

Bringing the Power of God Into Prayer

by Carter Conlon

The sermon emphasizes the importance of bringing the power of God into prayer and speaking words of faith and authority into the lives of those around us.

Duration: 1:00:09

Scripture: 2 Samuel 22:2-3, Psalm 2:1-3, Psalm 2:12, Psalm 21:11, Psalm 31:5, Acts 4:25-26, Acts 4:31

Topics: "Corporate Prayer"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the power of speaking and the impact it can have on someone's life. He shares a story from the Old Testament about three lepers who made a choice to speak and ended up saving themselves from death. The preacher then connects this story to the healing of a lame man in Acts chapter four, where Peter's words brought about a miraculous transformation. He encourages the audience to realize that their words can make a difference and urges them to pray for a revival of this kind of speaking and praying. The preacher also emphasizes that the battle for hearts and lives will not be won in the political arena, but through personal interactions and sharing the gospel.

Transcript

If you're visiting tonight and you have a cell phone, you may want to turn it off. Lest it ring at the time when God's trying to convict you and you end up staying in your cell before the... That's why they call them a cell phone in the house of God. You know, when the conviction of the Holy Ghost comes, the devil will call you.

You can be sure of that. Bless the Lord. Acts chapter 4, bringing the power of God into prayer.

Bringing the power of God into prayer. I believe if your heart is open tonight that the Lord will speak something to you that may change your prayer life. I remember as a young Christian wanting to pray.

It was the longing of my heart for many, many years. That cry that came from the heart of Jesus' disciples when they said, Teach us how to pray. In order to learn to pray, we oftentimes have to run through the gambit of all the formulas.

Many of you have been around a while, you know that. Everybody that rises up, every once in a while somebody rises up and they claim to have found a new formula for prayer. Well, if they've reduced prayer to a formula, then by the virtue of that alone, they've not really understood what prayer is all about.

It's like coming up with a formula for breathing. There's really no formula to it. You either do it or you die.

And God in His grace brings us to a place where we begin to understand that prayer is not a formula. Prayer is the very life breath of communication that we have with God. And I believe that I have something to show you from the Scriptures.

It will take a while. You're going to need your Bible tonight. It might begin to produce somewhat of a cry of faith in your heart, like the cry that is beginning to come into my heart.

It's in Pastor David's heart, it's in Pastor Neil's heart, it's in Pastor Patrick's heart. If you come out to prayer on Tuesday night, you will hear that cry. There's a cry of faith.

Bringing the power of God into prayer. Father, I thank you. I thank you from the depths of my being.

Lord, for what you are doing. And for how you are showing yourself to us. I thank you, Lord God, that you are bringing to us words of encouragement and faith.

And you're causing the faith. You're giving us faith, Lord, to trust in you. And to believe in your promises to us.

So that when we go into the closet of prayer, God, we can lift up our voices with an assurance. A calm, yet an excited assurance, God. That the things that you have already said you're going to do.

And no power of hell can ever stand against you. Father, thank you, Lord, for the knowledge tonight that hell has no right to our homes. Hell has no right to our lives.

Hell has no right to our future, our past, nor our present. Lord, it's all in your hand now. And you are in absolute control.

God, we thank you, Lord, that the heathen rage. But they are also under the control of Almighty God. Oh, God in heaven, I'm asking for a dimension of prayer to be released in this church on all of our lives.

God, I thank you for taking me in my weakness and showing me this, Father. I ask for the unction and anointing to bring this to this body. That it might become a living reality.

As we cry out to you, Lord, that you deliver us from all form and all tradition. All prayer by rote. All meaningless expressions in your house.

God, put a word of faith and power in our hearts. That when we pray, heaven and earth begin to shake. God, I thank you for it.

I thank you for it, Lord. Give me the ability tonight, Holy Spirit, to be able to speak this word simply. And give us the hearts to hear it, oh God.

Let faith arise, especially now in this generation, Lord. We see a hungry city that just lies before us. People are starving for truth.

God in heaven, I thank you for the anointing that breaks every yoke. I praise you for it in Jesus' name. Amen.

Acts chapter 4, beginning at verse 23. This is about Peter and John and many of the other believers. And being let go, they went to their own company and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.

And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord. And said, Lord, thou art God, which has made heaven and earth and the sea and all that in them is. Who by the mouth of thy servant David hath said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against his Christ.

For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate with the Gentiles and the people of Israel were gathered together. For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done. And now, Lord, behold their threatenance.

And grant to thy servants that with all boldness they may speak thy word, by stretching forth thine hand to heal. And that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together.

They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness. Bringing the power of God into prayer. This is a prayer meeting.

If we're ever going to learn about the prayer meeting and what it really is like to pray, and to pray in the power of God, we have to go back to the blueprints that God has given us. Forget the formulas. Forget all of men's ideas, and all their wisdom, and all their useless empty repetitions.

And go back to the beginning and find out how the early church prayed, and why God responded to them in such power. We know the scripture says, Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today, and forever. Nothing about God changes.

Nothing about God's character changes. Nothing about God's response to His people changes. The only thing that really changes oftentimes is our perception of God throughout history, and our being able to lay hold of what He has promised to do for us.

Under this scene of prayer, God immediately and powerfully responds. But this prayer actually has its beginning back in Acts chapter 3. So in order to understand what's going on here, we have to go back and look at the situation as it begins. Now, Acts chapter 3 and verse 1, we see Peter and John arriving at a place where prayers are being offered.

Scripture says, Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer. So there's a prayer meeting going on in the temple, being the ninth hour. Now, these are prayers that are being offered in the temple, but yet these prayers are powerless.

