

July 24th, 2016
Pinecrest Baptist Church
a.m.

Sermon Series: Acts Men
Sermon #9 Title: - Earth Shaking Prayer
Sermon #9 Text: (Acts 4:23-31)

I want to tell you this morning that I believe in Lord that we pray to.

I also know that not everyone that says they believe in the Lord, actually believes there is real power when His people pray!

Adrian Rogers said once – “We can do more than pray after we’ve prayed but we can do no more than pray until we’ve prayed.”

The scientist looks through his microscope at a piece of dirt, and says – “there is no god.”

The astronomist looks through his telescope and into the skies at night and says, “there is no god.”

The humanist proclaims he is the highest intelligence, and therefore there is no god

The atheist says, there is no evidence at all, so there is no god.

I look to them all, and say I have a list of answered prayers that say otherwise . . . There is a God!

- There is no greater proof of God than answered prayer.
- There is no greater fellowship with God than answered prayer.

- There is no greater awe to the mind than when God answers prayer!

I want to talk to you today about “Earth Shaking Prayer!”

Without doubt there are some people who say, “God’s never answered my prayer!” or Maybe “I’ve never once had God give me what I wanted Him to give me.”

Friend – there is a Truth about prayer.

- It is not what men imagine it to be, it is as exact as the Bible explains it to be, and the fact is that all praying is not praying – all prayers are not prayers, and the God of the Bible is obligated to do for no one anything. – The only thing that the God of the Bible is obligated to do – is to keep His Word!

- Now when your praying, gets in on Him keep His Word – You’ll see the answers to prayers like rain drops in thunderstorm.

The disciples had been arrested for preaching. Imprisoned for preaching, and threatened for preaching. – But when they are finally let go, we are shown a church full of people that knew who they were praying to – knew how He worked – knew how He thought, and when they prayed what He wanted them to pray – It shook the earth beneath them, and filled their hearts within them.

I. The People of Power Filled Prayer

*Note – We might say this is the power that came through the Pews!

- I think there is perhaps no greater example in all of the scriptures of a church teaching us how to be a praying church.

- Now we cannot forget a few things
 - We cannot do, what is God's to do.
 - We cannot fail to do, what is man's to do.
- Believers are to Believe
- Preachers are to Preach
- Listeners are to Listen
- The People of God are to Pray, and Obey!

It is here that any church, and every church should learn how to be a praying church.

- This particular moment in history, and this particular passage shows us four things about being a people of power filled prayer!

- That is prayer with Standing to pray
- That is prayer with Purpose to pray
- That is prayer that is sold out to pray!

A. Unknown to the World – verse 23 – “their own company” – literally their own companions.

As you read this passage it is not the Apostles leading the praying, it is not the preachers, and the pastors, it is who we might call the people in the pews!

- These are the “unnamed” disciples, and as far as history goes they are the “unknown” believers. – Now they were not unknown to the Lord, nor were they unknown to the apostles, but they were unknown to the fame of the faithful.

- Never get the idea that power in a church resides in the pulpit – Now there is to be power in the pulpit, but the power in the church begins in the hearts of the people in the pews!

- Of which most people will never make a splash of notoriety in this world – but they will the next!

Let me tell you about the record of this day, and where it is kept, and how it is kept, and who keeps it.

Malachi 3:16-17 – “Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.”

- Now that being said, these people are unknown to the fames of history, but they are duly recorded for the halls of eternity!

B. Undivided in their Will

- 1.) vs 24 – “When they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord.”

Now Peter and John, and some of the other Apostles had been arrested, threatened and charged not to do this again – and the crowd was gathered in unison to say, “Oh yes they will, and we will too!”

a.) There wasn't some fearful crank that said, “well, that's it . . . we have to quit, someone is going to get hurt before all of this is over.”

b.) There wasn't any weak willed politicians that said, “Well, there is a diplomatic way for us to compromise a little and keep the peace.”

- The Bible says that this church was united in this purpose and prayer – they were all in it – they were all, all in it – they were all, all in it together!

- All the people had the same will!

C. Intelligent the Word

Now write this down in your mind, and never forget it. – It is the Word of God that Fills the Prayers of Men with Divine Dynamite! – The very first thing they prayed, before they prayed, was to pray from the Bible!

1.) vs 24-26 – they prayed through the Word of the Lord. – (This is Psalm 2)

a.) Now no man has to be a theologian to offer up the simple prayers of faith – a child can do that.

b.) BUT – The Only Prayer that the Lord will give ear to, is prayer that is in Harmony with what the Lord has already said!

*Note – Some man might say, “I can pray for anything I want to pray for!” – Baloney. – You can say anything you want to say, but that doesn’t rise to the level of prayer!

- I told you before about hearing a young zealot pray, “Lord, I’m asking you to change your mind about hell, and just let people go!”

- No person can rightly pray for God to violate His Word, His Will, or His Work!

- That’s why it is imperative for every believer to be a Bible studying believer!

(Now listen, here is what will happen, if you continue to pray apart from the Word of the Lord . . .

- You will expect God to do things, He never said He would do.

- You might pray for God to do things, He has already said, He will never do.

- You might pray for things He has already told you to do.

- You might be asking for things that His Word has already said no to!

- That’s why we continue to say – Discipleship is not an option. Bible Study is not expendable. Growing in the Knowledge of Jesus Christ through His Word is not merely something that’s nice to do, it can be dangerous if we don’t!

