

Acts 4:23-37

Praying and Sharing

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Amazing Stories

23 When they had been released, they went to their own companions and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them.

- *When they had been released*
 - From the custody of the Jewish leaders
- *To their own companions – lit. to their own*
 - Implies privately
 - Not clear where they are meeting
- *Reported all [the Jewish leaders] said to them*
 - That they had testified to the resurrection of Christ
 - They the leaders had commanded them not to speak of it anymore

Voices to God

24 And when they heard this, they lifted their voices to God with one accord and said, "O Lord, it is You who MADE THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH AND THE SEA, AND ALL THAT IS IN THEM,

- *Lifted their voices to God with one accord*
 - Notice the repeated references to unity – Acts 1:14; 2:44
 - See also *one heart and soul* in verse 32
- *You who MADE THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH...*
 - Common to reference God as Creator
 - See Exodus 20:11; Nehemiah 9:6; Psalm 146:6; Isaiah 42:5
 - Same paradigm used in Acts 14:15; 17:24
- How important is it to see God as Creator?
 - He is powerful enough to do what we ask
 - See 2 Kings 19:15-19; Isaiah 37:15-20

As it was foretold

*25 who by the Holy Spirit, through the mouth of our father
David Your servant, said,
'WHY DID THE GENTILES RAGE,
AND THE PEOPLES DEVISE FUTILE THINGS?
26 THE KINGS OF THE EARTH TOOK THEIR STAND,
AND THE RULERS WERE GATHERED TOGETHER
AGAINST THE LORD AND AGAINST HIS CHRIST.'*

- Apostles quote from Psalm 2
- Acknowledge this is inspired by the Holy Spirit
 - Alt. text: *Who through the Holy Spirit, by the mouth of the Father...*
- Two specific promises:
 - They **will** be witnesses of the resurrection – Acts 1:8
 - They **will** suffer persecution – John 16:33

All according to the plan

27 For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, 28 to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur.

- *Gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus*
 - Apostles continue to place Christ, and their situation, in the context of OT prophecies
- *Whom You appointed*
 - Reaffirming that Christ is the Messiah, God's anointed one
- *To do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur*
 - The events surrounding Jesus *had* to occur
 - They are beginning to see this in light of God's eternal plan

Source of strength

29 And now, Lord, take note of their threats, and grant that Your bond-servants may speak Your word with all confidence, 30 while You extend Your hand to heal, and signs and wonders take place through the name of Your holy servant Jesus.”

- *Take note of their threats*
 - Was God not paying attention before?
 - Importance of *casting all our care upon him*
- *Grant that your bond-servants may speak Your word with all confidence*
 - Their intention is to speak the Truth
 - They understand the necessity of God's enabling
- What else are they expecting God to do?
 - *Extend Your hand to heal*
 - *Signs and wonders take place through the name of Your holy servant Jesus*

Shaken and stirred

31 And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness.

- Order of events (as listed in the text)
 - ① They prayed
 - ② The place was shaken
 - Can be physical or spiritual
 - See Acts 2:25; 16:26
 - ③ They were all filled with the Holy Spirit
 - Same word used with Peter earlier in the Chapter
 - ④ They began to speak the Word with boldness
 - *Boldness* = confidence, openness
- Why these extraordinary happenings?
 - See Exodus 19:18 & Isaiah 6:4

It's all about control

- *Filling* – Greek word is *pimplēmi*
 - Used in reference to the filling of the Holy Spirit only by Luke
 - See also Luke 1:15,41,67; Acts 2:4; Acts 4:8; Acts 9:17; Acts 13:9
 - In every reference¹:
 - Aorist Tense, signifying a special moment or event
 - Passive Voice, meaning they were acted upon sovereignty by the HS
 - Had no conditions placed on it
 - Like in the OT, had a specific purpose
 - Manifested by speaking out
 - Word used in other contexts to indicate filling with something
 - See Luke 5:26; Acts 5:17; Acts 13:45
- Two other Greek words used for “filling of/by the Holy Spirit”²
- Merryman: **“The sense in all these uses is that of dominance. Filling means dominance in the frame of reference, of the mind-soul-intellect.”**

¹from Merryman

²See supplement for references

Heart and Soul

32 And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul;

- *The congregation of those who believed*
 - *Congregation* can also be *multitude*
 - i.e. the 5,000 spoken of in verse 4?
 - Is this not the early church?
 - Is there any requirement of baptism here?
- *Of one heart and soul*
 - *Heart* – Luke 12:34; Ephesians 3:17
 - *Soul* – Luke 12:16-23
- The insight of preceding revelation
 - What is it that unites this congregation?
 - Who is it that unites the believers?

Heart and Soul

and not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own, but all things were common property to them.

- *Not one of them*
 - Contrasts with *they were all filled with the Holy Spirit* in verse 31
- *Claimed* – lit. *was saying*
 - Indicates a continual state
- *All things were common property to them*
 - See Titus 1:4; Jude 1:3
 - Constable: “They owned personal possessions, but they did not consider them private possessions.”
- The danger of over-interpretation
 - Is this proposed as prescriptive of the church?
 - Is this a particular manifestation of the Holy Spirit in a particular group of believers?

With great power comes great effectiveness

33 And with great power the apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon them all.

- *With great power the apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus*
 - *Great power = megas dynamis*
 - *Giving testimony* – i.e. giving witness
 - Directly connected with Acts 1:8
 - How essential is this to the character of the Church?
 - See John 13:35
- *Abundant grace*
 - *Abundant = megas*
 - Mega power and mega grace
 - *Grace = charis*, i.e. favor
 - See Luke 1:30

Abundance and need

34 For there was not a needy person among them, for all who were owners of land or houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of the sales 35 and lay them at the apostles' feet, and they would be distributed to each as any had need.

- *Not a needy person among them*
- Biblical paradigm of support
 - Philippians 4:19 – *My God will supply all your needs*
 - God gives one part of body excess to supply the need of another
 - We see a spontaneous outworking of the Spirit
 - Without even the Scripture to tell them what to do!
- *[Laid] them at the apostles' feet*
 - Will eventually require the help of deacons, as described in chapter 6
 - This selling of property seems to be an exceptional event³

³Constable

Barnabas' generosity

36 Now Joseph, a Levite of Cyprian birth, who was also called Barnabas by the apostles (which translated means Son of Encouragement), 37 and who owned a tract of land, sold it and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

- Who is Barnabas?
 - *Joeph* – in some texts, *Joses*
 - *a Levite* – of the household of Aaron
 - *of Cyprian birth* – i.e. from the island of Cyprus
 - Why is his birthplace of significance?
 - *Called Barnabas by the apostles*
 - We are told *Barnabas* means *Son of Encouragement*
 - Was this the first interaction between Barnabas and the apostles?
- This event contrasts with the duplicity of Ananias and Sapphira immediately following in chapter 5
 - We are given a positive example, followed by a negative one