

Study Guide for March 7th, 2004 The Spreading Flame: Acts 4:23-31 Prayer and Power

Introduction: When have you be surprised by an expression of courage or boldness - either in yourself or someone you observed? How did you explain it?

Read through Acts 4:23-31. Then go back and reread beginning at Acts 3:1 - 4:31. The response of the believers is the culmination of a truly remarkable event that propelled the church into prominence in its early days in Jerusalem. The church is growing in numbers, now over 5000 men plus women and children, and we see the beginnings of opposition. Try to imagine what it would have been like to be a member of the church in Jerusalem in those days. What can we learn from their example for our days.

I. PRAISE: (vs. 23-24)

- A. How do Peter and John respond to the threats of the chief priests and Jewish elders? These were the same people who ordered Jesus' crucifixion in the same place. How would you have reacted?
- B. How do they, the church, address God in prayer? How would our prayers be effected if we addressed God this way ? (not just using the words as a formula, but understanding their meaning)

II. PSALM: (vs. 25-28)

- A. Read Psalm 2. What seems to be the main idea of the Psalm? What portion is quoted?
- B. How did the believers see Psalm 2 fulfilled in the events surrounding Christ's crucifixion?
- C. According to vs. 27 and 28 who was responsible for Christ's death?
- D. Reflect on the words of vs. 28, "They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen." How did these believers see the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man expressed in the events surrounding Christ's death and resurrection?

III. PETITION: (vs. 29-30)

- A. In their prayer, what do these Christians specifically ask God to do?
- B. How should this prayer effect what we pray for as a congregation?

IV. POWER: (vs. 31)

- A. How did God answer the prayer? What did the Christians in Jerusalem do? What was the effect?
- B. Read I Cor. 2:1-5. How can you relate to the sentiments Paul expresses here?
- C. In Rom. 15:13 Paul writes, "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." How do you think God wants to demonstrate His power through you so that you can boldly witness for Christ?

