

Introduction

We are in the midst of 2016 presidential election. The debates and campaigns dominate the media. Most of the media, and those on the left are stepping up their attacks on Ben Carson. Why? Because he is teaching and proclaiming Jesus. He is wanting to lead our nation according to Biblical guidelines and principles, and they are greatly disturbed. They have begun launching personal attacks on him, rather than just criticizing his platform. Despite their efforts, the polling numbers for Ben Carson keep rising.

In many ways, this parallels our text. The religious leaders were jealous and very upset about Jesus. They had Him arrested and put to death. Instead of stopping the advance of Christianity, it kept advancing. Jesus rose from the dead, and appeared to hundreds of people. At the feast of Pentecost, when Jews from all over the world were in Jerusalem, Peter preached that Jesus was the Lord and the Messiah, and He had been attested by signs and wonders. Peter preached the resurrection of Jesus, and thousands of people had repented and received Jesus Christ as the Lord and Messiah (Christ). Despite the efforts of the religious leaders, the kingdom of God kept advancing.

Now, more signs and wonders were being done in the name of Jesus. A lame man, who had been lame since birth, had just been healed and the whole city had become aware of this miracle. Peter and the apostles are continuing to preach Jesus as the Lord and Messiah. The religious leaders were becoming very disturbed, and were even more fearful of losing their power and influence over the people. Despite all their efforts to date, nothing had worked. The kingdom of God kept advancing.

If you are ever wondering about the main difference between a true leader and a false leader, there is a great principle to be learned here. The religious leaders wanted people to follow them. Peter wanted people to follow Christ. Ask yourself a question, who is this leader trying to get people to follow. If a leader wants allegiance to himself, beware. If a leader is always pointing people to Christ, he is a trustworthy leader. **True leaders point people to Christ, not themselves.**

I have entitled the message, “The Kingdom of God Keeps Advancing.” In our passage today, Peter and James are arrested by the religious leaders. Next, they stand trial before the religious leaders. Finally, they are released and return to the church, and the church prays. Instead of stopping the advance of the kingdom of God, we find that the kingdom of God keeps moving forward.

The Kingdom of God Keeps Advancing

1. Proclamation and Demonstration
2. Bold and Confident Witnessing
3. Continual Empowering by the Holy Spirit

In Isaiah 9, we have the prophesy about the Son of God being born. This child to be born is the Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, and Prince of Peace. Then, it says, “there will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace.” That is what we find in our text today. There was no end to the increase of His government. The kingdom kept advancing.

(Isaiah 9:7) “There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.”

07 The Kingdom of God Keeps Advancing (Acts 4:1-31)

(Acts 4:1-4) “As they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to them, {2} being greatly disturbed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. {3} And they laid hands on them and put them in jail until the next day, for it was already evening. {4} But many of those who had heard the message believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.”

(Acts 4:5-22) “On the next day, their rulers and elders and scribes were gathered together in Jerusalem; {6} and Annas the high priest was there, and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of high-priestly descent. {7} When they had placed them in the center, they began to inquire, "By what power, or in what name, have you done this?" {8} Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers and elders of the people, {9} if we are on trial today for a benefit done to a sick man, as to how this man has been made well, {10} let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by this name this man stands here before you in good health. {11} "He is the STONE WHICH WAS REJECTED by you, THE BUILDERS, but WHICH BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER stone. {12} "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved." {13} Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus. {14} And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they had nothing to say in reply. {15} But when they had ordered them to leave the Council, they began to confer with one another, {16} saying, "What shall we do with these men? For the fact that a noteworthy miracle has taken place through them is apparent to all who live in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. {17} "But so that it will not spread any further among the people, let us warn them to speak no longer to any man in this name." {18} And when they had summoned them, they commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. {19} But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge; {20} for we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard." {21} When they had threatened them further, they let them go (finding no basis on which to punish them) on account of the people, because they were all glorifying God for what had happened; {22} for the man was more than forty years old on whom this miracle of healing had been performed.”

