

When They Heard That, Acts 4 24

by Fred Lunsford

This sermon emphasizes the importance of seeking God's face and praying for revival, drawing from personal experiences and biblical examples. It highlights the power of prayer and unity in the face of challenges and opposition, encouraging believers to humble themselves, seek God's face, and turn from wicked ways to experience a revival in their lives and communities.

Scripture: Acts 4:24, 2 Chronicles 7:14, Luke 2:49, John 10:27, James 4:7, Psalm 51:10, Acts 4:31, Matthew 18:19, 1 Thessalonians 5:16

Topics: "Seeking God's Face", "Power of Prayer and Unity"

Description

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Transcript

What an honor it is to have this privilege and opportunity to be back once again in First Baptist Church, Andrews. Before I start saying what I'm going to say, I've got something I want to say. When you get old, you have all kinds of stories about old people.

It appears that in Graham County, several years ago, Priscilla Cope might know who they are. I don't know. But anyway, it appears that this old couple in Graham County were in their nineties.

They lived back up in one of the coves and hollers over there in Graham County. It was a hot summer day. Shadows had fallen in the evening.

They were sitting out on the front porch in the rocking chair. The old lady said to the old man, I admire you. He said, I admire you.

He looked over at her and said, I'm tired of you too. Sometimes when you get old, you have this idea in your mind that people get tired of you. I've gone through that.

I might still have some of that in me. But I want to try to speak to you this morning on an urgent matter. Now, I've been in First Baptist Church, Andrews, many times over the years.

I've supplied several times for pastors, preached the revival. On several occasions, I've stood with the church when it was in jeopardy. One time I remember very well, three men came to my house on Sunday afternoon.

Dilley Raxter, Lee Pulliam, and Harold Mulkey. Fred, you've got to come to Andrews. You've got to come next Sunday.

We're in trouble. Please come. I said, I can't.

I'm booked somewhere else. Would you please call and see if we can get them to have somebody else, because we've got to have you. And the church was in big trouble.

So I made the call and got arrangements made for somebody else to go and do that Sunday. So on Sunday morning, about three or four o'clock in the morning, I woke up. I had a tremendous burden on my heart for the church.

I went back up in the hill above the house and got on my knees and began to pray. I was there when the sun rays broke through the trees and the birds started singing. And the Holy Spirit covered me up.

I come to the old church down there in town. The house was full of people. But the atmosphere was horrible.

I stood up there to speak that day and the Holy Spirit came down and moved in a mighty way that day among the people. And Harvey Mulkey came to me and he said, where were you about four o'clock this morning? I told him, I was up on the hill praying. He said, so was I. And he said, I knew when you stood up in that pulpit that you had been with Jesus.

What a blessed day that was. The church came out of it and did find wonderful people. Soon after that, the church called Tom Wells for pastor.

So the relationship has been tremendous. And I've had different occasions to come, but today I come in a different way than I've ever been here before. And I want to call your attention to a passage of scripture found in the book of Acts.

It's Acts chapter 4. Acts chapter 4 in verse 24. And when they heard that. That's the theme of my message.

And when they heard that. I ask you a question today, what did they hear? See in previous verses there, I'll not read them, but Peter and John had a tremendous encounter with the religious leaders of the day. Political leaders.

And they had threatened them. And told them not to preach anymore. So they go with their cohorts, their friends and fellow ministers and they share with them the story.

And it says when they heard that. Now I don't come to you with a message that I've had somebody persecute me or nobody has done that. Nobody has told me that I can't preach.

Except one person. And I will relate that to you in my story. And that person is the devil.

Now a lot of people discredit the devil and don't think he's real, but he is. My friend Al Brown has pastored over Little Brasstown where I pastored about 14 years. I was a missionary and then one day he came in my office and he was white as a shoe.

Trembling. I said, Al, what's wrong? He said, I don't know. I've been over there at the church trying to pray and he said every time I do, there's something slipping up on me.

He said, I can't figure out what it is. I said, Al, I know. Because Al had had this idea, and he'd said it to me several times, that we give the devil too much credit.

He don't have the power we think he has. I said, Al, that's the devil after you. He said, you reckon? I said, yeah, I know.

He said, let's pray. So we began to pray and rebuke the devil. Al got all right, but he's believed in the devil ever since.

The devil's real. But what did they do when they heard this story? Excuse me, what did these people, these leaders of the movement for Jesus Christ, Peter and John and the group, what did they do? Well, it says what they did in this verse. And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God.

They lifted up their voice to God with one accord. Now, what would I have done if I had been persecuted, if I had been demanded that I wouldn't preach anymore? I'd probably be whining and say, poor little me, I've been mistreated. Maybe even file a lawsuit.

But they didn't do that. They cried out to God. And one accord.