They're powerless prayers. And we have an ample supply of powerless prayer meetings all throughout the country today. An ample supply.

Thank God for the many who even take the time to gather. We've gotten to a place now in the church of Jesus Christ where the prayer meeting is an odyssey in the house of God. It's something you don't see very often.

You might see long conventions and things like that, but very rare will you drive by a church and see prayer meeting, Holy Ghost prayer meeting. As a matter of fact, I don't know if I've ever seen it since even coming to the United States about almost seven years ago now. Powerless prayer meetings.

But, thank God, at least there are some. But so many are powerless. The people come in.

They have so little concept of God. They've been so long out of the Word of God, so long alienated personally from the purposes of God, which is the winning of the lost here on this earth into the eternal heaven provided for them through the blood of Christ, that they get together to pray and are not even sure what they're to pray for. Oftentimes the prayers are misguided.

Sometimes the prayers are self-consuming. It's sad to say, tragically to say, as Pastor David shared this morning, many of the church groups end up just praying their own lusts. They just end up coming into the house of God, and it's as if they're approaching some kind of a cosmic Santa Claus, just looking for their own good, for their own betterment, their own blessing.

That seems to be the very source, even, of all of their prayer. But here is a powerless prayer meeting that Peter and John come into, and it's evidenced by the presence at the very gate of a 40-or-so-year-old man who, from his birth, the Scripture says in verse 2, a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple, which is called beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple. This young man was without strength.

He had to be carried daily to the gate of the temple, the prayer meeting. It was a gate which was called beautiful, which was a type possibly of that which represents the intent of God for all of humanity. God intends that the gate of His house be a place where the lame, the poor, the maimed, the blind, the nobodies, the nothings of society may come in, find freedom, and be given beauty for the ashes of their lives.

And here is this powerless man, every day, being carried in and laid at this gate which is called beautiful, yet he himself is in a less than beautiful condition. He is powerless, he is lame, and he is poor. And he has learned to fix his hope on all that he had been conditioned to expect from those who daily arrived to offer their prayers to God.

Here is this crippled man, this powerless man, and all that he could get from the people going to the prayer meeting was a coin or two clinking in his cup. What a tragedy! Reaching out at the gate of what is supposed to be beauty, what's supposed to be strength, what's supposed to be power, and he reaches out and all you can hear is clink, clink, clink, and an ominous, powerless silence of those who pass him by on their way into the house to profess their love for God. It's tragic, and it speaks of the apostate condition of any church in any generation that has lost a heart for people that most tragically have lost their heart for God himself.

Think of it, a crippled man at the gate, clink, clink, clink, clink, as people come in at the hour of prayer. But something is about to change. There are two men that have been in the presence of God.

They've been touched by God, they've been filled with the passion of God, they have the compassion of God, they're not interested in the accolades of men, they're not interested in all the things that the society around them has to offer, they're interested in one thing, and that's the work of God. And the work of God is to heal, the work of God is to restore, the work of God is to open prison doors, give sight to the blind,

give strength to the weary and to the weak, give direction to the confused, give hope to those that are hopeless, bring to the cleansing blood of Christ those that are stained and forever tarnished by the power of sin in their lives, to bring them to healing who are wounded and grinded by the abuses that they possibly have suffered in the past. These men don't care anything for formality.

They're about to rule in a perfectly good prayer meeting by the standards of that day. They walk into the house of God. The man at the gate looks at them, expecting to receive all that he's received from the house of his day.

Another couple of coins stuck in his cup and an ominous silence from them. But Peter looked at him and began to do something that you and I would be wise to consider doing today. Peter began to speak into his life.

Hallelujah. Peter said to him, silver and gold have I not. Now, I don't think necessarily that Peter didn't have a coin to buy lunch.

That wasn't the issue. Peter was saying to him, this is not what you need. This is not my trust.

I don't trust in gold. I trust in God. And Peter was saying, I've got something much greater than you need.

I have it and I'm going to give it to you. And he begins to speak into his life. He says, in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.

Here are words of spiritual authority that flow from a heart convinced of the purpose and power of God. Words that impart faith and strength, enabling this man to rise from his poor and powerless condition. Folks, that's the call of the church.

That's the call that's on your life, in your community, your neighborhood, your workplace, your home. It's not just to walk silent and throw a couple of coins at a problem. It's for you and I to lay hold of the heart of God.

And once we've laid hold of his heart, to begin to speak into people's life. Speak words of spiritual authority that says, you don't have to be like this anymore. Rise up and walk.

God has provided everything you need. Verse 8, the scripture says, not only did he speak, but he helped him. He took him, verse 7, he says, he took him by the right hand and lifted him up.

Sometimes it's not enough just to offer a few words. We've got to stretch out and, as it is, give strength. And immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.

And he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered with them into the temple. Walking and leaping and praising God. These are words that Peter spoke that brought him into the power of God.

Gave him beauty for ashes. Beauty for his tarnished life. Beauty for his powerlessness.

The stench of the man, perhaps, laying there every day, unable to care for himself. But one man walks by, or two men walk by, and one speaks into his life. And stretches out his hand.

And in the power of God, he is raised out of that condition. And he is given a living testimony. Hallelujah.

He walked into the temple, walking and leaping and praising God. Into the midst of a prayer meeting comes a man who's transformed. Hallelujah.

And the people, the Scripture says in verse 9, saw him walking and praising God. David said it the best. They not only heard him, but they saw him.