(Acts 4:23-31) “When they had been released, they went to their own companions and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. {24} And when they heard this, they lifted their voices to God with one accord and said, "O Lord, it is You who MADE THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH AND THE SEA, AND ALL THAT IS IN THEM, {25} who by the Holy Spirit, through the mouth of our father David Your servant, said, 'WHY DID THE GENTILES RAGE, AND THE PEOPLES DEVISE FUTILE THINGS? {26} 'THE KINGS OF THE EARTH TOOK THEIR STAND, AND THE RULERS WERE GATHERED TOGETHER AGAINST THE LORD AND AGAINST HIS CHRIST.' {27} "For 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, {28} to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur. {29} "And now, Lord, take note of their threats, and grant that Your bond-servants may speak Your word with all confidence, {30} while You extend Your hand to heal, and signs and wonders take place through the name of Your holy servant Jesus." {31} And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness.”

1. Proclamation and Demonstration

Throughout the gospels, **Jesus went about proclaiming and demonstrating the kingdom of God.** This was the model that He set for His disciples. In Luke 9, when Jesus sent out the apostles, He gave them instructions to go out and proclaim the kingdom of God and to perform healing. What did they do? They “began going throughout the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.” They were proclaiming and demonstrating the gospel of the kingdom.

(Luke 9:1-6) “And He called the twelve together, and gave them power and authority over all the demons and to heal diseases. {2} And He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to perform healing....{6} Departing, they began going throughout the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.”

The apostles proclaimed and demonstrated the kingdom in their everyday life. As Peter and John were on their way to prayer, they came across this lame man, who had been lame from birth. Because he could not do anything else, He became a beggar. He was a smart beggar. He positioned himself by the entrance to the temple, where he hoped the kind-hearted souls would give him alms. When Peter and John approached, he asked for alms. Peter and John did what they had grown accustomed to doing. They demonstrated the kingdom of God and healed the lame man. Then, starting in Acts 3:11, Peter preached the kingdom of God. First, Peter let them know that it was God that healed the man, not them. True godly leaders point people to Christ, not themselves. Then, Peter preached repentance. He told them to repent and return, so that their sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.

(Acts 3:19) “Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord;”

A couple of weeks ago, we spent most of one message clarifying the gospel message to you. Jesus made provision for our sins. He bore our sins on the cross, and not only our sins, but the sins of the world. But, people must receive His payment for their sins. They must repent and return so that their sins are wiped away.

Peter and John had simply done what they had been trained to do. They were proclaiming and demonstrating the kingdom of God. These two things work together. Church, if we will pray for opportunities, and then make the most of those opportunities, we will see the kingdom of God increase. When we see people that are sick, we can ask them if we can pray for them. If the Holy Spirit prompts you to pray for someone, pray for them. Jesus modeled it. The apostles modeled it. Those instructions and those examples have been modeled for us to follow. **We need to proclaim and demonstrate the kingdom of God.**

A few months ago I told you about my trip to the Scottrade office with Kathleen. She was pulling out her funds, and so we met with John Tanner, the Albuquerque Manager. Kathleen noticed that his eyes were irritated, so she asked if she could pray for him, which she did. A couple months later, John called me on the phone and told me that his eyes had been healed. He was going to have them operated on, but he no longer needed the surgery. Kathleen had made the most of the opportunity. We must learn to be alert and take advantages of the opportunities that God places in front of us. We must learn to proclaim and demonstrate the kingdom of God.

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This is where our text began today. Peter and John were still speaking to the people. They were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. When you proclaim Jesus, there will be some who see and hear the message and believe. In this case, there were about five thousand men who believed. Luke does not give us the number of women and children, only the number of men. At Pentecost, there were three thousand souls who came to Christ. The number of souls in this passage could range between five thousand and fifteen thousand; we just do not know.

(Acts 4:1-4) “As they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to them, {2} being greatly disturbed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. {3} And they laid hands on them and put them in jail until the next day, for it was already evening. {4} But many of those who had heard the message believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.”

There will also be those who will get disturbed when you preach Jesus. It is the religious leaders who again became greatly disturbed. In particular, it is the Sadducees, who had control of the Sanhedrin council. The Sadducees did not believe in miracles or the resurrection of the dead. So, when Peter and John are proclaiming the resurrection of the dead, it went against their theology. It upset their apple cart. They did not want them teaching this any longer. So, they laid hands on them and put them in jail until the next day.

