



***How does God answer the apostolic church’s request for boldness?*** *Pastor leads his family in today’s “Hopewell @Home” passage. Acts 4:23–31 prepares us for the morning sermon on the coming Lord’s Day. In these nine verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that some of what God uses to embolden His people to speak in Jesus’s Name are: God’s prophecies and promises, God’s purpose and plan, God’s providential power, and God’s hearing and answering prayer.*

### **Saturday, March 19, 2022 ▫ Read Acts 4:23–31**

*Questions from the Scripture text: What happened to Peter and John at the beginning of v23? To whom do they go? What do they report? To Whom does the church respond (v24)? What do they call God? What do they say He has done? Whom do they quote in v25? By whose mouth did He say it? What had the nations done? And what had the people done? What did the kings of the earth and the rulers do (v26)? Against Whom? Whom do they identify as the Christ in v27? And what kings? And what peoples? What does v28 say that these all did? In what two ways does v28 describe God’s purposing it? What do they call Him in v29? What do they ask Him to see? What do they ask Him to give them? In order to do what? By what did they hope to get this boldness and the neutralization of the threats (v30)? What did God immediately do (v31)? With what (Whom!) were they filled? And what immediate answer to prayer did they receive?*

God much encourages His people by displaying the genuineness and reliability of His Word.

So, when the rulers of the Israelites continued doing (v23) exactly as Psalm 2:1–2 had prophesied (v25–26), they praised God for what He had done. Yes, the rulers of the two kingdoms (Herod and Pilate, v27b) and the peoples of the two kingdoms (the Gentiles and the people of Israel, v27c) had conspired to murder the Christ, the anointed (v27a). But the fact that God had so plainly prophesied (promised, even!) this in Psalm 2 encouraged them to know that this was “whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done” (v28).

God’s hand had predetermined to do it. It would be accomplished by His power. He would rule and overrule to do good by what the wicked would wickedly do.

God’s purpose had predetermined to do it. It would be accomplished by His plan. He would wisely work for good even through what they wickedly intended for evil.

Now came the question: whose will would prevail. The rulers had made threats (v29a)—promises of a sort, an evil sort. But the Lord had given them the task of speaking His Word, and His purposes in their task must be accomplished.

For that, they needed boldness (v29b)—more of what the Lord had already given them (cf. v13). He had already encouraged them by displaying the genuineness of His Word through the fulfillment of prophecy. They ask Him to do the same by giving the signs of a true apostolic testimony (v30, cf. 2:43, 5:12; 2Cor 12:12; Heb 2:4).

The Lord still gives both sorts of encouragement. Everything with Christ occurred exactly according to God’s Word. What He tells us about ourselves is true. What He tells us to expect about Christian experience of grace is true. What He tells us about the world’s response to us is true.

And He keeps producing in His people fruit that could only come not from our flesh but from a genuine work of His Spirit (cf. Gal 5, 1Th 1)—Christians themselves, the only current parts of the New Creation, are the ongoing and great sign (cf. 2Cor 3:2–3)... not just signs like those that Jesus did in His earthly ministry, but greater signs now in His heavenly ministry!

For boldness, what they needed most of all, however, was not the external signs of fulfilled prophecy or miracles and wonders. For boldness, they needed the blessing of the Spirit upon the means of grace. Yes, the place was shaken. But even more than that, “when they had prayed... they were *all* filled with the holy Spirit, and they spoke the Word of God with boldness”! (v31).

With whom do you need more boldness with the Word? What are some ways that God encourages your boldness? How will you look to Him for boldness, and how will you make use of the means by which He gives that boldness?

