

**April 30<sup>th</sup> 2006: National Prayer Sunday: Acts 4:1-31**

**In my sermon last Sun.**....story of Christian Reger

To help him thro this terrible ordeal.....God gave him the same scripture twice

**That partic script.**....Acts 4:26—29...part of todays reading ...and is in fact a prayer

A prayer prayed by the disciples....time of persecution.....A prayer that met Christian's

- **Because today is our National Day of prayer**

It seemed good.....to have a closer look at it.....and at the lessons it teaches

**The bible reading gave....story behind.**

**Not long** after Pentecost.....Peter and John were used by God....to heal crippled...

Because of the impact.....they were thrown into prison and then brought the next day b4

**The Sanhedrin** got a lot more than they bargained for.....Instead of men cowering

Peter gave them a Gospel sermon ...**And** they were amazed at ...courage ...articulation

**And in the end** they had to let them go.....with threats but w/out further punishment

**Peter...John and**.....Went straight back to the believers.....reported.....

And then together they prayed this prayer

**A prayer** that includes references from Neh 9, Isaiah 37 and Psalm 2.....

.....*Listen again as I read it to you:-*

*V24—30.....*

- **The first thing that I note is ....The Absolute Respect they have for God**

He is Sovereign.....in what He has done...planned.....will do

**Throughout** the prayer there is not even a hint....or suggestion

That God is not in control.....or that they are asking Him to do something....

that He has not planned.....or thought about beforehand

**The term they use to address Him**....is just one word.....despota =>DESPOT

It referred to the absolute Master of a slave.....who has complete power

**Able to do good or evil**.....Only used 6 times in the NT....

**So from the very first word**.....they emphasise that they dare to approach God  
Only as a slave to a Master.....(*In v29 .....look upon your servants.....Slave*)

**Indeed to One who is Master of all things**...Nations..Rulers and powers

**God ...in His awesome Grace and Mercy**.....has revealed Himself to them in love  
But it is still with great respect for who He is.....And for the Absolute control He has  
..that they come into His presence.....even at such a time of crisis

- **We live in an age**....where respect for those in authority.....eroded constantly  
And sad to say sometimes.....we all can be guilty....of not giving God the respect  
The place of authority that is His...in our prayers...in our worship

This prayer reminds us of who our God is.

- **The second thing I note....is The Absolute Trust They have in God**

**It is more than a recognition of His Sovereignty**

It is also a belief that He will do what is right....

He will carry through His plan.....already set in motion.....by His holy servant Jesus  
...and nothing will stop it.

**Look again at the prayer**

**They say to God**.....

Lord--back in David's time you predicted an occasion when Nations..Kings..rulers  
Would rise up against your Anointed One...

**And sure** enough we saw it happened....right here in this city of Jerusalem

**Even Herod and Pilate**.....got together.....to do a terrible injustice against.....

But even that was all planned by You ages before

And what they did in anger.....Was what you had decided to take place

**You O God...have always brought to pass whatever You had planned**  
And this...that we are going through at the moment....  
Must therefore be under your control too.....It hasn't taken you by surprise  
Because You are Sovereign God

- **Do you and I show that Absolute Trust in God when we pray.....**  
Or do we hold back some of our trust.....and wait for things to improve  
Wait for God to somehow prove Himself.....B4 we completely trust Him

**It is this same absolute trust.....see in Job when he says in 13:15**  
*Though He slay me, yet will I hope in Him.*

*In one of the commentaries I was looking at ...this story.....p177Application Commentary on Acts*

- **The Third thing I note is what they asked for:**

...v29.....

**The threats they refer to.....**were real and very nasty  
The Sandhedrin had the power.....make things very diff.....even to take lives

**John the Baptist....**beheaded.....**Jesus...crucified.....**Beatings were normal  
Indeed not long afterwards.....James would be beheaded.....Stephen...stoned

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**They mentioned the threats....of course....**They were a worry  
But that was not their main concern

*I tend to think it would have been mine.....*Lord help me...Make my life easy...  
Even if you have to change your plans to do so.....Protect little me

*(Prayer of John Wesley....p38A Box of Delights)*

**Their Main Request.....**Was for more miracles.....:**caused** all the trouble 1<sup>st</sup> place  
and boldness to speak the word.....

**Boldness to be part of God's great plan**

Even if that plan meant suffering...being persecuted....  
As it did for Jesus

**They looked at what** God was doing in the world.....and they wanted to be part of it  
Whatever the cost

- **They too were human like us**

They knew fear.....They understood what the authorities were capable of  
They had families.....They needed food and money and freedom to survive

**They were not unmoved by the threats they had received**

Yet they wanted to be part of what God was doing.....  
They wanted to spread His message of love....of salvation

**SO THEY ASKED FOR BOLDNESS**

**What prevents** us from being as effective for God as we could be ?  
Possibly a lot of things

**But you know**....and I know.....that at the top of the list.....A lack of boldness

**As I was preparing this.....**Lord brought to mind....something He wanted me to do  
But I had been putting off.....And I realised that I was fearful

**So after thinking about this.....**What else could I do  
I prayed for boldness.....and straight away did it

- **What do you need to ask God to give you boldness for right now??**

Something you are fearful about in your life....ministry  
Something you know God wants you to do.....putting it off

**This morning approach God** with the respect He deserves

Acknowledge that His plans never fail .... trust Him completely

**And ask not** for comfort....or for a change of assignment

**But for Boldness to speak His word and to do His will**