There was such an inward working of God that it could not be contained. It began to manifest itself outwardly. David said it this way.

He has put a new song in my mouth. Even praising to our God, many shall see it in fear and shall trust in the Lord. Now he had this new song, because in the previous verse, in Psalm 40, verse 2, the Scripture says, he brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and he has established my goings.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. We need more ruined prayer meetings across the nation.

We need more prayer meetings disrupted by the power of God. Disrupted by the poor. Disrupted by the blind as they come in.

The lame. The maimed. And the power of God touches them and they begin to dance and leap in the presence of God and praise Him for what He has done.

Verse 10 says, they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened to him. A leaping and praising man entering in and disturbing their powerless prayer meeting. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. I hope you catch the irony of that tonight, because we sure could use a lot more of that in the house of God. Verse 13, Peter takes the opportunity now to preach to the people who gather around at this amazing thing as a life is changed.

A life is changed by somebody who simply made the choice to speak. You know, there was a story in the Old Testament about three lepers that were dying outside the city gates and the city was surrounded by an opposing army. And they went into the camp.

They said, well, if we stay here, we die. So they went into the opposing enemy's camp. The Scripture says God made the footsteps of three lepers coming down the sand dune sound like an opposing army coming in their direction.

And the Holy Ghost literally turned up the volume of their footsteps and caused the opposing army to flee. And they all of a sudden found themselves in the midst of a huge, wonderful spoil. But they said something to themselves that we would be wise to say to our own hearts again today.

They said, it is not a good thing that we've come across such a wonderful provision that has been given to us to spare our lives and we keep it to ourselves while people are dying in the city that we have just come out of. They said, we must go back. Even though the city had not done much good for them.

They had put them outside the gates and, you know, lepers were ostracized from the city. But they said, nevertheless, they were manifesting the heart of God. We have now what they need.

We know why they treated us the way they did because they don't have now what we have. And we've got to go back and tell them that we've found an incredible treasure that can sustain their lives. Peter

preaches to the people and he says in verse 13, The God of Abraham and of Isaac, Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his son, Jesus, whom you have delivered up and denied him in the presence of Pilate when he was determined to let him go.

But you denied the Holy One and the just and desired a murderer to be granted unto you and killed the Prince of Life, whom God has raised from the dead whereof we are witnesses. And his name, through faith in his name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yea, the faith which is by him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

Peter stood and said, God sent his son, but you didn't want his son to reign over you. And instead of his son, you desire a murderer. Now, the murderer, historically, I suppose you could say, was Barabbas, when the crowd stood there and said we would have Barabbas and crucify Christ.

But technically speaking, that's the truth. But there's another principle behind it. Jesus himself said in John, he said in chapter 8, verses 42 and 44, he said, If God were your father, you would love me.

For I proceeded forth and came from God, and neither came I of myself, but he sent me. You are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father you will do. He was a murderer, this is the devil, from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him.

And Peter was effectively saying, God sent you life, but you chose death. He sent you the giver of life, but you chose the one who takes life away. And you desired that he would reign over you, rather than the Son of God.

And you tried to put him away from your coast, you tried to push him out, but you can't push God out of the world he created. Hallelujah. You can't push God out of his own creation.

Tell me, how can you do that? Tell me who's powerful enough to stand against the hand of God. Who can outwit God? God, who by the spoken word created this universe and puny mankind. All the kings and the rulers of society somehow think that they can push God out of their society.

How foolish to even think such a thing. You see, God doesn't abide in the laws, and God doesn't abide in all these things, these structures of men. He dwells in the hearts of people.

And just at the moment when a society thinks they have succeeded in pushing him out of their coast, the Holy Ghost comes, he begins to fill people once again. They stand up, they begin to speak words of life, and life begins, life begins, life begins, life begins, life, and God begins to pour into humanity again. Hallelujah.

School officials can think that they've pushed Christ out of our schools, but one girl, one boy can stand in a flagpole and begin to pray. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

Harvard University, in its ignorance, can think that in the learning of man we can push the one who created the universe out of the halls and recreate and redefine truth. But one teacher opens her apartment and begins to share Christ, and all of a sudden the whole thing begins to turn around. Hallelujah.

The desire to be self-ruled, to be lawless towards God and to rebel against his ways, this is what Peter was saying. While at the same time wanting to push Christ out of your borders is evidence that in your self-willed ignorance you would rather the rule and corresponding fruit of Satan's kingdom than that of the

kingdom of God. Oh, folks, I tell you, this is the only alternative left to those who want to be rulers of their own destiny and don't want to submit to God.

We're living in a tragic era today, a tragic, tragic generation. My heart grieves at the ignorance of America. The United States of America, a nation truly founded by people at least who had a sincere desire to be under the governorship of God.

They had a sincere desire, I believe that, many did at least anyway, to have laws that reflected the laws of God, to establish a country that reflected the heart of God in the sense that they said, Bring us, send us your poor, send us those that you don't want, we will take them here. This is a land of freedom, freedom in a sense being based on the virtual word of God, the laws of God, the character of God, the nature of God, the power of God. There was an understanding of these things, but now, becoming wise, I see a nation that is becoming foolish, more and more foolish every day.

A people, once again, as history repeats itself, who think that we can somehow push God out of our borders, away from our children, and still continue to prosper. What a tragic, foolish mistake. God is about to prove this whole thing wrong.

He's going to begin to, He's already doing it now. These shootings happening in schools and such like, are only the beginnings of an underwrought of judgment that is already upon this society. James Dobson, who is the author of the newsletter, Focus on the Family, I believe about a year ago, conceded in one of his newsletters, when he said, I made the wrong assumption.