*Sample prayer: Lord, we praise You for doing all things exactly according to what Your hand and Your purpose have predetermined. Forgive us for the weakness of our courage, and fill us with Your Spirit, so that we may be bold with Your Word, we ask in Jesus’s Name, AMEN!!*

**Suggested songs: ARP46 “God Is Our Refuge and Our Strength” or TPH438 “I Love to Tell the Story”**

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**(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording referenced above)**

Acts four. Beginning in verse 23 and going through verse 31, these are God's words and being let go, they went to their own companions and reported all that the Chief priests and elders had said to them. So when they heard that they raised their voice to God with one accord and said, Lord, you are God who made heaven and earth and the sea and all that is in them who by the mouth of your servant.

David have said, why did the nation's rage and the people plot vain things, the kings of the earth took their stand and the rulers were gathered together against Yahweh against the Lord and against His Christ For truly against your holy servant. Jesus whom you anoint, it both Herod and Pontius Pilate with the Gentiles of the people of Israel were gathered together to do, whatever your hand and your purpose, determined before to be done now.

Lord look on their threats and grant to your servants. That with all boldness, they may speak your word by stretching out your hand to heal and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of your holy servant. Jesus. And when they had prayed the place where they were all assembled together, it was shaken.

And then we're all filled with the Holy Spirit and they spoke the word of God with boldness. So far the reading of God's inspired and inherent part. What the Apostles want. What the church wants is boldness. The Lord has already given boldness. This was what the council had observed back in verse 13.

Now, when they saw the boldness of Peter and John and then they ask in verse 29 now, Lord look on their threats and grant to your servants. That with all boldness, they may speak your word and the Lord gives it to them. The very end of our passage in verse 31 is and they spoke the Word of God with boldness.

Boldness is something that is a, an essential part of the Christian life. It is something that comes from being sure of who God is what God has done, what God is doing in us and others and in the world and what God promises to complete. And so we want to have boldness if we don't have boldness then we're not properly trusting in and enjoying God, desiring his glory desiring, the good of our neighbor and so we ought to want boldness.

And since boldness is one of our great desires as Christians, it is very important to us to see in this passage the ways that the Lord gives as people boldness in this passage and several of those and were able to make them all start with P for the help of our remembering the prophecy prophecy or prophecies or promises that the prophecy of God gives his people boldness.

The purposes of God gives his people wellness stuff, power of God gives his people boldness. Or you could also say provenance under power but the prophecies the purposes. The powerful providence will say both of God give his people boldness and the the privilege of prayer to God gives his people boldness.

First the purposes of God sorry first, the prophecy of God. Why aren't they surprised that the one thing that Pharisees and Sadducees, who ordinarily rage against one? Another can agree on is that neither of them like Christians. Well, because Herod and Pilate who were never able to agree with one another until the day of Christ's crucifixion.

And the scripture tells us on that very day, they became friends. The only thing that they were able to agree upon was to crucify Jesus and Psalm to had taught us this and that's what they quote. Lord, you are God, who made heaven and earth, is he and all this in them who buy the mouth of your servant David have said.

So, even though it was David, who wrote and spoke, Psalm 2, it was God who was speaking even through David. The words of scripture, our God's words even though they come on the lips and pins of men, why did the nation's rage and the people's plot vain things? The kings of the earth took their stand and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against his Christ.

And of course, Psalm 2 goes on to say, he who sits in heaven, laughs he will speak to them with scorn and how the nations rage against one another. But God is working to bring his son into the world to give his son rule over the world and give an opportunity for belief in his son before the son's wrath kindled and he shatters all the nations.

And so there's a small quote from Psalm 2 but the whole of Psalm 2 is behind it. And what they're saying is, this is just like God said, it would be he prophesied this and you have God's prophecies. But generally, he tells us what sinners are like and what the world is like, and what it will be like for sinners who repent and believe in the world.

He tells us what the Christian life will be like that we not be surprised or taken aback. And the scripture even says, why are you surprised when the firey trial comes up on you? It's exactly what you expect,

because God tells us the truth. Why are you surprised that you turn out to be hopelessly wicked except for God's grace as he not told you the truth about that and so there are the general prophecies of God, but they're also the specific prophecies of God.

