

**Welcome to Promise Land Bible Church
We're glad you're here!**



Blessed Be the Name

Hymn 352



His Name is Wonderful

Hymn 230



An open Bible is shown from a low angle, looking up at the pages. The pages are filled with text, which is slightly blurred. The background is a bright blue sky with wispy white clouds. The text is centered on the pages.

Call to Worship

Psalm 4

Psalm 4 Answer me when I call, **O God of my righteousness!** You have given me relief when I was in distress. Be gracious to me and hear my prayer! O men, how long shall my honor be turned into shame? How long will you love vain words and seek after lies? **But know that the LORD has set apart the godly for himself;** the LORD hears when I call to him. Be angry, and do not sin; ponder in your own hearts on your beds, and be silent. Offer right sacrifices, and **put your trust in the LORD.** There are many who say, "Who will show us some good? Lift up the light of your face upon us, O LORD!" You have put more joy in my heart than they have when their grain and wine abound. **In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.**

He Hideth My Soul

Hymn 120



Take the Name of Jesus with You

Hymn 231





Praise and Prayer Request

Philippians 1:3-6 I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

Receiving of the Offering



2 Corinthians 9:5 So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to go on ahead to you and arrange in advance for the gift you have promised, so that it may be ready **as a willing gift**, not as an exaction.

Famous Quote:

“To convince the world of the truth of Christianity, it must first be convinced of sin. It is only sin that renders Christ intelligible.”

ANDREW MURRAY

An open book is shown from a low angle, looking up at the pages. The pages are filled with small, dense text, likely a Bible. The book is set against a bright blue sky with wispy white clouds. The text is overlaid in the center of the book's pages.

Today's Message

“Pray for Boldness”

Calling on His Holy Name

Scripture text: Acts 4:23-31

Act 4:23-26 When they were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them. And 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, who 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? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed"--

Act 4:27-31 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, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place. And **now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness**, while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus." And **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.**

WOW what a prayer!

What Power Displayed!

Why is that power not displayed today?

The greatest concentration of power in Jerusalem that day was in the prayer meeting that followed the trial. This is one of the truly great prayers recorded in the Bible, and **it is a good example for us to follow.**

To begin with, it was a prayer that was born out of witness and service for the Lord. Peter and John had just come in “from the trenches,” and the church met to pray in order to defeat the enemy. Too often today, believers gather for prayer as though attending a concert or a party. There is little sense of urgency and danger because most of us are comfortable in our Christian walk. If more of God’s people were witnessing for Christ in daily life, there would be more urgency and blessing when the church meets for prayer.

It was a **united prayer** meeting as they “**lifted up their voice to God with one accord**”

Act 4:24 And 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,

Act 1:14 **All these with one accord** were **devoting themselves to prayer**, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

The people were of one heart and mind, and God was pleased to answer their requests.

Division in the church always hinders prayer and robs the church of spiritual power.

Their praying was based solidly on the Word of God, in this case, Psalm 2. The Word of God and prayer must always go together (John 15:7).

In His Word, God speaks to us and tells us what He wants to do. **In prayer, we speak to Him and make ourselves available to accomplish His will.** True prayer is not telling God what to do, but **asking God to do His will in us and through us (1 John 5:14–15).** It means getting **God's will done on earth, not man's will done in heaven.**

Psalm 2:1-7 Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his Anointed, saying, "Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us." He who sits in the heavens laughs; the **Lord holds them in derision.** Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, "As for me, **I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill.**" I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you.

Psalm 2:8-12 Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." **Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.** Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. **Blessed are all who take refuge in him.**

1 John 5:14-15 And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, **we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.**

John 15:4-7 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, **for apart from me you can do nothing.** If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. **If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.**

They did not pray to have their circumstances changed or their enemies put out of office.

Rather, they asked God to empower them to make the best use of their circumstances and to accomplish what He had already determined (Acts 4:28).

This was not “fatalism” but faith in the Lord of history who has a perfect plan and is always victorious. **They asked for divine enablement, not escape; and God gave them the power that they needed.**

“Do not pray for easy lives,” wrote Phillips Brooks. **“Pray to be stronger men and women. Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers. Pray for powers equal to your tasks.”** That is the way the early Christians prayed, and that is the way God’s people should pray today.

They addressed God as **“Sovereign Lord,”** the God who is in control of all things. The Greek word gives us our English word *despot, a ruler who exercises absolute power, either benevolently or abusively.*

Simeon used this same title when he prayed in the temple (Luke 2:29). It is good to know the Sovereign Lord when you are experiencing persecution.