He said, I assumed that the majority of Americans were moral. Isn't that a tragic thing to have to say? But he said, I believe that I've been an error in this thing, and this whole battle will never be won in the political arena. And in one of his newsletters he said, I dedicate the rest of my life to doing what I was called to do, to preaching and teaching and publishing and defending the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The only power that can change the hearts of men and kingdoms. Recently, these are just some excerpts from a recent newsletter. I just want to share them with you, in case you may not be aware of them.

A recent decision by a federal district judge ruled in May, this past May, that displays of historic American documents in eastern Kentucky schools and county courthouses are unconstitutional and had to be removed from the walls of the schools and courthouses. Now listen to the documents which are now unconstitutional in eastern Kentucky. An excerpt from the Declaration of Independence which reads, All men are empowered by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, had to be taken off the wall of the schools.

The preamble of the Constitution of Kentucky which states, We the people of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, grateful to Almighty God for the civil, political, and religious liberties we enjoy, and invoking the continuance of these blessings, do ordain and establish this Constitution, removed from the courthouses and from the schools. The national motto, In God We Trust, removed. A proclamation by President Reagan marking 1983, the year of the Bible, removed.

A proclamation by President Abraham Lincoln designating April 30, 1863, a national day of prayer and humiliation, removed from public display. An excerpt from President Lincoln's memorials which reads, The Bible is the best gift God has ever given to men, removed from our schools, removed from display in the courthouses. The Mayflower Compact in which the colony's founders invoked the name of God and

explained that their journey was taken, among other reasons, for the glory of God and the advancement of the Christian faith, removed as no longer constitutional and cannot be displayed in their schools.

Now, folks, I want to tell you something. It would be tragic enough if this was isolated. These are not isolated incidents, folks.

These are happening all over the country now. A judicial branch that is moving its hand against Almighty God. Recently, a panel of the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in the state of Ohio struck down the 1959 state motto that reads, With God, all things are possible.

Two of the three judges claimed it expresses a uniquely Christian thought and it is therefore now unconstitutional. All of these things, the pushing God out of the schools, out of the court system, out of the borders of the country, are leading to all kinds of debauchery. One of them, which is of worthy note, which was a curriculum which was written for children in New York City's elementary schools ten years ago and it came to be known as Children of the Rainbow.

Some of you may be familiar with this. Which taught thousands of wide-eyed kids to regard homosexuality as an alternative lifestyle. One of the textbooks used was Daddy's Roommate, a tale in which Daddy leaves Mommy for his gay lover.

Another was entitled, Heather Has Two Mommies, which described lesbian motherhood in glowing terms. This is the end result, folks. We begin to push God out of our borders.

A people would rather be under the governorship of the devil than the governorship of God. Now, into the midst of a people who had just, in their own mind, put Christ away. They crucified Christ.

They preferred a murderer over the risen Lord. Into the midst of this situation, which I would say probably looked as hopeless as any. Yes, in America, in North America, there's an attempt to push Christ out of our borders.

The word of God out of our schools and courts. And virtually eradicate the name of God from society. But this was a generation that had literally the living God, the embodied Son of God, in their midst.

And they had just finished Him off, in a sense. They crucified Him. But you know, you cannot push God out of your borders.

When God has determined to do something, He's going to do it. It doesn't matter what mankind does. Into the midst of this situation, rise up men and women that have no formal education to speak of.

They are just tax gatherers. They are fishermen. There are some harlots that have come to Christ.

And the leopards, rather, the blind. All the rest of these. They are now empowered by the Spirit of God.

They are moving in unison with the heart of God. They're declaring the truth of God. And nothing can stop them.

Nothing can stop them. Because there is a power higher than all of the secular powers that are around about us. Now, Acts chapter 4. Moving on.

We have Peter and John's presentation of the healing truth of Christ. And you'd think that society would get all excited when the lame man is healed. But society doesn't get excited.

All you have to do is lead somebody to Christ in the workplace. And you'll find out that your bosses won't get excited about it. Lead somebody to Christ that comes in, that used to formally tear everybody to pieces and come in half drunk to work and pass a tolerable day as it is in the ways of the modern world.

And lead that man to Christ or that woman to Christ. And all of a sudden they come in and they're dancing and leaping in the presence of God. They're passing out tracks.

Folks, I know what I'm talking about. I've been there. I've lived it.

I've lived in a place of leading policemen to Jesus Christ and watching them do this very thing. Go to the boss that hated me. Hated me with a passion and sticking tracks right in his face and telling him he needed to get saved.

All excited about God, this newfound life, this telling him everything I've been looking for, I've found in Christ. A man who was transferred into the office I worked in, I've shared this with you before, who had a terminal illness, put there just to die. He received Christ as his Savior and I never laid hands on him.

I never prayed for him. I never talked about healing. But the moment he received Christ, he was miraculously healed.

God touched his body and took the disease away. He was 100% restored. God did it.

A marvelous testimony. He filled the whole orchard with the Holy Ghost. There were seven men in my section and I was there I guess about three, four, five, I forget how long, it was less than six months and six were saved and filled with the Holy Ghost.

And you'd think everybody would get excited about that. Here's Tom, he's healed. His body's healed.

But they didn't get excited. They got quite annoyed with me. And they spake to the people.

As they spake to the people, chapter 4, verse 1, the priest, the captain of the temple, the Sadducees came upon them. Here are all the leaders of the day. Their whole tinsel kingdom is now being threatened by the power of God.

