

**Text:** Acts 4:23-32

**Meaning:** The church prayed and spiritual power was given

**Big Idea:** When we pray God displays His power

**Objective:** I want the hearers to pray

**Theme:** Changes

### **WHEN GOD'S PEOPLE PRAY**

**Prayed** – Deomai in Greek – Speaks of begging God, pleading with Him

#### **Jeremiah 29:13**

You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with ALL YOUR HEART.

This is wholehearted, passionate, intense praying. Our intensity in prayer is not us proving that we mean it. It is revealing that we long for it. Wholehearted prayer is simply us voicing to God what we truly desire in our spirit.

When we pray:

#### **GOD SHAKES THE HOUSE**

The word in the Greek here speaks of a literal earthquake of some kind at their location. But also, shaking the house can be symbolic. For example when the PRESIDENT or CEO of a company, or a BATTALION COMMANDER in the army says "we need to SHAKE THINGS UP A BIT", that typically means some major changes are coming. Leadership is going to change. Processes and systems are going to change. Strategy is going to change.

When God shakes the house – He SHAKES THINGS UP! He shakes us from our complacency and our apathy, our comfortable convenient ways of living and relating. PRAYER SHAKES THINGS UP!

BELOVED – IF YOU'RE NOT PRAYING YOU'RE NOT CHANGING, AND IF YOU'RE NOT CHANGING YOU'RE NOT GROWING!

Additionally, not only does God awaken His Church through prayer, but the DEVIL IS AWAKENED ALSO WHEN WE PRAY!

#### **Samuel Chadwick**

*"The one concern of the devil is to keep Christians from praying. He fears nothing from prayerless studies, prayerless work, and prayerless religion. He laughs at our toil, mocks at our wisdom, but trembles when we pray."*

Satan hates it when God's Church gets serious about prayer and the proclamation of the gospel, and he will do everything he can to try and disrupt, distract, divide, and destroy what is happening there.

HOWEVER WE KNOW – THE GATES OF HELL CANNOT COME AGAINST THE CHURCH OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST! WHEN WE PRAY IN THE MIGHTY NAME OF JESUS THE DEVIL HAS TO FLEE! RESIST THE DEVIL AND HE WILL FLEE FROM YOU! NO WEAPON FORMED AGAINST GOD'S CHURCH SHALL PROSPER!

#### **THE SPIRIT FILLS THE HOUSE**

When they prayed they were all FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT.

**FILLED** – speaks of being completely full, completely saturated with the Spirit. Like a sponge that is fully immersed in a bucket of water until it is full and cannot hold anymore. Full to the brim.

**Ephesians 5:18** – Be filled with the Holy Spirit

**Luke 11:13** – Just Ask!

#### **What happens when the Spirit fills the House?**

**SIGNS AND WONDERS** – Sicknesses are healed, mental health is restored, addictions are broken, relationships are reconciled, prideful hearts are broken with humility

**BOLDNESS IN PROCLAMATION** – The gospel is proclaimed in power!

*TODAY – GOD WANTS TO SHAKE THINGS UP IN YOUR LIFE FOR THE BETTER! BE FILLED WITH HIS HOLY SPIRIT! LET GOD HAVE HIS WAY IN YOUR HEART TODAY!*

**WHEN WE PRAY WHOLEHEARTED PRAYERS THINGS CHANGE!**

We see in this passage some specific aspects of our lives that change as a result of passionate wholehearted prayer:

**1. FEAR IS REPLACED WITH SECURITY**

Peter and John have just been arrested and threatened by the Sadducean priests and temple leaders. They were commanded to no longer preach the name of Jesus. To which Peter replied – whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than Him you be the judge – BUT WE ARE NOT GOING TO STOP PREACHING OF WHAT WE HAVE SEEN AND HEARD – THERE IS NO OTHER NAME BY WHICH YOU MUST BE SAVED OTHER THAN THE NAME OF JESUS! Just a handful of weeks before this – Peter, John, and the other disciples were running for their lives at the crucifixion of Jesus. Peter himself denied Christ at least three times – twice to a little servant girl.

**As they prayed they gained:**

**POWER** – strength comes through the filling of the Holy Spirit

**PERSPECTIVE** – in their prayer here we see they declare the SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD and they quote PSALM 2 which says that the nations and kings of the earth SET THEMSELVES AGAINST GOD. In

other words they declare – GOD YOU SAID THIS WAS GOING TO HAPPEN AND CHRIST'S CRUCIFIXION AND THIS PERSECUTION IS ALL A PART OF YOUR SOVEREIGN PLAN OH LORD!

When we pray – **WE BEGIN TO SEE LIFE THROUGH HEAVEN'S EYES!**

**Church – WHEN YOU ARE AFRAID – PRAY! WHEN YOU ARE ANXIOUS – PRAY! WHEN YOU ARE WORRIED – PRAY! WHEN YOU HAVE DOUBTS – PRAY!**

THE SPIRIT OF GOD turns our fear into rock solid hope and faith when we PRAY!

**2. WEAKNESS IS REPLACED BY TENACITY**

These men were scared to death and running from everybody – NOW THEY ARE LOOKING THE SAME PEOPLE WHO CRUCIFIED JESUS RIGHT IN THE EYE AND DECLARING – DO WHAT YOU WILL BUT WE WILL NOT STOP PREACHING THE GOSPEL!

What was the difference? – PRAYER AND THE HOLY SPIRIT!

**3. PRIDE IS REPLACED BY UNITY**

**Ephesians 4:3**

(We must be) eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

**Philippians 2:2-3**

**4. GREED IS REPLACED BY GENEROSITY**

There are some people in this life who have more than enough to live on – but nobody to live with – and nothing of eternal significance to live for.

**Luke 12:15 – Be on guard against EVERY FORM OF GREED**

Covetousness marks the lives of many people – a longing to have more than someone else or have something better than someone else.

WE SPEND SO MUCH MONEY IN THIS CULTURE ON THINGS WE DON'T NEED – WITH MONEY WE DON'T HAVE – TO IMPRESS PEOPLE WE DON'T EVEN KNOW

As some have so aptly put it – SOME SPEND THEIR LIVES CHASING THE JONES'S AND THEN WHEN YOU FINALLY CATCH THEM THEY REFINANCE!

**1 Timothy 6:10**

For the love of money is a root of all *kinds of* evil

**GREED** – not simply UNETHICAL ACTIONS FOR THE PURPOSE OF ACCUMLATING WEALTH. It is also characterized by the UNNECESSARY ACCUMULATION OF RESOURCES.

**WHEN “WANTS” CONTINUALLY BECOME “NEEDS” THAT’S GREED.**

When the Spirit of God got hold of the early church – radical generosity broke out. Nobody claimed that anything belonging to him was his own, but they had all things in common.

**Barnabas** – sold a field that belonged to him and gave the entire proceeds to the apostles for the multiplication of the early new testament church and to help meet the needs of others