**Exalting God Through Prayer! Text: Acts 4:23-33 Date: 6/5&12/2016 Sunday AM**

Every truly Biblical prayer is directed to our God…“Our Father which art in heaven.” Our view of God determines the size and parameters of our prayers! If our God is man-sized our prayers will be man-sized! But if our view of God is taken from Scripture we must say that He is above and beyond our most amazing imagination. Biblical prayers are centered upon God as He is revealed in Scripture! Genesis sets the tone!!! In the first words of Genesis we see a God beyond anything we could ever create in our tiny minds! **Genesis 1:1 simply proclaims, “***In the beginning* ***GOD*** *created the heaven and the earth.”* The God of the Bible simply defies human description! This makes prayer an intimidating force. It makes prayer supernatural! Prayer did not originate with man. If prayer originated with man it could be no larger than man! Prayer originated with GOD; that’s why prayer is so powerful!

**In Acts 4:23-33** we see the first Christian church affirming the grandness and greatness of God through prayer!

Their view of God shows a genuine reverence for God.

They saw God as the One in control of every detail of their lives from the beginning to the end!!!

Their view of God reveals the depth of their worship of God!

**Consider these valuable nuggets of truth we gain from this prayer:**

1. **We should unite together and praise God as Creator and Sustainer of all things (vs. 23-26)**

* Persecution *revealed* their God focused unity!
* Persecution *tested* the fabric of their faith!
* Persecution **did not** produce their God focused unity!
* Their unity originated with their belief in the sovereignty of God ***and*** that they could enter into His presence.
* **A.W. Pink defines The sovereignty of God.** *What do we mean by this expression? We mean the supremacy of God, the kingship of God, the godhood of God. To say that God is sovereign is to declare that God is God. To say that God is sovereign is to declare that He is the Most High, doing according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, so that none can stay His hand or say unto Him what doest Thou? (Dan. 4:35). To say that God is sovereign is to declare that He is the Almighty, the Possessor of all power in heaven and earth, so that none can defeat His counsels, thwart His purpose, or resist His will (Ps. 115:3). To say that God is sovereign is to declare that He is "The Governor among the nations" (Ps. 22:28), setting up kingdoms, overthrowing empires, and determining the course of dynasties as pleaseth Him best. To say that God is sovereign is to declare that He is the "Only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords" (1 Tim. 6:15). Such is the God of the Bible.*
* **OBSERVATION:** If God created all things and sustains all things, can He not work out all things for your good and for His glory???

1. **Thank God for His providential and sovereign work of salvation in your life and in your world (vs. 27-28)**

* **REMEMBER…** they are praying!
* **Acts 2:23** explains it… “Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain….”
* The Lord used their opposition to accomplish redemption.
* *Opposition* (4:27) **AND** *Redemption* (4:28) come from the Lord!
* This world has always opposed Jesus, the Gospel and His Church and NOTHING HAS CHANGED!
* **Ephesians 1:11 defines God’s sovereignty, He…** “worketh ***all things*** after the counsel of His own will….”

1. **Pray for Christian witnesses to have a holy boldness as they share their faith with the lost (vs. 29)**

* Their beliefs produced a faith based boldness.
* The Lord knows our challenges and gives us boldness to speak His Word!
* **Acts 4:13** Now when they (Authorities) 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…* ***before and after His resurrection!!!***

1. **Pray for Christ to validate His work of salvation with changed hearts and lives (vs. 30)**

* Acts 4 flows out of Acts 3.
* Their view of salvation was equal to their view of God.

* **Acts 3:6** Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: *In the* ***name*** *of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.*
* **Acts 4:7** And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what ***name*,** have ye done this?
* **Acts 4:12** Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other ***name*** under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.
* **Acts 4:20-21** For we cannot but speak the things which we have *seen and heard*. 21 So when they had 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.

1. **Pray for Christians to be filled with the Holy Spirit (vs. 31)**

* **FEAR** could have paralyzed them!
* Instead, *holy boldness* gripped their hearts and filled their mouths with God’s Word!
* *Holy boldness* does not originated from within the human spirit.
* *Holy boldness* is *more than* an act of emotion.
* *Holy boldness* is *evidence* of the Holy Spirit’s *presence* in your life.
* *Holy boldness* is *confidence* rooted in a Gospel oriented faith!

1. **Pray for a unified congregation where the focus is on powerful proclamation of the resurrected Christ (vs. 32-33)**

* A clear view of Who God is leads to a clear view of the Gospel!
* The Gospel originated with the Godhead!
* **KEY IDEA…** There is nothing more unifying than a clear understanding of the Gospel and our responsibility regarding it!
* Salvation would be impossible without the work of God the Father, God the Son and God the Spirit!
* All three are at work in Redemption!
* Our Gospel is built upon our risen Lord!
* There is nothing we can do to make the Gospel more powerful than it is! **ABSOLUTELY NOTHING!!!**

1. **Pray for God to pour out His abundant grace upon your church today (vs. 33)**

* Through our weakness God is glorified!
* Gospel oriented saints and Gospel oriented churches experience a work of God’s amazing grace!

**\*Major points of this message originate from AWAKEN by J. Chris Schofield, Ph.D and can be found at www.ncbaptist.org**