

**THE IMPERFECT PRAYER LIFE AND THE DESIRE FOR COMMUNION WITH GOD - Part two - Sunday, September 29th 2024 - 5:30 p.m
Pastor Don Horban, Cedarview Community Church, Newmarket, ON**

Last Sunday we considered three thoughts from this account of Peter and John and the healing of the lame man at the temple gate. ***First, the need for a demonstration of God's power in this needy world. Second, we considered the connection between the manifestation of God's power and the church's prayer life. And third, we studied Peter and John's explanation for God's manifestation of healing power.***

Now we'll consider two more points:

4) **STUDY THE REACTION OF PETER AND JOHN TO THIS OPPOSITION**

Verses 23-24, 29 - "When they were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them. [24] And 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....[29] And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness...."

What did they do in the face of this situation?

- a) ***They went to their own companions - vs. 23 - “When they were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them.”*** They were so linked with their ***community of faith*** it didn't even occur to them to face this situation alone. As we'll see in the next point, the reflex reaction of these disciples was to link their situation with the prayer life of the rest of the body.

This was their ***first*** line of action. They didn't look for a good book on the subject of faith. They didn't get the phone number of a good counsellor. They didn't seek out a lawyer for litigation advice. And they didn't just say, "Let's grit our teeth and try to face this storm." None of that. They immediately said, ***“We need the church - They'll pray”***

- b) ***They lifted their voices to God - vs. 24 - “And 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....’”***

We'll look more at the **content** fo their corporate intercession in the next point. But notice now that this wasn't just quiet, pious, inner meditation - "***They lifted their voices together....***"(24).

They weren't shouting so God would hear them. It wasn't to demonstrate they were charismatic or Pentecostal. And it wasn't just because some leader said, "Really scream your lungs out as we sing this song again!"

- i) ***They were aware of the desperateness of their need.***
They were in earnest. They were moved and impassioned about this. It was ***important***. They felt the weight of what they were doing.

- ii) ***They were aware of the strength of their enemy.*** They weren't taking him lightly. They were putting all their energy into their intercession. Perhaps they remembered the way God told His people to ***shout*** around the walls of Jericho, not ***meditate*** around them.

- iii) ***Finally, they were aware of the awesome power of God.*** God was ***great*** in their eyes. They were calling on Him to reveal His ***power***. Unlike many of us, as they prayed and called on God's Name they sensed they were on the edge of something great, something about to happen. They were ***engaged*** in it the way people get engaged at the World Cup or the Stanley Cup.

But in all of these points don't lose the big picture. Their ***first*** response in crisis wasn't to call a ***committee*** meeting, but a ***prayer*** meeting. Their ***first*** response wasn't ***administrative***, but ***spiritual***. The first thing they did upon hearing of the problems of Peter and John was to lift their collective voice to God almighty.

5) **THEY FOCUSSED ON THE POWER OF GOD IN CREATION**

Verse 24 - "And 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...."

The focus is God's **creational** power and majesty. They didn't just proclaim they **believed** in God the Creator. There is a knife-sharp difference between a belief in God that's **theologically accurate** (which **is** very important as a starting point for faith) and one that's **prayerfully powerful**.

These early Christians were affirming their faith by proclaiming, **"Lord, Your Power is greater than our enemies. We trust You to be greater than the nations and their leaders. We believe that through our prayers you can accomplish Your purpose even against this persecution!"**

Then, as they prayed, they brought everything they knew to be true about God into their **present** situation - **verse 29** - **"And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness...."**

"And now Lord...." Those are the three important words. "Here's Your might in creation, but here's our situation today. **And now Lord**, we trust you to be the **same** God, doing the **same** things, right now!"

This is the difference between a ***Bible believing*** church and a ***New Testament*** church. A Bible believing church ***agrees*** that the text states truth. A Bible believing church says, "Yes, I believe that's true". A ***New Testament*** Church says, "Lord, not only is this text historically true, but I know this text describes something eternally relevant about the way You act ***today***. And we call upon You because there are many things that are never going to happen in this world ***until we link up with You in prayer!***"

That is exactly what these Christians in Acts four did. They knew what their Old Testament Scriptures said about the Creator God. Then they ***applied*** what they saw in their Scriptures to their ***present*** situation. This is the pathway charted for us in the prayer life of the New Testament Church.