Being grieved that they taught the people and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them. Now they're not talking about praying for a blessing here.

They laid hands on them and put them in hold until the next day for it was now even time. In other words, they called them on the carpet. That's exactly what would happen.

When you begin to step out in the workplace, I'm not going to stand here and tell you it's going to be easy. I'm going to tell you the moment God begins to work, you're going to get called on the carpet. Jesus said they called the master of the house Beelzebub.

How much more are they going to call them of his household? Don't think that you're going to escape persecution when you step out for Jesus Christ. Not everyone is going to think you're lovely and wonderful because you come into the office telling them, I found the truth that will lead you to heaven. No, sir.

They're not going to be happy about it. How be it many of them which heard the word beneath and the number of men was about 5,000. People are coming to Christ.

Thousands are getting saved. And it came to pass on the morrow that the rulers, the elders, the scribes, Anastas, the high priest, Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were the kindred of the high priest were gathered together at Jerusalem. And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power or by what name have you done this? And Peter filled with the Holy Ghost said unto them, You rulers of the people and elders of Israel, if we this day be examined of the good deed done to this impotent or that powerless man, and by what means he is made whole, all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him does this man stand here before you all.

And this is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, and has become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. When they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled, and they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus.

And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. Folks, I remember these days. I remember these days who could argue that Tom had been healed of a fatal illness.

Nobody could argue it, but yet there was a rage that began to well up in their hearts. But when they had commanded them to go outside of the council, they conferred among themselves. You can be sure in your workplace that there will be some meetings after hours about you when you start to share Jesus Christ.

Saying, What shall we do to these men? For that indeed a notable miracle has been done by them as manifest to all that dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. But that it spread no further among the people, let us straightly threaten them that they speak henceforth to no man in this name. And they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.

Anybody ever been there before? Let me see. Have you ever been there? They called them in and commanded them, You are not to speak in this name. But listen, Peter and John answered and said, Folks, there is a time to stand.

There is a time to stand. Homosexuals will stand for their devout agenda. And folks, I'm personally, in my heart, I say it's time for the church of Jesus Christ to stop cowering and apologizing in a corner.

It's time to stand for the truth that we know is right. It's time to stand for the sake of our children. You remember Nehemiah when the enemy was coming in and trying to stop and hinder the work.

Nehemiah said, Remember, fight for your families. Fight for your sons and daughters. Fight for your children.

Fight for this society. There is a time to stand. Hallelujah.

Count the cost, yes, before you stand, but count the cost of not standing. Count the cost of countless lives who may never have a chance to hear Christ if you and I don't stand and speak to them the truth. Hallelujah.

I determined in my heart years ago I would rather go to jail than stop speaking about Jesus Christ. But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken to you more than to God judge yourself. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. So, verse 21, when they further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them because of the people.

For all men glorified God for that which was done. For the man was above forty years old on whom this miracle of healing was showed. Now we come to the prayer meeting.

How are you going to understand something? And being let go, they came to their own company and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them. And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord. One accord.

One heart. One understanding. They lifted up their voice because there was one purpose.

That purpose was to see men and women brought to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. To see that which men had desired even to their own harm turned around. To yield their lives as a living sacrifice if necessary for the purposes of God.

Folks, you have to understand the cross was very fresh to these people. It was fresh. The history says that the roads were lined with crosses all the way into Jerusalem.

The screams, the agony, the blood, the brutality was very fresh. But yet these people, they were moving to the heartbeat of God that beat within them. They had found the mind of God.

They knew the purposes of God. They were not self-consumed, obviously, because if they were, their prayer would have been a lot different. They would have been praying, Oh God, help us.

Oh God, protect us. Oh God, keep us. Oh God, hide us.

And I fear sometimes that's the way when we get into this difficulty that we begin to pray. Oh God. Oh God.

Me, me, my, my, mine. I, I, I, I, I. Oh God. Help me, Lord.

But with one heart, with one accord, they began to pray. And if you can see it today, there was something in this prayer that brought to them a renewed baptism, as it were, in the power of God. Folks, we need to pray like this.

And they began to pray, and it says, with one accord. And they said, Lord, this is where they started. Thou art God, which has made heaven and earth and the sea and all that in them is.

You know, we're, oftentimes when we start, here's how we start praying. Oh Lord, I have a problem. A big problem.

A huge problem. This problem is as big as the world. Nobody else has ever had a problem like my problem.

Oh little God, can you deal with my big problem? No, they didn't start that way. They said, You are God. Folks, they didn't have to remind God of who He was.

It was to remind themselves of who they were praying to. I am praying to God. I am praying to the One.

We are lifting our voice to the One who made heaven and earth and the sea and all that in them is. That's who we're praying to. You are God.

We need to start our prayers that way. We need to get up in the morning and pray that way. We need to go to bed at night and pray like that.

You are God. You are God. With a spoken word, You created the world.

You create every man. You hold everyone in the palm of Your hand. No matter how big a dictator might be, His heart is in Your hand.

It can't beat another beat without Your permission. You are God. You made all things by one, by the word of Your mouth.

Hallelujah. You are God. Then they began to quote Scripture.

It's important to know your Bible when you pray. Like our brother today that prayed the promises. You have to know them.

Not in your head, your heart. The Bible, God said, there's a day coming I'm going to write my law in your heart. Not in the small Bible you keep in your breast pocket of your jacket.

I'm going to put it in your heart. You have to know the Word. You have to begin to pray the Word.

You have to agree. Praying the Word is simply agreeing with God. It's so important to know what He said about certain circumstances.

