



**Message #10**  
**“SHAKING THE FOUNDATIONS”**  
**Acts 4:23-31**

Peter and John, having been arrested, brought before the Sanhedrin, interrogated and threatened, are finally released and they return to their “people” and report all that has happened (Acts 4:23).

Who were “their people”? The remaining apostles along with other believers in the early church. No doubt they had been wondering what had happened to Peter and John behind the closed doors of the Sanhedrin council.

**What was the immediate response of the followers of Jesus to the report from Peter & John (vs 24)?**

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It has been said that “prayer is the natural response of the Christian to God’s grace”. Yet prayer, or the lack of it, can also be the weak point in the Christian life.

For some, prayer is as natural as breathing....for others, it is only ever a “last resort”.

**What is your prayer life like? Are you satisfied with it, or do you think it could be “better”? How?**

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In verse 24, Luke uses a word that seems to be one of his favourites (and one of great significance): **homothymadon** – means “together” (with the inference of one heart and mind...a true unity).

**Given the new era of opposition & persecution that’s unfolding, what’s the significance of this unity of the early church?**

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**Read Acts 4:23-32 again. Describe the prayer that the believers prayed....**

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**How is it different from what you might expect after all that Peter and John had been through?**

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There are 141 words in the NIV version of this prayer. 104 of them are in praise of God’s sovereignty. That means that about 70% of this prayer has nothing to do with their needs or situation! God was the focus.

*“We have to pray with our eyes focused on God and not the difficulties.” (Oswald Chambers)*

**Do you find it hard to do this when you are faced with uncertainty, trials and difficulties?**

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**What does this prayer tell you about the faith in the character, power and faithfulness of God?**

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**What do your prayers communicate about your view of God?**

In verses 29-30, the prayer turns to their current situation, the escalating persecution.

**List the two requests (petitions) they pray in these verses. What's the significance of the requests?**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

### **What They Did NOT Pray:**

It is very significant that the believers never asked God to spare them from further confrontation or suffering. Rather, they prayed that they would be granted EXTRA boldness to speak God's Word.

So, they were, in reality, praying....

*Lord, in the face of opposition, don't let us weaken. Don't let us compromise. Please keep working out Your purposes, and please keep us working for Your purposes.*

Of course, it is not wrong to pray against suffering and persecution. But we should never fear opposition to the extent that we prioritise our personal security above the mission of spreading the gospel. Fear is often a dangerous weapon that the world uses against the church. God's people face threats every day, particularly in nations that do not protect religious liberty, or that even actually oppose it.

But as we pray for protection, we must also ask God, as the early church did, to give us the strength needed to endure the dangers that come with faithful gospel ministry.

### **\*\*\* DISCUSS: "Our mission matters more than our safety."**

Jesus told His followers that the world would hate them. We should not be surprised when we discover the world despises us (Christians). Jesus told His disciples that dangers were coming their way, but they were not to lose heart...because He, Christ, had overcome the world.

Therefore, when persecution comes knocking on your door, pray for boldness in proclaiming the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

### **Verse 31:**

When the believers finished praying this incredible prayer, "the place where they were gathered together was shaken". In a sense, this shaking of the ground symbolizes the presence of God and His approval of the prayer of the gathered believers. And it goes on to say that they were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness. Already their prayer was being answered.

### **How does God need to shake you, and the church, up?**

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### **TO DO:**

**Write a letter to God. Tell Him about areas in your life & witness where you are stretched, criticised or challenged. Tell Him where you need His strength and grace. Write specifically how you would like for your words & life to proclaim Jesus. Ask Him to make you a person of courage & boldness.**

#### **When God's People Pray (Wayne Watson)**

*Trouble knocking on your window pane, stormy weather at your door*

*And the outlook for the day ahead, like the day before*

*People tell you praying changes things, but words don't stop the fear*

*A prayer is only pious rambling, without a Father's ear*

*He will not turn away when His people pray*

*When God's people pray, and take the pains of earth to the doors of heaven*

*When God's people pray, there is hope reborn, there is sin forgiven*

*And miracles you can't explain away....When God's people pray*

*Hopeless situation turns around, dilemma passes by and by  
Look, there's a never-ending field of blue, past your clouded sky  
He alone can know the need in me, before a single word begins*

*The Holy Spirit intercedes for me, I will trust in Him*

*He will not turn away when His people pray*