

Series: How Jesus Acts Through Us Today: **The Power of a Praying People**
sermon delivered by **Josh Moody**, senior pastor, on March 29, 2020

Bible text explored: Acts 4:23–31

²³When they were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them. ²⁴And 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, ²⁵who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit,

““Why did the Gentiles rage,
and the peoples plot in vain?

²⁶The kings of the earth set themselves,
and the rulers were gathered together,
against the Lord and against his Anointed’— ^(a)

²⁷for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, ²⁸to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place. ²⁹And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, ³⁰while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” ³¹And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.

^(a)Psalm 2:1-2

Review and application:

1. In verses considered last week (*Acts 4:18-22*), what did the authorities insist that Peter and John (and all aligned with them) could no longer do? What was the “or else” implied by this threat to those they were reluctantly releasing? What ongoing or current pressures incline you to keep quiet about what you believe?
2. Where (*verses 25-26*) did the believers turn to grasp how God viewed their dire situation? In that Psalm (*verse 4*), how did God react to those opposing him and his Anointed? Why was it absurd to believe that God’s sovereign purpose could be successfully opposed?
3. To which anointed one did the Psalm originally refer? But since the word Anointed is *Messiah* (in Hebrew) and *Christ* (in Greek), to whom did it prophetically apply?
4. Who (*verses 27-28*) did the believers see as “gathered together against the LORD”? But who did they understand to be fully in control?
5. When he was crucified and buried, Jesus the Christ initially appeared defeated. But whose plan prevailed? Would some of the disciples suffer and be killed? But if the gospel was advanced through their efforts, who were the ultimate winners?

6. What (*verse 23-24a*) did Peter and John report to the other believers?
And how did they respond?

Writing on this Scripture, John Calvin said “the fear of danger ought . . . to drive us to crave the help of God.”

7. What (*verses 29-30*) was *not* the primary concern of the group’s joint praying?

What *was* the two-fold focus of their prayers?

8. What terms did Paul use to describe the boldness for which the gathered believers prayed? (See *2 Corinthians 5:11* and *20*.)

Christians are evangelical if they promote salvation through personal faith in Christ. Do you think our society sees evangelicals this way today?

9. How (*verse 31*) did God affirm the fervent, united praying?

How does *verse 28* express the outcome of praying that aligns our lives with God’s sovereign purposes?