PRAY FIRST Part 5 HANDOUT

A PRAYING CHURCH

11.15.26

Big Idea: A praying church doesn't ask God to make life easier; it asks God to make His people faithful, bold, and dependent on Him.

1. A PRAYING CHURCH RUNS TO GOD

Acts 4:23–24 23 On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people
and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. 24 When
they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. “Sovereign
Lord,” they said, “you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and
everything in them.

- When pressure came, the church didn't run from God. They ran to God.
- What is your first response when pressure comes?

KEY THOUGHT #1 The first response reveals our dependence.

You can tell a lot about what you really believe by what you do when something goes wrong.

2. A PRAYING CHURCH STARTS WITH GOD

- Before we talk about our problem, let's remember who our God is.

KEY THOUGHT #2: Your problem may be bigger than you, but it is never bigger than God.

3. A PRAYING CHURCH SEES ITS PROBLEMS THROUGH THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

Acts 4:25–28 25 You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our
father David: “ ‘Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? 26 The kings of the
earth rise up and the rulers band together against the Lord and against his anointed
one.’ 27 Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of
Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed.
28 They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen.

- The church looks at the crucifixion of Jesus and says:
- **What looked like chaos was actually under the sovereignty of God.**

The sovereignty of God means: **Human rebellion cannot overthrow God's purposes.**

4. A PRAYING CHURCH DOESN'T JUST ASK FOR RELIEF

Acts 4:29 29Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness.

- **They don't ask God to remove the threat.**
- They ask God to strengthen them in the middle of it.

5. A PRAYING CHURCH ASKS FOR BOLDNESS

Acts 4:29 29Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness.

- Notice they don't ask for boldness to defend themselves.
- They ask for boldness to **speak God's Word.**
- **Prayer fuels obedience.**

KEY THOUGHT #3: Prayer doesn't make us passive. Prayer makes us dependent enough to be obedient.

6. A PRAYING CHURCH EXPECTS GOD TO MOVE

Acts 4:30–31 30Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” 31After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

- The point is that prayer puts us in a posture where we expect God to do what only God can do.
- **The real miracle is that fearful people became bold witnesses.**
- Dependence on God isn't a sign that your faith is weak.
- Dependence on God is what faith looks like.

LifePoint: When we pray, we stop asking God to bless our plans and start asking God to accomplish His purposes.