Notice the attitude of these religious leaders. They did not care about the welfare of this lame man who could now walk. They did not care that a verifiable miracle had happened. They were not rejoicing with the lame man. They were only interested in what this did to their following. People were believing in Christ, and were no longer following them. True spiritual leaders point people to Christ, and help them follow Christ with all their heart. They are not trying to elevate themselves.

This same attitude was prevalent during Jesus’ ministry. In Luke 6, we saw that Jesus healed a man with a withered right hand. The scribes and Pharisees were more concerned about Jesus violating their man-made laws than whether the man got healed. Jesus asked them a question. “I ask you, is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save a life or to destroy it? After Jesus healed the man’s hand, they “were filled with rage, and discussed together what they might do to Jesus.”

True spiritual leaders are concerned about the welfare of people they serve.

(Luke 6:6-11) “On another Sabbath He entered the synagogue and was teaching; and there was a man there whose right hand was withered. {7} The scribes and the Pharisees were watching Him closely to see if He healed on the Sabbath, so that they might find reason to accuse Him... “I ask you, is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save a life or to destroy it?” ...{11} But they themselves were filled with rage, and discussed together what they might do to Jesus.”

2. Bold and Confident Witnessing

The second activity that advances the kingdom is bold and confident witnessing. The next day they held a religious trial. All the top leaders were there. Annas, the high priest was there, along with some others of high-priestly descent. They put Peter and John in the center of their council and asked them, “by what power, or in what name, have you done this?” It was a perfect opening for Peter.

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(Acts 4:5-7) “On the next day, their rulers and elders and scribes were gathered together in Jerusalem; {6} and Annas the high priest was there, and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of high-priestly descent. {7} When they had placed them in the center, they began to inquire, "By what power, or in what name, have you done this?"

Notice what Luke says before he gives Peter’s reply. It says, Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit...” **The key to demonstrating the kingdom of God is being filled with the Holy Spirit. The key to boldly proclaiming the gospel is being filled with the Holy Spirit.** That is why Jesus told the disciples to wait in Jerusalem until they were clothed with power. The Christian life is not about having been filled at one point in our life. It is about being continually filled with the Holy Spirit, so that when you are in these situations, you are ready to boldly witness. Peter is full of the Holy Spirit, and he is ready to go. Are you and I ready for the encounters that we will have each day? Do we spend time in prayer and in worship, getting filled with the Holy Spirit? If we want to see the kingdom of God advance, we must be filled with the Holy Spirit.

(Acts 4:8) “Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers and elders of the people,”

In John 15, Jesus said that when the Helper comes, He will testify about Jesus. When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit will boldly testify through us. The Holy Spirit is going to speak through Peter at this trial.

(John 15:26) “When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me,”

Look at what Jesus told the disciples in Mark 13. He said, “When they arrest you and hand you over, do not worry beforehand about what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour; for it is not you who speak, but it is the Holy Spirit.” Peter has been arrested and handed over. In this hour, it is the Holy Spirit who is going to speak through Peter. It is so important for us to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

(Mark 13:11) “When they arrest you and hand you over, do not worry beforehand about what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour; for it is not you who speak, but it is the Holy Spirit.”

Peter does not take personal credit. He does not say, look what I did. He says, “let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by this name this man stands here before you in good health. There are no “I’s” in his statement. He does not try to bring glory to himself. Peter makes it clear that it is by the name of Jesus that the lame man was healed. **Good spiritual leaders try to bring glory to God, not themselves.**

(Acts 4:9-10) “if we are on trial today for a benefit done to a sick man, as to how this man has been made well, {10} let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by this name this man stands here before you in good health.”

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Peter tells them that they crucified Jesus and that God raised Him from the dead. He goes on to tell them that Jesus was the stone, the chief corner stone, which they rejected. Not only is he the chief cornerstone, but he tells them that there is salvation in no one else. **There is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.**

(Acts 4:11-12) "He is the STONE WHICH WAS REJECTED by you, THE BUILDERS, but WHICH BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER stone. {12} "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."

Jesus said that He was the way, the truth, and the life, and that no man comes to the Father but through Me. Peter is telling them the same thing. There is no other way. God has not given any other way to be saved. If they want to be saved, they will need to accept Jesus as the Messiah.

(John 14:6) "Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."

