

March 1 2020

Acts Chapter 4 verse 24:

Last week, we concluded with the fact that Peter and John had been told by the Jewish elders after healing the lame man; not to speak in Jesus name anymore and were threatened.

Now we will continue with verse 24 after they have finished telling the people what had happened to them.

When they heard this they raised their voices together in prayer to God.

- 1. They prayed as a group for each other, listen to their prayer.**

“Sovereign Lord,” they said, “You made the heavens and the earth and the sea and everything in them.”

“You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David:

“Why do the nations rage and the people’s plot in vain?

The kingdoms of the earth rise up; the ruler’s band together against the Lord and against His anointed one.”

- 2. They are quoting the prophecy of David in Psalms in their prayer.**

“Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in the city to conspire against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed.”

“They did what ‘Your power and will’ had decided before hand should happen.”

- 3. Think of the boldness of their prayer, do you quote Scripture back to the Lord Jesus and God the Father in your prayer?**

Maybe you should!

“Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable Your servants to speak Your word with great boldness.

Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of Your Holy servant Jesus.”

- 4. Have you ever considered a prayer like this, for more boldness in the face of persecution, for an answer to your prayer that you know God will give you, because you quoted a Scripture for reference to what you’re asking for?**

Think about it, we need to understand that God is a God of love and covenant and He will respect what He has spoken through the prophets.

After the prayer, the place where they were meeting was shaken.

- 5. That would be quite an affirmative answer to your prayer, when the whole building shakes.**

And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the Word of God boldly.

- 6. In other words, after you pray go about your business and continue to praise the Lord and speak the word of the Lord. Amen?**

All the believers were one in heart and mind.

- 7. Are we all one in heart and mind? We need to be.**

No one claimed that any of their possessions were their own, but they shared everything they had.

- 8. The Holy Spirit is so powerful that it overcomes our desire that everything is mine, mine, mine.**

With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

- 9. It is important that we understand that the apostles are testifying that Jesus came back from the dead and was with them and ascended to heaven. They are the witnesses to His life, His death, His resurrection, and His Ascension.**

We need to understand because that is what we believe in.

And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all that there were no needy persons among them.

- 10. This is why I spoke last week, about it being like the "Garden of Eden" for them, the love, grace, and faith were**

unshakable, because they saw Jesus firsthand. Remember, the Bible says, “Blessed are those who have never seen Me and yet believe.

For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need.

- 10. The Scriptures, we’re going to look at in the next few verses are going to show us two different people selling property and bringing the money and putting it at the apostles feet. This will be a firsthand look at what happens when sin enters in the door in one case. Let us read about it:**

Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means son of encouragement), sold a field he owned and brought the money and put at the apostles feet.

- 11. He is living and acting in the power of the Holy Spirit and God will surely bless him for it.**

Acts chapter 5 verse 1:

Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property.

With his wife's full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles feet.

- 12. Wow! He is going to try to make a public showing of giving all he has to the group. This is the arrogance that Jesus spoke about in the Jewish people. We need to take a real lesson from this as we continue to look at what happens when the Holy Spirit makes Peter aware of exactly what is happening. Let us read about it:**

Then Peter said, Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land?

- 13. Think about what was just said, were talking about the Holy Spirit being very prevalent in this group. Peter has just said to Ananias that Satan has filled his heart, how could that happen, right in the midst of the manifestation of God's love and the Holy Spirit. I keep telling you that where two or more are gathered together Jesus said, "He would be in the midst," but Satan is here also. I want you to recognize that always. When we pray, we need to know that we are praying to God and Jesus right in front of Satan, and he is not happy. Be aware and be ready for all the slings and arrows he will fire at you. Let us see what Peter says now.**

Didn't it belong to you before it was sold?

And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal?

What made you think of doing such a thing?

- 14. Satan made him think of doing such a thing, when you look back at things you have done that are wrong but you did them? Did you just dream it up on your own or did Satan have a part in it? You need to answer that question. We need to learn from our experiences, and we will see what happens to someone who deliberately lies to the Holy Spirit. Peter says:**

You have not lied just to human beings but to God.

- 15. Herein lies the problem, this man in front of a servant of the Lord has lied to the Holy Spirit. The thing that bothers me deeply is that God does not change. So what he thought of Ananias he could very well think of each one of us if we tried such a thing. Think about it as we continue:**

When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died.

And great fear seized all who heard what had happened.

- 16. We should be very afraid to live a halfhearted Christian life, my responsibility, is to show you what the Scripture says not what I say. Let us continue to look at this:**

Then some young men came forward, wrapped up his body, and carried him out and buried him.

About 3 hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened.

Peter asked her, “Tell me is this the price you and Ananias got for the land?”

“Yes”, she said, “That is the price.”

Peter said to her, “How could you conspire to test the spirit of the Lord?”

17. I will ask you the same question Peter asked of her, how could you? Peter goes on to say:

“Listen! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also.”

At that moment she fell down at his feet and died.

Then the young men came in and finding her dead, carried her out and buried her beside her husband.

13. What should we understand from this?

Do not trifle with the Holy Spirit!