God, You are God. You are God. And You said, You're not giving me a spirit of fear, but power, love and a sound mind.

You see, you have something to pray now. Hallelujah. And as you begin to pray, something gets into your spirit.

And the timidity and the weakness and everything associated with the fallen nature of humanity begins to be crushed underfoot. And God in the power of His Spirit begins to raise you up and raise me up of people of faith who cannot be denied. I've been praying that way lately.

I was in my apartment just a little while ago and I was walking up and down the aisle and I said, I will not accept defeat. I will not be denied. The things that I'm praying for are in Your Word.

I don't have to beg You for them. They're in Your book. I stand on it.

I stand on the truth of this book and every promise You've made to me. The very honor of God is at stake in fulfilling His promises that He has made to us. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. You are God. We need to start our prayer meetings with about a half hour of that, folks.

You are God. And begin to declare who He is, who we're praying to. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. We tragically make a mistake when we start with a problem because the problem gets big and God gets very small. We walk out more defeated than when we started to pray.

Who by the mouth of Thy servant David has said, Why did the heathen rage and the people imagine vain things? Hallelujah. You see, you are God and you have already spoken through David, Your servant. And you said, Why do the people imagine foolish things? I think the best way I can show you, if you go with me to Psalm 21, just keep a marker in Acts chapter 4 and go to Psalm 21.

Why do the people imagine vain things? Now, what do you think those vain things are? Help me now. Why do the people think they can triumph over God? Why do they think they can destroy the plan of God? Why do they think they can stop the people of God, the purposes of God? Why do they imagine these empty things? Listen to Psalm 21, verse 8. Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies. Thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee.

Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of thine anger. The Lord shall swallow them up in His wrath, and the fire shall devour them. Their fruit shalt thou destroy from the earth, and their seed from among the children of men.

This is the end result of those who will not yield to God. This is the end. 4, verse 11, They intended evil against thee.

They imagined a mischievous device which they are not able to perform. They imagined they could triumph over God. Therefore shalt thou make them turn their back, when thou shalt make ready thine arrows upon thy strings against the face of them.

This is what the psalmist is saying. God, I have seen you do this. Now, David wrote this psalm.

He says, I've seen you do this. I've watched them come against me in so many ways. But God, I've seen what you can do on the earth.

I see that your plan cannot be stopped. Be thou exalted, Lord, in thine own strength, so will we sing and praise thy power. This church was quoting, actually, if you'll turn back just very quickly, they were quoting Psalm 2, when they said, Lord, you are God, and you said by the mouth of your servant David.

Psalm 2 says, Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves and their rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his anointing. His people. They take counsel against God and against his people.

And they say, Let us break their bands asunder and cast away their cords from us. You see, there's a recognition in the spiritual realm that God has given us power and authority to bind and cast down imaginations and wicked devices of evil. But the kings of the earth are really pawns of the devil himself and every demonic force are saying, Let's take counsel.

Let's get fear into their hearts. Let's stop them. Let's bind them.

Because if we don't bind them, they're going to bind us. This is their counsel. This is what David says, He that sits in the heavens shall last.

The Lord shall have them in derision. God says, I will send them on paths. They're only men.

I'll shift them all over the place. Then shall he speak to them in his wrath and vex them in his sordid pleasure. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.

I will declare the decree the Lord has said unto me. Now this is about Christ speaking. Thou art my son.

This day have I begotten thee. Ask of me and I'll give you the heathens for thine inheritance. The uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.

Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron. Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings.

Be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice and trembling. Kiss the son.

In other words, let the fruit of your lips begin to honor him. Honor him with your hearts. Honor him with your words.

Lest he be angry and you perish from the way when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him. Go back to the prayer meeting now in Acts chapter 4. For by the mouth, verse 25, of thy servant David, I said, Why did the heathen rage and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against his Christ.

Now this is what the Scripture says. Now they're applying their present situation to the Word of God. Now you can do that.

You can do that with your office or whatever it is coming against you. For of the truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou has anointed both Herod and Pontius Pilate with the Gentiles and the people of Israel were gathered together. In other words, they're saying it looks like the whole of society is now against us.

Herod, Pontius Pilate, the Gentiles, the people of Israel are gathered together and verse 28, if you can see this, I think it's going to make you shout as it did me as I was looking at it. For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done. They've all gathered together.

They're all moving against your people. They're moving against the testimony of Christ. But they are completely ignorant of the fact that you foreknew all they would try to do and that they're only allowed to do that which you have already allowed them to do.

They're only doing what you've allowed them. They're moving in mass thinking they can push you out of their borders. But God, you knew it before the world was even created.

You set bounds around them. And you said, you can do this, but you can only go so far. You can only do that much because you are God.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. You know, if somebody wicked is prospering against you, it's only because God foresees him and a reason has allowed it.

But they cannot go any farther than God has already predetermined them to go. Isn't that wonderful to know that? Hallelujah. And now, now, verse 29, I love this part of the prayer.

Now, Lord, behold their threatenings. And grant to thy servants. What do they say? And protect us.

Hide us. Stick us in a cave. No.

Behold their threatenings and grant unto thy servants that with all boldness they may speak thy word. In other words, your word is complete. It is true.

It is sure. It is the only sure path of eternal life and life. It is eternal.

Your word will punish the wicked and reward the righteous. Your word will set the captives free. Your word will heal the wounded in heart.

Your word will give strength to the weak, comfort the weary, give new sight to the blind, bring to life that which was dead, cause there to be singing again in our streets. Your word is the only thing that can bring again joy and rejoicing into your house. There is nothing but the word of God that will make a difference.