- As we’ve said – that doesn’t happen during the Sunday morning sermon! – That has to happen during Sunday School, during Wednesday Bible Study – At home during the week.)

You cannot escape the fact that the fountain head of Power in the prayer of these people was the Word of God!

D. Intentional in their Work

1.) – vs 29 – “Now, Lord, behold thy threatenings; and grant unto thy servants that with all boldness they may speak thy Word.”

*Note – Their work, was Word, work! Their ministry was a message ministry!

a.) It is interesting that they did not pray for a way of escape, but they prayed for Courage to Continue!

*Note – There was no doubt about the Will of the Lord.

- There was no sense of, “now wait a minute – maybe we misunderstood the instructions of the Lord.” –

They had a firm grip, and a clear understanding of what the Lord wanted from them, and so their prayer was not to clear up doubt, but it was to shore up their strength.

(May I say this to you – though the apostles were doing the Word preaching – these people were doing the Word praying! – What is your ministry at Pinecrest Baptist Church? – It is the same as my ministry at Pinecrest Baptist Church – which is to proclaim What God has Said to men, and explain what God has said to men!

- What has God said to men – Jesus! We proclaim Him, We explain Him!

- They were all in on it!

Four Characteristics of a People of Power Filled Prayer: - They are okay with being UNKNOWN to the World, they are Undivided in their Will, they are Intelligent in the Word, and they are Intentional in their Work.

II. The Prayer of Power Filled People

*Note – Why kind of prayer did this people pray? What are the elements, and spirit of this prayer. – We could spend an enormous amount of time in the details of this prayer, but I want to focus on two primary premises that are the under girding themes.

A. They Began with Surrender to the Reign of God

1.) to His Sovereignty – “Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that in them is...”

a.) That was their version of “Our Father which art in heaven....”

*Note – Submission to the Reign of God’s Sovereignty is the recognition that there is nothing that is not under God! – All of the Natural World, all of the Human World, all of the Political World, all of the Animal World, and all of the Christian World – is subject to the Actions of Almighty God!

(No prayer goes anywhere that does not at its heart know this, understand this, and surrender to it.)

2.) to His Clarity – “Thou hast said by the mouth of David . . .”

They began with the realization and declaration that they understood that what God had said would happen . . . had happened! – This is that part of the prayer where they confess that they can see and say that they know God is keeping His Word!

a.) To paraphrase verse 25-27 – Lord, You said the kings of the earth would rise up against thy holy child Jesus – and they sure have! – Herod, Pontius Pilate, the Gentiles, and the people of Israel did just what you said does happen, and will happen!

When any people surrender to the Sovereignty of God – they will then see and must say – God things are happening, as you said they would – God you have done, what you said you did.

(Here is one of the greatest failures among Christians. – the inability to see the scriptures happening before their eyes!

- When a man doesn’t know what He said – He’ll never recognize when it happens! – If He never recognizes when it

happens, he'll never be able to fully and rightly praise God, and fear God.

- They submitted to His Sovereignty, and to His Clarity – BUT they also submitted to His “Perplexity”

3.) to His Perplexity – (these people were gathered together, “. . . to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.”

There is a mystery, and a perplexity that the infinite mind cannot understand. – How the Sovereignty of God, and the Free will of men work together!

(Men have argue if God is Sovereign over our actions, then men can't be free. If Man is Free, then God can't be Sovereign over us – which is it? – Yes! – God is Sovereign And Man is Free!

a.) God in his Counsel determined that these people would gather against Jesus. They in their freedom, gathered against Jesus.

Now that perplexes some people – It is a mystery! – It is the same mystery that says, God had His Way, through the actions of Evil men! – ie – Joseph, - even in the life of Job.

God is so sovereign that He can give a man full freedom, and still maintain His Sovereignty.

(Now here is why that is important:

Vs 28-29 – “Lord, they are acting according to your counsel – now behold their threatenings!)

- Lord, they are not acting outside of your Sovereign control, and we know that –we now turn to you, to strengthen us within your sovereign plan!)

- So surrender and submit to the Reign of God, is to realize you do not have to understand what God is up to in order to Worship Him.

B. They Submit their Request to God

1.) – vs 29-30

a.) Grant us Boldness to carry out your ministry!

b.) this word for “Boldness” is the word that means to “speak freely” or with “confidence” the idea of speaking without restraint from fear.

Boldness is not arrogance. It is not a license to be obnoxious or annoying. – However it is a request that every believer needs to make!

- Strength to Speak! – Strength to Speak – Strength to Speak!

This is not something that they would have to “pull themselves up by the bootstraps, suck it up and then shout it out.” – No this was praying that the Lord would grant them from the inside out – only from Him that they would have “the strength to speak.”

- Do you know why? – That's the one thing that God chose as His method for bring people to Jesus – The message.

(Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God)

- People need the strength to speak the Word!

III. The Power of Prayer Filled People

- vs 31 – “And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spake the Word of God with Boldness!”

- When Persecuted for Preaching, they prayed for boldness to do more preaching, and the Lord gave them their Boldness, and then some!

When any church, any people, any believer, actually, factually, genuinely pray for what God wants them to pray for, they will get what they pray for!

- How do I know what God wants me to pray for?

- 1.) Begin with the Bible – just like they did.
- 2.) Want His Will – just like they did.
- 3.) Ask for Strength to do, what you know to do – just like they did.

That is earthshaking prayer!