We live in a day where people believe that there are many tracks that lead to God. For example, in the Masonic Lodge, people have the ability to choose one of many different paths. They can enter the Christian path, the Muslim path, or the Jewish path. I have nothing against the Masonic Lodge. They raise funds for hospitals and a host of other great causes. I use this only as an example of what many believe, that there are many paths that lead to God. Unfortunately, that is a lie. God's word clearly teaches us that there is only one path that leads to God. There is no other name given among men by which we may be saved.

The way of Buddha does not lead to eternal life. The way of Mohammed does not lead to eternal life. The way of Dali Lama does not lead to eternal life. There are many false religions today, yet they cannot take away our sins and give us eternal life. "There is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."

Next, Luke gives us some observations of the religious leaders. They observed the confidence of Peter and John. The KJV says the boldness of Peter and John. The Greek word is *parresia*, and it is used thirty-one times. It is translated both ways about the same number of times. How do you get boldness or confidence. **We get boldness from the Holy Spirit**. When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, and know that God is with us, we become bold. **We also get boldness from faith**. Faith means to be convinced of something. It is hard to be bold about something that you are not convinced about. We must increase our faith to increase our boldness. **We also get boldness through knowledge**. Have you memorized some scriptures for witnessing? Are you familiar with a gospel plan. We gain confidence and boldness through a better knowledge of the gospel.

(Acts 4:13) "Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus."

It also says that they observed that they were uneducated and untrained men. Peter and John may not have had perfect grammar. They were fishermen by trade. They may not have been eloquent and polished. The apostles came from varied backgrounds. One was even a tax collector. But, their

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secular backgrounds did not hinder their understanding of the kingdom of God and how churches were to be run and operated. These uneducated and untrained men amazed these the religious leaders.

I was reminded that sometimes it is not the most educated that win debates. Last month (September) a group of inmates at Bard Correctional Facility in New York debated the Harvard Debate Team. Who won? The inmates from Bard Correctional Facility defeated the Harvard Team. The panel of judges were made up of college professors. Even though Peter and John were not Harvard men, they were confident and bold in their presentation of the gospel. The religious leaders were amazed at Peter and John.

Many denominations have added seminary requirements for their pastors. The Methodists and Lutherans are just two of many. You must have a Masters of Divinity or higher to become ordained as a pastor. Peter and John did not have a Masters of Divinity. What did they have? They had been mentored by Jesus. Notice that the religious leaders recognized that they had been with Jesus. The real qualifications of a leader are that we need to know Jesus. We need to be His disciples. We need to pray like He prayed. We need to spend time with the Father like Jesus. We need to teach like He taught. We need to minister to people the same way He ministered. **Spiritual leaders need to have spent time with the Father. Spiritual leaders need to be like Jesus in all their ways.**

Luke also gives us their observation about the man who had been healed. He was standing there. He was no longer a lame man who could not stand up or walk. He was standing there with them. A noteworthy miracle had taken place. People all over Jerusalem were aware of it. They could not deny what had happened, so they had nothing to say in reply. People can argue with you about many things, but a life that has been healed silences people. That is why it is important that we proclaim the gospel and also demonstrate the gospel.

(Acts 4:15-16) “But when they had ordered them to leave the Council, they began to confer with one another, {16} saying, "What shall we do with these men? For the fact that a noteworthy miracle has taken place through them is apparent to all who live in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it.”

It is difficult for me to understand some things. Jesus re-attached the ear of the religious leader’s slave when he was arrested. Why did the religious leader stop in his tracks and recognize that Jesus was the Messiah? Why did he not fall down at Jesus’ feet and repent? Why did these religious leaders not accept that Jesus had healed this man, and repent? Their hearts were hard. We do not know, but it is possible that God used this incident to soften their hearts, and that some of them later committed their lives to Christ.

The religious leaders conferred with one another and ordered Peter and John not to speak or teach any man about Jesus. They thought that this would stop the forward progress of the gospel, but it did not. Isaiah said there is no end to the increase of the government of God. The gospel would keep advancing.

(Acts 4:17-18) “But so that it will not spread any further among the people, let us warn them to speak no longer to any man in this name." {18} And when they had summoned them, they commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.”