Your word will establish a people in truth over which hell and death have no power. Your word will build that which was broken down and will restore that which was taken away. Thine is the kingdom.

Thine is the power. Thine is the glory. There is no other kingdom.

There is no other power. God, God, behold their threatenings and give us more of that which got us into trouble in the first place. That was their prayer.

Give us more. They think they can stop your kingdom? They don't know who you are. Give us more.

Heal more people. Give us a word of power. Give us a word to speak that will speak into people's lives and cause them to be raised up and glorify you.

Give us a double portion of what we had yesterday. Fill us, God, with your Spirit. Stretch forth your hand.

Don't hold back. Stretch it forth to heal. Let signs and wonders be done in the name of thy Holy Child, Jesus.

Set free the oppressed. Give hope to the hopeless. Set free those that are blind.

Give healing to those that are bruised in heart. Give our children direction again in our streets. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. They can threaten all they want, but they can't stop the hand of God. They can't stop what you've determined to do.

Stretch forth your hand. Give me more of that which got me into trouble yesterday. Hallelujah.

That's the kind of prayer that brings the power of God into a prayer meeting. Not a prayer of self-consumption, a prayer of self-protection, and all the rest of that. But, oh God, even if I go to jail, let them threaten me.

There's a higher call. You gave your life for me. It's only reasonable that I should yield my life for your purposes.

And once you and I know the passion of God for the lost, nothing will stop you. Tell me, if it was your child that was playing on the street and the crowd tried to stop you, tell me, who could stop you from rescuing your own child? Who could speak a word into your life and threaten you and tell you not to do it or suffer the consequences and you would obey them? Not a single soul could stop you from doing it. Once you know the heart of God, once you understand what was in His heart that caused Him to come to this world

and die for sinners, once that is implanted within you, you know the passion, the power of God, the compassion of God.

There is nothing, there is nobody, no power of hell can stop you from speaking the name of Jesus. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

My prayer, my prayer is Jesus, give me spiritual authority to speak to a life and to see it changed. That's the miracle. I'm not looking just for some kind of as wonderful as it is healing or something like that, but God give me the power to speak to the oppressed and the downtrodden, those that are without God, they're cast out of His presence.

Give me the power to speak life into them and the power to stand against every threatening voice of hell that will try to stop it because you are God. You are in control, complete control. Every knee will bow, every tongue will confess.

And yes, if I have to endure scorn for a season, God give me more. If they send me to jail, give me a triple portion of anointing to preach to those that are inside the prison house. And when they prayed, that place where they were assembled together, the place was shaken where they were assembled.

Shaken. I don't know, I don't really know why God shook it and I'm supposing that there'd be a lot of theories about it. I have only one and I'll just share it by way of what I think might have been in the heart of God.

The Lord never does disdain displays of power for no particular reason. But in Hebrews 12, 26, 27, He says, Yet once more I shake not the earth only but also heaven. And this word, yet once more, signifies the removing of those things that are shaken as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken might remain.

Wherefore, we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, cannot be moved. Hallelujah. Cannot be moved.

Cannot be moved. Let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear for our God is a consuming fire. I think in my heart that perhaps the Holy Ghost was saying, I'm going to show you that I'm going to shake everything that can be shaken.

But what cannot be shaken are a people who have so laid hold of my heart that they are willing to follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. They are willing to speak no matter what the personal cost is. They're going to come out of hiding.

They're not ashamed of me. They're not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ. They're not ashamed to confess me before men.

And they're going to stand. I'm not talking about any presumptuous arrogance. You need to be very careful about that.

That when you stand to speak it's not an arrogant spirit speaking through you. Or arrogant humanity trying to preach the gospel. I'm talking about somebody who has a genuine burden for the lost.

A genuine burden to see the kingdom of God advance and stands in that power of God. Everything around will be shaken. You folks, your bosses don't have power over you.

You have a much higher authority if you know Jesus Christ living inside of your life. They can call you on the carpet and they can threaten you and threaten you again. But I challenge you if that's beginning to happen as we begin to reach out into the city you can be sure the devil has always tried to stop the work of God that way and you can be sure that he will try to stop it that way again.

Superintendents will threaten you for having a Bible study in the building. Neighbors will threaten you. You go to your workplace and they'll tell you your career is finished.

Folks, I was told that. Mike, your career is finished. It's over.

You've disgraced us in a sense because you're no longer one of the boys as they used to call it. But I tell you the very people that threatened me within a few years were all gone and I was still there. I was still there.

And they were filled with the Holy Ghost and they spoke the Word of God with boldness, power, compassion, authority. Hallelujah. You have to be determined in your heart that you want to do this.

As Pastor Dave shared this morning you can't be double minded and know this walk. You can't. You'll end up hiding.

You'll end up with a silent testimony. Living your life hoping somebody notices and asks and nobody ever notices and nobody asks. Because there's not much hope in you.

You have to know the promises of God. These have to become a higher authority than circumstance. They have to become a higher law than the threats that will come against you for preaching the gospel.

But I'm not personally content to see our kids going to hell in New York City and I sure hope you're not. I'm not personally content to give them over to the devil. This is a hungry generation.

A hungry generation. Harvard University now, apartment being filled with university students coming to Christ. We had a lady here this morning that brought 15 university students in a van to our service this afternoon actually at 3 o'clock.

15 students from NYU, I believe it's Columbia University this afternoon came to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ from somebody that has made a choice to speak to them. Folks, you and I can make a difference. But we have to ask God.