Now, here is my story, why I'm here today. Last year I had an episode and I had to be in the hospital a few days. And when I got out, the doctor had given me some specific instruction.

One is I couldn't drive a few days. None of you know about that, do you? But then when I got to where I could drive at least a little bit, I got in my little old pickup and I went up to my prayer garden. Well, we called it Gladys' Prayer Garden, it was named after her.

That's where we're going to have a prayer walk in one of the solemn assemblies in a few days. Where Dan built his cabin up there, an old home place. I go up there every day and pray.

So I went up there and parked my little old truck and sat in the truck and looked toward the Buckhorn Gap and began to pray. And I was feeling sorry for myself, Brother Bobo. I was sorry for myself.

I said, Lord, my wife's gone on to glory. She's been gone now for four years and I'm on my own land. I'm no good anymore.

I'm no good to anybody. I can't do things like I used to. And how about if it's all right with you, just take me on, Lord.

I'm ready to go. I was, I was ready to go. Now, he spoke to me.

Now, I want to verify, I want to tell you, you may not believe in God speaking to you, but he does. Not in a loud voice, audible voice, but that still small voice spoke to my heart. Said, not yet.

Not yet. Not yet. What do you mean, not yet? Tell me why not yet.

And he, he didn't answer me. I didn't hear his voice. He didn't answer me.

No response at all. Went back the next day and done the same thing. No response.

This went on for a few weeks. No response from God. Just not yet.

But I went up there one, one day, and a beautiful day. Last fall. Got out of my truck, sat down at the picnic table there, a little waterfall, you'll run in there.

Beautiful, beautiful time. Enjoying myself, and I said, God, why not yet? About that time, I was looking toward the Buckhorn Gap, back toward the Peachtree Ball, and it seemed to me I saw Jesus standing with outstretched hands. Then I heard it thunder.

It was a beautiful, peaceful time. But then it thundered again. Then I saw a cloud begin to come up over the mountain.

And then a cloud rising higher and higher. Wind began to blow. Thunder rolling.

A little bit, the sun was gone. And the rain began to fall. I jumped up and run, got in my truck, rolled up the windows, sat there.

God spoke to my heart. I reached over in the seat of my truck and picked up my Bible and opened it up. And turned to the passage where Jesus, Joseph, and Mary had gone up to the temple.

And they missed Him. He wasn't in the crowd. And they found Him in the temple discussing at twelve years old.

And they said to Him, why have you done this to us? We've been worried about you. He said to them, Do you not understand that I must be about the Father's business? I read that. And God said, I've got some unfinished business that I want you to take care of.

What is it? Through the storms that you have encountered and the beautiful days, these seventy years I've been with you. Now I want you to celebrate. And I want you to preach a revival.

And I want you to tell your friends to join you in praying for revival. That day my heart began to cry out to God for revival. It's been crying ever since.

And I promised Him I'd go wherever I could and I'd tell people to please join me. Let's do it in one accord. Not just Vengeance Creek Church or Andrew's First Baptist or Marble Springs or Little Brasstown or Murphy.

But all of us as God's children. Let's cry out to God. Because as the dear pastor as well said, Man don't bring revival, only God.

But what was the result of these people when they began to cry out to God? They prayed a little prayer that lasted two minutes at the most. And notice what was happening. In verse 31 he said, And when they had prayed, the place was shaken, where they were assembled together, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

Community was gone. And the power of the Holy Spirit fell upon them. Now I've told, I had to make a decision about that, doing that revival because God had told me He wanted me to do it where I preached

my first sermon at Vengeance Creek 70 years ago.

And I told the pastor this and that a while ago. I had a preacher friend that told me, If you're going to be a way of revival, you're going to have to repent. I mean he'd done it eyeball to eyeball.

And what, how long are you going to repent of your pride? I've been preaching 70 years, preached hundreds of revivals, and I don't know how many churches I've preached in over the years, but I have never asked to preach nowhere. God always fixed it, and people would ask me to come and preach, but nobody asked me to preach revival. Too old.

I guess. And God had told me when we preached that revival at Vengeance Creek. Vengeance Creek was out of the pastor, and I went to the deacons and told them, I'm going to do something I've never done in my life.

But God has told me that He wants me to preach the revival, and I'm going to be 94 years old, and I'm going to ask the church to let me come and preach the revival. But if you don't, I'm going to preach it somewhere, because there's fire in my bones. So, they said, okay, no, no, that's not enough.

The church has got to say so. So the church voted for me to do it. Now, I've had some adversaries.

I've had some things come and happen since then. The devil has told me, you're too old. The devil has told me, you'll have a stroke in the pulpit.

You'll have a heart attack and die. If that's true, okay. But the devil's a liar.

Then there's been some good friends told me, you're having it at the wrong place. Venus Creek's too small, it won't hold the people. I hope that's true.