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I love Peter and John's response to the religious leaders. They said, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge; for we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard." I want to make a couple points about this statement. First, many people in the church do not speak about Jesus, because they have not experienced Jesus. They have never come into a relationship with Christ. They do not have a changed life. They are living in the world. They have nothing to speak about. Many people in the church do not look for opportunities and step out in faith. Because they do not take risks and pray for people, they do not see things happen. If Peter and John just walked on by the lame man, they would not have had anything to speak about. But, they stopped and took a risk. God healed the lame man, and now they are boldly witnessing of the event. Church, take risks. Go for it. God is going to surprise you, and you will not be able to stop talking about it. **We need to make the most of opportunities and step out in faith.**

(Acts 4:19-20) "But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge; {20} for we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard."

Second, even though this does not really tie in with the message, it is a valid principle that we can learn from the passage. **God is the ultimate authority.** He is the highest authority. Every authority has been established by God, and will have to give account to God. When an authority in your life tells you to do something that is contrary to what God tells you to do, you must obey the higher authority. **We must always obey God.** There are ways to communicate this. Rather than being defiant, it is better to make an appeal. Daniel and his three friends did not want to defile themselves with the king's food, so they made an appeal. They were not obstinate, rebellious, or defiant. They wisely made an appeal, which was accepted. If the appeal does not work, then we must be willing to suffer the consequences for doing what is right. That pleases God when we suffer for doing what is right.

The religious leaders could not find any basis to punish Peter and John, so they threatened them not to speak in the name of Jesus any more. The religious leaders were also afraid of losing credibility and respect from the crowds, who were all glorifying God for what had happened.

(Acts 4:21-22) "When they had threatened them further, they let them go (finding no basis on which to punish them) on account of the people, because they were all glorifying God for what had happened; {22} for the man was more than forty years old on whom this miracle of healing had been performed."

These religious leaders were men pleasers. **True leaders are not men pleasers, but God pleasers.** Notice what Paul tells the Galatians. "For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ." True spiritual leaders try to please God. If I were trying to please men, I may not preach the whole counsel of God. But, Donald and I have the responsibility of preaching the whole counsel of God. We have to talk about tithing. We have to talk about sin. We have to talk about adultery, fornication, greed, homosexuality, and a host of other things. One day, we are going to stand before God and give account for the stewardship He has given us.

(Gal 1:10) "For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ."

3. Continual Empowering by the Holy Spirit

After Peter and John were released, they went back to their own companions and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. Their report resulted in a unanimous outbreak of prayer to God. **The apostles prayed with one accord.** There is power in agreement. We must learn to pray in agreement. The early church had *kononia*, or shared things in common. They were living in one accord, so it was easy for them to pray in one accord.

(Acts 4:23-24a) “When they had been released, they went to their own companions and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. {24} And when they heard this, they lifted their voices to God with one accord...”

(Matt 18:19) “Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven.”

How did they pray? **The apostles first praised God.** They acknowledged that He is the creator of heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them. It is good for us to praise God for who He is and what He has done. It has been my desire to see our church get in the habit of giving thanks and praise in our corporate prayer time, rather than just jump in with our requests.

(Acts 4:24b) “...and said, "O Lord, it is You who MADE THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH AND THE SEA, AND ALL THAT IS IN THEM,”

Next, **the apostles prayed Scripture.** They agreed with the words that David had prophesied about the rulers gathering together against the Lord and against His Christ.

(Acts 4:25-26) “who by the Holy Spirit, through the mouth of our father David Your servant, said, 'WHY DID THE GENTILES RAGE, AND THE PEOPLES DEVISE FUTILE THINGS? {26} 'THE KINGS OF THE EARTH TOOK THEIR STAND, AND THE RULERS WERE GATHERED TOGETHER AGAINST THE LORD AND AGAINST HIS CHRIST.'”

When we pray, that is a good example to follow. I love to pray Scripture. Sometimes, I will just open up a book of the Bible and use it for my prayer guide. I will pray through each verse. We know that we have the requests we ask for when we pray according to God’s will. When you pray Scripture, you are praying God’s will. It is a powerful way to pray.

(1 John 5:14-15) “This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. {15} And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.”