We want all the good things, answers to our prayers, healing, joy, love and support, and we don't want to talk about the downside, that we must obey, follow, love our brother and sister, and in all things show humility. I have

trouble with that just like you do but I want you to understand it doesn't change what God and Jesus Christ expect just because we have trouble accomplishing it. We need to pray more, read the Bible more, live a Christian life always, and love our brother and sister unconditionally.

Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events.

The apostles perform many signs and wonders among the people.

18. Yes, the apostles are doing a wonderful thing so much so that Luke goes on to tell Theophilus the following:

And all the believers used to meet together in Solomons colonnade.

No one else dared join them, even though they were highly regarded by the people.

Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number.

As a result, people brought the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and mats so that at least Peter's shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by.

Crowds gathered also from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those tormented by impure spirits, and all of them were healed.

19. What was just said here? That they gathered together in the temple area and all the people had tremendous respect for them and they were well thought of by the people, and miraculously healed, cast out spirits, and even Peter's shadow healed them. They are also growing in number and even the areas around Jerusalem are becoming involved. The teachers of the law, the high priest, they can't have that. We shall now see what happens next. Let us continue:

Then the high priest and all his associates, who were members of the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy.

20. Ever been jealous? I mean really jealous? To what length did you go to assuage your jealousy? When you think about that, realize that's a sin. Let's read what they do about their jealousy:

They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail.

21. Not again, you have already arrested them once. This will get old. But watch what happens:

But during the night an Angel of the Lord open the doors of the jail and brought them out.

“Go, stand in the temple courts,.” he said, “And tell the people all about this new life.”

22. So, just like last week’s sermon, they’re going back to the temple courts, and they will teach there. Will there be a different outcome? We will see:

At daybreak they entered the temple courts, as they had been told, and began to teach the people.

When the high priest and his associates arrived they called together the Sanhedrin: the full assembly of the elders of Israel: and sent to the jail for the apostles.

23. Boy, are they in for a surprise. But seriously, if you are one of them and they are the law, because supposedly the Lord is talking to them. You have thrown a group talking against you in jail, and you have no idea where they are, and you find them in the temple courts, teaching in the name of Jesus, wouldn’t you be a little concerned about what you’re going to do next? I would, but let’s see what they do:

But on arriving at the jail, the officers did not find them there.

So they went back and reported, we found the jail securely locked, with the guards standing at the doors, but when we opened them, we found no one inside.

On hearing this report, the Captain of the temple guard and the chief priests were at a loss, wondering what this might lead to.

Then someone came and said, “Look! The men you put in jail are standing in the temple courts teaching the people.”

At that, the Captain went with his officers and brought the apostles.

They did not use force, because they feared that the people would stone them.

The apostles were brought in and made to appear before the Sanhedrin to be questioned by the high priest.

24. Wouldn't you think, at this point that the high priest would be a little afraid? Or is he so arrogant that even God doesn't worry him? Let's look at what happens:

“We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name,” he said.

“Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man's blood.”

25. You see what the point is? He said quote “you are determined to make us guilty of this Man's blood.”

26. He doesn't care who or what has happened or how many people have been healed or how many people believe or anything else, as far as he is concerned

you are worth nothing in his sight. But see what Peter has to say:

Peter and the other apostles replied: “We must obey God rather than human beings!

The God of our ancestors raised Jesus from the dead: whom you killed by hanging Him on a cross.

God exalted Him to His own right hand as Prince and Savior that He might bring Israel to repentance and forgive their sins.

We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God is giving to those who obey Him.”

When they heard this, they were furious and wanted to put them to death.

27. You see how arrogant they are? It is either my way or the highway, and they’ve been that way for hundreds of years in teaching the law to the people. That is why God has punished them.

But a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law, who was honored by all the people, stood up in the Sanhedrin and ordered that the men be put outside for a little while.

Then he addressed the Sanhedrin: “Men of Israel, consider carefully what you intend to do to these men.

Some time ago Theudas appeared, claiming to be somebody, and about 400 men rallied to him.

He was killed, all his followers were dispersed, and all came to nothing.

After him, Judas the Galilean appeared in the days of the census and led a band of people in revolt.

He was killed, and all his followers were scattered.

Therefore, in the present case I advise you: leave these men alone!

For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail.

But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God.

28. Think about it from a historical standpoint, he has told them of several instances in which there have been others claiming to be someone possibly the Messiah and have come to nothing. He is saying to them if this is not of God, it will come to nothing. We should take note of this and recognize that indeed it only continued to grow throughout the world. Another witness to the actuality that Jesus Christ was the Messiah. Let us continue:

His speech persuaded them.

They called the apostles in and had them flogged.

29. This time, they didn't just threatened them but they had them beaten! Then they threatened them. Let's see what they say:

Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the name.

30. You and I, might think it odd, that they rejoiced to be beaten, but think about how much they want to please God, and Jesus Christ. Let's see what they do now:

Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah.

31. And so at this point, all seems to be well. Next week, we will continue with them as they begin to form a more formal group and start to take more steps that cement their relationship in Jerusalem. Will they stay only in Jerusalem? I think not. Next week we will begin to see what God has in mind for them to make this movement a worldwide religion of God and Jesus the Messiah.

Let us close with prayer.