

The Power of Prayer

Acts 4:23-31

“Do not pray for easy lives. Pray to be stronger men and women. Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers. Pray for powers equal to your tasks.” – Phillips Brooks

1. **When** Did These Early Christians Pray? (Acts 4:23)

When their backs were against the wall.

Satan’s strategy and the Great Commission:¹

- To oppose the Kingdom and deprive God of the praise and glory due to Him.
- To keep the nations closed to the Gospel.
- To keep people groups hidden from our awareness.
- To persecute believers and the church at large.
- To convince Christians that missions and evangelism are optional.
- To erode the authority of God’s Word.
- To erode the faith of God’s people.
- To destroy the spiritual vitality of the church.

2. **How** Did These Early Christians Pray? (Acts 4:24-30)

They addressed the **Sovereign Ruler** (24-28)

Prayer does not undervalue the sovereign purposes of God. Sovereignty is the emphasis of the prayer, but Peter’s sermon in chapter 3 holds those people responsible. According to 4:28, in the prayer, they acknowledge it was because of God’s purpose.

When your God is big, your problems are small. The only mention of their problem is “**behold their threatenings.**”

They acknowledged a **Submissive Reality** (v.29)

They used the word “bond-slave” or “servant” to describe themselves.

¹ Adapted from the chapter headings of Jerry Rankin and Ed Stetzer in *Spiritual Warfare and Missions* (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 2010), v.

They asked a **Specific Request** (29-30)

They prayed for boldness, and that the gospel would be preached, and that God would confirm His Word (see also **Mark 16:20**). Paul asked for God's people to pray for his evangelistic efforts in **Ephesians 6:19-20**.

"The devil trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees." – unknown author

3. **What Happened** When These Early Christians Prayed?² (**Acts 4:31**)

- The Presence of God Was **Perceived** "The place...was shaken" (see also **Acts 16:26**)

- The Power of God Was **Received** "They were all filled with the Holy Spirit"

Note: They didn't pray to be filled with the Spirit (**Luke 11:13**) but when they prayed they were filled with the Spirit. It as the result of their prayers.

- The Purpose of God Was **Achieved** "And they spoke the word of God with boldness"

Evangelistic Outreach Prayer Guide

August 15-16; 2pm-7pm – select members of Mount Vernon and the International Mission Board will share Christ with our community through neighborhood door-to-door evangelism. Below are a few ways we can be praying for these efforts to make a kingdom impact:

- Pray for the new missionaries and Mount Vernon members to be in good health and spiritually prepared to share the gospel. Pray that they may be pure and clean vessels to allow the Holy Spirit to speak through them.
- Pray that the evangelistic groups may be guided to the right locations to be able to initiate gospel conversations. Pray that God may pair the right individuals to work together well to share the gospel.
- Pray that the Holy Spirit would direct the witnesses to people open to hear and believe the gospel. Pray for God prepared people who are ready to receive the good news.
- Pray that the Lord would give the witnesses courage and boldness as they share. Pray that the evil one would not hinder or distract while the witnesses are sharing.
- Pray that the Holy Spirit would direct and enable the witnesses to clearly share the gospel and that the hearers may have open ears to hear and open hearts to receive the gospel message.
- Pray that the evangelism efforts would be fruitful for the Kingdom of God.

² This outline on verse 31 is from Ron Dunn in *Don't Just Stand There, Pray Something* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1992), 230-238.