They also approached Him as the Creator, for, after all, if your Father is “Lord of heaven and earth,” what have you to fear? (see Matt. 11:25–30) Nehemiah approached God on this same basis (Neh. 9:6), and so did the psalmist (see Ps. 145) and the Prophet Isaiah (Isa. 42).

Years later, when he wrote his first epistle, Peter encouraged suffering saints to yield themselves to the faithful Creator (1 Peter 4:19).

Psalm 2 describes the revolt of the nations against the Lord and His Christ. The psalm originally grew out of the crowning of a new king in Israel, perhaps David; but its ultimate message points to the King of kings, Jesus Christ. Whenever a new king was enthroned, the vassal rulers around were required to come and submit to him; but some of them refused to do this. God only laughed at their revolt, for He knew that they could never stand up against His King.

The early believers applied the message of this psalm to their own situation and identified their adversaries as Herod, Pilate, the Romans, and the Jews. These enemies had “**ganged up**” against Jesus Christ and even **crucified Him, yet God raised Him from the dead** and enthroned Him in heaven. **All of this was a part of God’s perfect plan**, so there was no need to fear.

Act 2:23 this Jesus, **delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God**, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.

Act 3:18 But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that **his Christ would suffer**, he thus fulfilled.

The early church strongly believed in God's sovereignty and His perfect plan for His people. But note that **they did not permit their faith in divine sovereignty to destroy human responsibility**, for they were **faithful to witness and pray**. It is when God's people **get out of balance** and overemphasize either sovereignty or responsibility that the church loses power. Again, we are reminded of Augustine's wise words, "**Pray as though everything depends on God, and work as though everything depended on you.**" Faith in a sovereign Lord is a tremendous encouragement for God's people to keep serving the Lord when the going is difficult.

They did not ask for protection; they asked for power. They did not ask for fire from heaven to destroy the enemy (see Luke 9:51–56), **but for power from heaven to preach the Word and heal the sick** (see Matt. 5:10–12, 43–48). **Their great desire was for boldness in the face of opposition** (see Acts 4:17).

The emphasis is on the hand of God at work in the life of the church (Acts 4:28, 30), not the hand of man at work for God. **Believing prayer releases God's power and enables God's hand to move** (Isa. 50:2; 64:1–8).

Act 4:28-30 to do whatever **your hand and your plan** had predestined to take place. And now, **Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness**, while you **stretch out your hand to heal**, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus.“

Isaiah 50:2 Why, when I came, was there no man; why, when I called, was there no one to answer? **Is my hand shortened, that it cannot redeem? Or have I no power to deliver?** Behold, by my rebuke I dry up the sea, I make the rivers a desert; their fish stink for lack of water and die of thirst.

Isaiah 64:1-4 Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down, **that the mountains might quake at your presence**--as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil-- **to make your name known to your adversaries, and that the nations might tremble at your presence!** When you did awesome things that we did not look for, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence. From of old no one has heard or perceived by the ear, no eye has seen a God besides you, who acts for those who wait for him.

Isaiah 64:5-8 You meet him who joyfully works righteousness, **those who remember you in your ways.** Behold, you were angry, and we sinned; in our sins we have been a long time, and shall we be saved? We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. There is no one who calls upon your name, who rouses himself to take hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us, and have made us melt in the hand of our iniquities. But now, O LORD, you are our Father; **we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand.**

Finally, note that they wanted to glorify God's Child (Servant) Jesus Christ (Acts 4:27, 30).

It was His name that gave them power to minister the Word and to perform miracles, and His name alone deserved the glory. The glory of God, not the needs of men, is the highest purpose of answered prayer.

Act 4:12 And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

God's answer was to shake the place where they were meeting and to **fill the people once again** with the Spirit of God (***Acts 4:31*** *And 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.*).

This gave them the boldness that they needed to continue to serve God in spite of official opposition. This was not a “second Pentecost” because there cannot be another Pentecost any more than there can be another Calvary. **It was a new filling of the Spirit to equip the believers** to serve the Lord and minister to the people.

The name of Jesus Christ has not lost its power, but many of God's people have lost their power because they have stopped praying to the sovereign God.

“Nothing lies beyond the reach of prayer except that which lies outside the will of God.” I don't know who first said that, but the statement is absolutely true. Dr. R.A. Torrey, the noted evangelist and educator, said, **“Pray for great things, expect great things, work for great things, but above all—pray.”**

The early church prayed, and God answered in mighty power.

Leaning on the Everlasting Arms

Hymn 87