Many very specific prophecies, especially about the coming and the work and the death and the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and all of them perfectly and exactly fulfilled. We are emboldened by the prophecies of God because he has told the end from the beginning and he's told much about what is in between and things are always exactly.

As he has said, his word is reliable and so his faithfulness in his prophecy, emboldens us. But also His purposes, not just that he's told us how it will be but that he's planned for it to be this way. He has a good plan to accomplish good things even through what the wicked do.

And there's never been anything more wicked than the crucifixion of Jesus as there. And so he says, for truly against your holy servant Jesus whom you anointed both Herod and Pontius Pilate and with the Gentiles and the people of Israel were gathered together. So what you said in Psalm 2 happened prophecies of God but now they're emboldened not just by the god that God predicted it but that the God planned it and had purpose in it to do verse 28, whatever your hand.

And your purpose determined before predetermined to be done. So God intends the good that will come out of it, salvation of sinners and reconciliation to God, in our Lord, Jesus Christ, and God's power accomplishes it. They are free and willing agents, and they are guilty of the wickedness that they plan.

And they are guilty of the wickedness that they do, but God is superintending. Sovereignly overruling accomplishing his good by his power. He hasn't just set up a very interesting complex machine in which he tricks the the willing agent in the middle into being a cog in it but he rules and overrules all things.

His hand has predetermined. Not just as purpose. And so the purpose of God, emboldance his servants. We know that he is doing good and we want to be those not despite him, He does that good, although we take much comfort that he will do that good. Despite all of our failings, and all of our weakness, and all of our remaining sin and it's grievous continued expression, but we want to be those through whom.

He does that good who are willing, participating agents in the good work of God and we know that the great way that he's doing his good work. Now is through the proclaiming of repentance and remission of sins in Jesus name throughout all the earth to the end of the age.

And if you're gonna participate in that work, then one of the first and great things you need is boldness, and you actually get some of that boldness. By knowing that you're participating with God, It encourages the dad, as he leads family worship and encourages the mom. As she's giving the child that she's disciplining instruction from the Bible.

It encourages brothers and sisters in the family and in the church as they discuss one another from the Word of God, as he sanctifies his people by the truth, His word is truth. It encourages the preacher and the pulpit, it encourages the preacher or the elder who is doing Evangelism it.

Encourages the believer who's giving an answer for the hope that is in them. It encourages us as we admonish one another in Psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs with the Word of Christ, coming to dwell richly in in those who hear us singing. And in ourselves, as we hear them singing the word, the power of God is being exercised, according to the purpose of God.

And so they ask they don't just claim the prophecy of God and the purpose of God. But they also ask for displays of God's power now look on their threats and grant to your servants that with old boldness, they may speak your word. Bye. Stretching out your hand to heel and that signs and wonders may be done.

The Lord had promised particular signs to accomplate to a company, the ministry of the Apostles, the Apostle Paul will make reference to the Corinthians telling them that he performed These signs, and miracles that God had testified in his power that attended the preaching of Paul, that Paul was an authentic apostle.

Not everyone who gets called Apostle is apostle. A lot of folks who had gone to Corinth, and they demanded primadonna treatment, and they demanded high speakers salary, isn't the word speakers fee and they called themselves. Even the scripture says the super apostles. But God, hadn't come with miracles and signs and wonders.

Well, then like he did with Paul, so Paul was not very impressive and his words were very different and very plain to the point that in second Corinthians 4, he's explaining why against their complaints about how plainly he spoke. But Paul not being impressive, doesn't mean that things weren't impressive because God was impressive through Paul and Hebrews chapter 2 tells us the same thing that when the apostles spoke and behalf of Christ, God testified with signs miracles wonders healings.

This is one reason why it is very important that we both believe what Scripture says about the timing

and purpose of these signs. And that we acknowledge that no one else but the apostles and the apostolic speakers had gifts of sign and miracle. If you're good, it wouldn't work as a sign, you know, a passport doesn't work as a passport.