The apostles correlated what was happening to what had been prophesied. At the same time, they acknowledged that all of this was according to God’s purpose and was predestined to occur. God is a sovereign God, and we must always trust that He is ultimately in control.

(Acts 4:27-28) “For 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, {28} to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur.”

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Next, **the apostles petitioned the Lord**. They let their requests be made known. First, they asked the Lord to take note of their threats. Second, they prayed that they would speak His word with confidence or boldness. Third, they prayed that God would extend His hand to heal, and signs and wonders would take place through the name of His holy servant Jesus. Those are excellent things for us to pray today. Pray for bold proclamation and demonstration. That is power evangelism.

(Acts 4:29-30) “And now, Lord, take note of their threats, and grant that Your bond-servants may speak Your word with all confidence, {30} while You extend Your hand to heal, and signs and wonders take place through the name of Your holy servant Jesus.”

When they got done praying, the place where they had gathered together was shaken and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness. They had just got baptized and filled with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Now, they are all filled again with the Holy Spirit. The kingdom of God kept advancing because the church was continually being filled and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

(Acts 4:31) “And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness.”

It was the infilling and empowering of the Holy Spirit that brings boldness. It is the infilling of the Holy Spirit that brings about the signs and wonders, or the demonstration that the kingdom of God is here. The early church knew the key to being filled with the Holy Spirit. The apostles had observed Jesus for three years. He would continually slip away and pray. They saw the connection between prayer and a release of the Holy Spirit. It was now a way of life to them.

Conclusion

My desire for many years is that the church would be a house of prayer. My desire has been to see a New Testament church that cried out to God in one accord. My desire has been to see a church ask God for a release of signs and wonders, and for the church to see lame men walk. My desire has been to see the church pray for people to be healed, and for multitudes of people to be healed and saved. It is happening in some places, but my desire is for it to happen in our body.

What will it take? It will take a church that is continually empowered by the Holy Spirit. It will take a church that prays in one accord and asks God for boldness and a release of His Spirit. It will take a church that is willing to proclaim and demonstrate the kingdom of God. It will take a church that boldly testifies. It will take a church that is fully submitted and obedient to the Lord Jesus Christ. Are you and I willing to be that church?

Let's pray.

Introduction (Acts 4:1-31, Isaiah 9:7)

- True leaders point people to _____, not themselves.

1. Proclamation and Demonstration (Acts 4:1-4)

- _____ went about proclaiming and demonstrating the kingdom of God. (Luke 9:1-6)
- The _____ proclaimed and demonstrated the kingdom in their everyday life. (Acts 3:19)
- _____ need to proclaim and demonstrate the kingdom of God.
- True spiritual leaders are concerned about the _____ of people they serve. (Luke 6:6-11)

2. Bold and Confident Witnessing (Acts 4:5-22)

- The key to demonstrating the kingdom of God is being _____ with the Holy Spirit.
- The key to boldly proclaiming the gospel is being _____ with the Holy Spirit. (John 15:26, Mark 13:11)
- Good spiritual leaders try to bring glory to _____, not themselves. (Acts 4:9-10)
- There is _____ other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved. (Acts 4:11-12, John 14:6)
- We get boldness from the _____.
- We get boldness from _____.
- We get boldness through _____.
- Spiritual leaders need to have spent time with the _____.
- Spiritual leaders need to be like _____ in all their ways.
- We need to make the most of opportunities and _____ in faith.
- God is the ultimate _____. We must always obey _____.
- True leaders are not men-pleasers, but _____-pleasers. (Gal 1:10)

3. Continual Empowering by the Holy Spirit (Acts 4:23-31)

- The apostles prayed with _____. (Matt 18:19)
- The apostles first _____ God.
- The apostles prayed _____. (1 John 5:14-15)
- The apostles _____ the Lord.
- It is the infilling and empowering of the Holy Spirit that brings _____.

Introduction (Acts 4:1-31, Isaiah 9:7)

- True leaders point people to _____, not themselves.

1. Proclamation and Demonstration (Acts 4:1-4)

- _____ went about proclaiming and demonstrating the kingdom of God. (Luke 9:1-6)
- The _____ proclaimed and demonstrated the kingdom in their everyday life. (Acts 3:19)
- _____ need to proclaim and demonstrate the kingdom of God.
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