You ought to have it at a bigger place. You ought to have it at Little Brass Town, Peachtree, Murphy First, Andrews First, someplace else. No, we're going to have it where God said to have it.

We'll start it anyway. There's already been suggestions from some of my fellow preachers that we make it, have it in one church one night and one church another night and stuff like that. I've had all kinds of feedback.

I said, well, God's in charge. We'll find out what God's up to. We'll just get on board with Him.

But I don't have time to go into detail about what happened here. But I want to go back to the Old Testament for just a minute and deal with this idea of praying for revival. 2 Chronicles 7.14. You've heard it preached on many times.

I've preached on it a number of times. But these people on this day to pray that little two-minute prayer, amazing things happened. But they took seriously 2 Chronicles 7.14. If my people... Now, I know that when that was written, they were talking about Israel as a people of God.

But His church, His people, you are His people. I am part of His people. We are His people.

Not somebody else's people down the road. Not the devil's people. But we are God's people.

And we are called by His name. If that is true, and the Bible says it's true, if my people, which are called by my name, will humble themselves, and do what? And pray. And seek my face.

And turn from their wicked ways. I will hear from heaven and I will heal their land. Now, I was on the radio the other day and I used this story.

The first time I used it, I never thought about it like that before. But there's some questions about that. One preacher said to me, you've got to have humility before you can pray.

Well, I agree that we need humility to pray. But how are you going to get humility? That's not something you detach on to life. Where do you get it? Where does it come from? Well, I contend that when you go before God, and you seriously spend time with God, your heart's going to be humble.

Your life is going to crumble in the presence of God. But the big question is, what does it mean by seeking my face? Well, the other day on the radio down there, it just came to me all of a sudden. And I share it with you today.

I went in the Army when I just graduated from high school down here at Andrews, 1943. Went in the Army and had my basic training. Came home in the spring of 1944, and me and Gladys got married.

For our old age, I was 19, she was 17. She wanted us to get married before I went overseas. Was home two nights after we got married.

I left and went back and went overseas. Was gone 18 months in the Battle of Normandy invasion, the Battle of the Bulge and all that stuff. And all kinds of temptations was available, especially in France for immorality.

Most all of the guys went out and done things that they're sorry about later. I never did. But you know what? Every night when I closed my eyes, I saw Gladys' face.

Every day, many times a day and a night, when I would pray, when I would be tempted to go out and have a big time, I saw her face. Then one day I came home. On the bus, I got off at Marble.

Walked across the river to Max Ladd's house and had an old wood truck. My first cousin got him to take me up to what we called the head of the road or the mailbox. My brother Hoyt was there waiting on the school bus.

He was 11 years younger than me. When he saw me getting out of that truck, he started running up that hill. That old mailbox hill, that old road was an old dirt road.

You couldn't drive over it really, you'd get over it with a sled or horse and buggy or something. But he ran as hard as he could run up that hill. And I started up that hill with my duffel bag on my back.

And the first thing I knew, I saw Gladys coming over the hill running with her arms stretched up. I threw my duffel bag down and went and ran and met her. She threw her arms around me.

I saw her face. If we spend enough time in prayer as we ought, we're going to behold the face of Jesus. And that will automatically turn us away from our wicked ways.

It will automatically humble our hearts and send revival to our soul. I feel his presence here today. As real as I've ever felt him in my life.

God is sending all kinds of things to me. Last week, last weekend, had a man come to my house. Tony brought him up from Marietta.

Had the privilege of winning him to the Lord. If there's one person in this building today that don't know Jesus as Savior and Lord, let me tell you something. You need Jesus.

There's only two kinds of people in the world. The saved and the lost. You're either saved or you're lost.

I had a lady from this church come to my house one time. She called me up. If I told you her name, you'd know her.

She met me at my house at 8 o'clock on one morning. She said, God... She was worried. She was afraid she'd never been saved.

I had her to pray three times to ask God to save her. It didn't happen. I said, has it ever occurred to you that God only saves you one time? And all of a sudden, she exploded.

She said, I am saved, ain't I? The devil was tormenting her. But I said, if you ask Jesus to save you, he said he would. He said he would.

And he don't lie. So if you're here today and that's your condition, come on, take Jesus as your Savior. But I want to challenge you and ask you, my friends, to please join me in praying for a Holy Ghost revival, an earth-shaking revival.

Not just on Vengeance Creek, not just in Cherokee County, but in Clay County, in Graham County, in Swain County, and on beyond. God knows we need a visitation from heaven. And I have promised the Lord that I would, all this year, that I would celebrate my 70 years in the ministry by going from place to place asking my friends and people of God to pray for revival every day.

Our Heavenly Father, we thank you, dear Lord, for your presence. Thank you for your power. Thank you for your mercy.

Thank you for your grace.

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