If a bunch of people who aren't actually citizens have them, the signs of an apostle don't work as the signs of an apostle. If a bunch of people who aren't actually part of the apostolic preaching ministry have them, But they ask for that and God not only gives them the signs that they ask for, but he gives them sign of answered prayer.

When they had prayed, they the place where they were assembled together was shaken. And sometimes, God does in his, in his surprising providence, do things in such a way that even through the creation. He says I have heard you, you know, we had a providential experience of that one night at second press and Yazoo City.

When Neil was preaching on the flood and God gave us a flood light sample and it was terrifying and even more. So in the nursery where Ed Cassidy and the lightning flashes made the giraffes on, the very daintily painted Noah's Ark in the dark room. The giraffes looked quite sinister in the lightning flashes and that was to me as a dad, not just to her as a toddler.

But and then he that same night, he struck the barn of the apostatizing woman and burned it to the ground while she was at worship complaining, that God's servant always preached judgment. Whenever she was there, which she should have taken as a sign from God, not as suspicion, that he always had a judgment sermon.

Ready just in case she should go up as if she was that important to distort. The whole ministry. Anyway, neither here, nor there. God in his provenance sometimes gives us even in his creation evidence of his hearing our prayer, but also part of that providence, is that he answers prayer.

We ask for boldness and he gives us boldness. We ask for wisdom and he enables us to make decisions and choose words that we know we would not have been able to do on our own. We ask for grace to get through a situation and we come out on the other end and we look back and even on the other end we stay I have no explanation for how I came through that for the peace that I had in it for the joy, for the strength, for the fruitfulness that came out of Victor, whatever else it is.

And so we are emboldened by God's displays of his power and then closer-related by the fact that he has often answered, not only the prayers of his people throughout the ages and ear was a great answer to their prayer. They asked for boldness and immediately God shook the place filled them all with the Holy Spirit and answered their prayer.

They spoke the word of God with boldness and throughout the ages but a believer who has walked with God and has prayed oftentimes in our lives to the Lord. For good things that we that we know are good from his word. He has answered many times, and those answers to prayer.

Remind us that this God who prophesies? And this God who purposes in this God, who is powerful? He is at work in our lives individually and personally the same God, who is at work, even in the cross of Jesus Christ. And that comes out in the language. Look at verse 27 for truly against your holy servant.

Jesus and look at verse 29, at the end and grant that signs, and wonders may be done through the name of your holy servant. Jesus, but what are they able to say about themselves at the beginning of verse 29? Now Lord look on their threats and grant to your servants.

Yes it's a lowercase s. We are not the holy servant. The plan of redemption is not all about us, but it includes us. And it's for us and the same. God, who was infinitely powerfully? And who's perfect goodness was on display in the crucifixion and resurrection of our Lord.

Jesus Christ is the one who answers our prayers day to day and among them. Our prayers for boldness. So, the Lord gives his servants. And that means each of us boldness by his prophecies, by his purposes, by his power. And by the fact that we know that he hears and answers even our prayers, and then let's ask him to give us boldness, Our Father in heaven.

We thank you that even our praying. There's something by what you give us boldness. That we come. Now, having red and turd from these nine verses, the way you gave boldness to your people there, and towards the ends towards the end of act 4, and that you even now are hearing us.

And you will surely answer us. We thank you for the strength that it gives us as your spirit instructs, our hearts and opens our lips to call upon you as our Abba. Our Father, as your spirit stirs up. Faith in your word to know that you are the same God with us.

As you have always been and as you are with your people there and that the purpose and plan that you are carrying out in the death and resurrection of Christ, you will continue to carry out in the application of that redemption. Even as we speak your words to one another and study it together, and hear it and speak it to others.

So, give us our God, boldness for Christ and the joy of participating. In such a work. As you have promised such a work, as you have purposed, such a work, as you powerfully accomplish in your providence, such a work as we pray for now. For, we ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen