speak about Jesus any more

C. Peter and John and their friends go to prayer and ask God to do it again

"Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus" (Acts 4:30)

THE APOSTLES' PRAYER

A. The apostles' prayer for boldness flows from two things:

1. From the sovereignty of God

"Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth, the sea, and everything in them" (Acts 4:24b)

a. They found consolation and assurance in the sovereignty of God

b. They had found wisdom and insight in going to the Scripture

"Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain. The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against his anointed one" (Psalm 2:1-2)

c. They found comfort knowing everything was part of God's plan

d. They found strength in knowing God could move nations

2. From the name of Jesus

"Through the name of your holy servant, Jesus" (Acts 4:20)

a. The nature of God is revealed *in the name of Jesus*

b. We have access to the throne of God *in the name of Jesus*

"I tell you the truth, my father will give you whatever you ask in my name" (John 16:23)

c. *The name of Jesus* symbolizes our standing with the Father (John 17:6)

d. We have authority *"to drive out evil spirits" in the name of Jesus* (Mat. 10:1)

e. *The name of Jesus "assures me of eternal life"* (cf. H.C. 1)

f. We have power over the evil one *in the name of Jesus* (John 17:11-12)

g. *In the name of Jesus* we are to bring honor and glory to his name

B. They bend their knees and pray together (Acts 4:29-30)

C. God answered their prayer (4:31)

1. The passage reminds us there is a mighty power at work in this world

2. The passage reminds us we are to proclaim His Word with boldness

THE BELIEVERS' PRAYER

A. Jesus said, "My house shall be a house of prayer for all nations"

1. For most of us it hasn't become a part of our DNA

a. Perhaps we don't connect prayer to the mission of the church

b. Perhaps we've forgotten that unless people find Jesus they are lost

c. Perhaps we don't believe prayer is important

2. Perhaps we don't really believe God answers our prayers...

B. One of our preferred values here is Spirit-led prayer

1. The challenge now is to make that "preferred value" an "actual value"

2. The challenge is to make boldness in prayer a reality

a. Following Jesus requires boldness. Saving souls requires boldness

b. The message of Christ crucified and risen changes lives...

"Now who will harm you if you are eager to do good? And even if you suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. "Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened. But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be ready to give an answer to anyone who asks from you an accounting for the hope that is in you." (1 Peter 3:13f)

C. God did it with Peter. With the lame man. With Jeremiah Lanphier.

D. "God, do it again here with us"