We have to pray the way God has commissioned the church to pray. It's time for this kind of praying again. It's time that we we're not going to ever win in the political arena.

Face it. It's not, the battle will not be won. It will not be waged there.

That's a losing concern. The battle will be waged heart to heart, life to life, home to home. Transformed.

It will be waged by the kingdom of God coming within the lives of those whom society even says there's no hope for them. So far gone. Or perhaps so ingrained in sin and rebellion that they will never hear.

The kingdom of God will come and raise them up. And they will go into their schools. They will be standing leaping and praising God.

I've been praying a specific prayer. I've been saying, Lady God, take the worst in our high schools. Take those that are schoolyard bullies.

Take those that back down from nobody. And give them the Holy Ghost. And set them in the schoolyard to preach the gospel.

God can do this. God can do it if we will believe him. Now Paul, in 2nd Timothy, this is going to be my altar call tonight.

2nd Timothy chapter 1, verse 7. Must be 2nd Timothy. Oh, it is 2nd Timothy. Sorry.

Chapter 1. Paul says to Timothy, God has not given us the spirit of fear, but power and love and a sound mind. Now I believe that sound mind comes from knowing who we are in Christ, who Christ is, what God has accomplished, and is doing in the earth. In verse 8, he says, Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of the Lord, nor of me his prisoner.

But be thou a partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God. Paul is saying, Timothy, it is going to cost you, Timothy, my son. But don't be afraid.

You, you, God, you have the spirit of God. He has given you a soundness of mind, a love that will cause you, constrain you to reach out. And you have the power of the Holy Ghost within your life.

Don't be ashamed of what God has done in your life. Don't be ashamed to speak it into the lives of others. Don't be ashamed of those that have gone before and are suffering perhaps because of their declaration of the gospel.

But be a partaker of the affliction. There was an invitation. Timothy, you're going to have trouble.

But be a partaker according to the power of God who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purposes and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. God has not given us a spirit of fear. Therefore, be not ashamed.

Be not ashamed. My altar call is simple tonight. God raised up Times Square Church and he planted us here right in the middle of Times Square in New York City, one of the most wicked areas I believe in all of this, perhaps all of the country.

And he planted the church here and he's given us an incredible measure of himself. And if anybody has been attending here for any amount of time, you now know who God is. You know who he is.

You know what he's done. You know what he can do. You know you're needed him.

You know his provision, the depth of his provision. But folks, we are not here just to experience his presence all to ourselves from now till Christ comes to take us home. There is a purpose for the church.

The body. We're the body. We're supposed to continue the work of Christ on the earth.

That's his body. He said when there was a time he said in his word that, you know, the things that I'm doing are going to be multiplied as it were. You're going to do many more things than I'm doing.

He was saying I'm limited in the sense of this one physical body. But I'm going to have a much larger body. Once I die and I'm raised again from the dead, I'm going to send the Holy Spirit and there's a people

that are going to become my body.

And they're going to carry on my work. And if truly we are going to carry on the work we've got to consider Jesus. We've got to consider what he did.

Doesn't the scripture tell us to keep him before our faces? Who for the joy that was set before him endured all of the opposition. Endured the scorn. Everything that was heaped against him because he knew of a day when people are going to come to him and going to come home to live with him for all of eternity.

God has not given us a spirit of fear. Therefore be not ashamed. I know this is a high calling.

I know it's a holy calling. I know it's a hard calling. But it's the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We don't do well if we hold to ourselves this truth that God has given into our hands. My other call I guess is really simple. It's for those who say God I need courage.

I'm a coward at heart. I need courage to stand in my workplace, school, my community. Enough of a silent testimony.

I want power of God to speak into people's lives. I want the compassion of Christ to know your heart God before I even speak. I want your Holy Spirit to give me words of knowledge, words of wisdom.

I want your giftings to come into my life. I want to be able to speak right to the heart and cut away all the periphery issues and go right to the heart. I want the power to reach out a hand to somebody maybe who's laid cripple at the Gate Beautiful for 40 years and not just to speak but to lift them up.

And to walk with them into the house of God dancing and leaping and praising God for what He has done. I want the power to stand against everything of hell that will try to shut my mouth. I want your power oh God because yours is the only kingdom that is going to endure.

Everything else is going to fail. It's all going to fall but your kingdom will last. If that's in your heart and I pray to God if you've been sitting here any amount of time it has to be in your heart by now.

If it's not, you've missed the whole point of the gospel. Yes, you've gotten saved but you've missed the second part. Loving the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength but the second is like the first.

Loving your neighbor as much as you love yourself. Times for church there's a holy calling on us as a body. God has given us a mandate to bless the city.

I don't know and I won't give you numbers. I don't know how many are going to get saved. That's up to God.

If I give you a number He can do beyond what I even think or ask or any of the pastors of this church. But I challenge you in Christ's name to open your mouth and begin to speak. Father, I can't say any more.

There's nothing more I can say. I ask you for the grace to live this message. Myself, Lord.

I ask you for the power to stand and speak. Lord, I remember a day when there's nothing in the world could stop me from speaking the gospel of Jesus Christ. God, I don't want that to ever diminish.

I thank you, Father that you are speaking to this church. You are leading us. You are showing us again tonight that even somebody that takes the time to speak to somebody in the laundry room wins a soul to God.

Oh, Father in Heaven give us courage now. Give us courage. You are God.

We believe that with all of our hearts. You made heaven and earth to heathen rage but they can't triumph over the work of your hands. I ask you to give courage to this body for the coming days in Jesus' name.

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