

Praying for Boldness to Obey God

International Bible Lesson

Acts 4:23-31

Sunday, September 6, 2015

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“Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness” (Acts 4:29—NIV).

After the authorities demanded that Peter and John quit preaching about Jesus, they reported to the Church. Then everyone prayed. Luke did not report everything they might have prayed, but he did record the most important parts which have become an example for Christians in similar situations. Luke wrote nothing about the disciples praying for God’s just retribution against the authorities—they may have done so, but when Stephen died as the first Christian martyr, he prayed, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them” (Acts 7:60) . Luke only noted: “consider their threats,” which seems sufficient. They did pray for boldness to do what their Sovereign Lord and highest authority had commanded them to do. Jesus had commanded them to be witnesses about His teaching, His death on the cross, and His resurrection from the dead as the way of salvation, which meant disobeying some human authorities. Jesus had promised that no matter what happened, He would be with them spiritually forever and He would send the Holy Spirit to fill and empower them so they could go anywhere and testify truly about Him anyplace. Therefore, in spite of facing persecution and death, when they considered Jesus’ commands and promises they prayed for boldness to overcome their fears so they could honor Christ by faithfully doing what He commanded. The Lord honored their prayers and filled them once again with the Holy Spirit; then they spoke the word of God boldly. Stephen may have prayed with them that day, for he preached boldly about Jesus; afterwards, the authorities stoned him to death. However, Saul witnessed Stephen’s death, and later became the Apostle Paul.

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Thinking Further

1. What are some of the truths that the first Christians prayed about God’s attributes, abilities, and actions after Peter and John reported their experiences to them?
2. What did God do in answer to their prayer?
3. What does it mean to you to learn about the Holy Spirit speaking through David?
4. What does it mean to you to learn that nations and people plot in vain against God or imagine in vain that they can defeat God or His plans?
5. Read Acts 4:29-30 again. Can you pray that prayer today? Why or Why not?