

Desperate Prayer: The Key to Empowered Witness

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 01 May 2022

Preacher: Jared

[0 : 00] It's an honor to be here with you this morning.

It's an honor to be with you.

It's an honor to follow Albert last week. He's been a huge blessing in my life as I spent time with IMB and was trained under him before we went overseas to Central Asia.

It's an honor to be back with my wife. I missed her. I was gone two weeks. And my children, I was in West Africa and just praying and hoping that I would not die on a motorcycle.

And so as I thought about this week and kind of following after Albert, I was thinking, what do we focus on? There's so much when we talk about missions that we could talk about.

[1 : 15] So where do I go? And I had an epiphany on one of those motorcycles digging in and out that prayer is pretty essential, not just to see the kingdom go, but to not die when you're on motorcycles.

And so today we'll be in Acts chapter 4. In the words of a former president, if you have a Bible, then I hope you do. Please open to Acts chapter 4, verses 23 through 31.

And if you don't mind, this is kind of old school, if you would stand for the reading of God's word. When they were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priest and the elders had said to them.

And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit, why did the Gentiles rage and the people's plot in vain?

The kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against his anointed. For truly in this city they 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, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.

[2 : 50] And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, while you stretch out your hand to heal and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus.

And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.

This is the word of God. You may be seated. Thank you. So I was dressed in Guinea, and while I was there, I heard this incredible story.

Guinea was a French colony in West Africa, and their first president ruler was a guy named Sekou Touré. And part of what Sekou Touré did when he took over is decide that all the expats had to leave.

He decided that every Westerner had overstayed their welcome, and they needed to go. And the fledgling church at that time begged this president that a few of the missionaries would be able to stay.

[4 : 03] So they gathered together, and they prayed, and the president really didn't want to listen to this. He felt like all the Westerners needed to leave. But for whatever reason, he was humbled enough to say, Okay, we'll give you a chance.

Why don't you invite one of the missionaries to come to speak with me, and we'll go from there.

What he didn't know is that there had been what we call a third culture kid or a missionary kid who had grown up in the east part of the country, in the Malinke region, and he had returned.

He was fluent. He had lived in a village out there, and he spoke the language fluently. And that was the people group that the president, Sekou Touré, was from. So this young man enters in.

I'm sure he was nervous. I'm sure he wasn't sure what he was going to say. He just knew he was going to speak the language of the president and hope that the Lord's hand would be upon him. During that time, the people were praying for him, praying that God would bless this encounter. This young man comes in speaking Malinke, and the president's eyes get huge.

[5 : 23] Huge basketball eyes, right? You know that look. A shock and surprise. And about halfway through, the president finally stops him, and he says, Do you know who I am?

He said, Well, yes, of course. You're the president, you're Sekou Touré. He said, No, no, no. Do you know who I was? He said, No, I don't understand. The president said, You lived in my village, and we were boys together, and you shared your choice with me.

And the people that you want to stay, I'll allow three of you to stay, as long as you're one of the three. And so the church was able to keep three of their missionaries.

God answered that prayer. And through that, the whole forest region of Guinea was reached pretty substantially by the gospel. It was so influential that when they decided to allow other missionary organizations to come through, this young man's organization was given the right to say yes or no to them.

So, can the Southern Baptists come? Yes, that's okay. The IMB can be here. Can the Jehovah's Witnesses come? No, of course not. Don't let them in. And so not only did the church have access to be strengthened and encouraged, but even false groups were kept out for about a 10-year period after God allowed the other organizations to return.

[6 : 48] Desperate prayer is the key to empowered witness. Desperate prayer is when we cry out to the Lord, when we don't see a way, when we don't understand how God is going to provide.

And yet he does. And yet he does. If we read in Acts chapter 4 before this, in chapters 3 and 4, we'll see the preceding story is this story of Peter and John, and they're going to the temple, and they encounter this baker.

And this baker has been there for years and years and years and years. And he looks up at Peter and John, and he expects when they tell him to look at him that he would get some money.

That's all he wanted. Maybe today I'll be able to grab some bread. I'll be able to live. I'll be all right. And Peter and John tell them, we don't have any money, but we have something better than money.

In the name of Jesus Christ, walk. He gets up, and he jumps, and he yells, and he praises God. And it's incredible. I mean, imagine the scene where Southern Baptist Church here, right?

[7 : 56] And if somebody started jumping up and down and screaming, hooting and hollering, we'd think they lost their mind. Well, I'm sure the Jews did as well. God does incredible things when we rely on his power.

Of course, the Jews didn't really like this whole Jesus thing. The Jewish leaders, they were upset, and they threatened, and they are amazed, it says, at the power of Peter and John because they're normal people.

They're uneducated. And yet, when they depart, they say, don't you dare, right? You parents, you understand that, right? Don't you dare do that again.

And Peter and John are filled with power and with courage, and they say, you decide for yourself what is right. As for us, we cannot help but share these things that we have seen.

We are witnesses to a resurrected Christ. And so we pick it up here in this story, and it says when they were released, they went to their friends.

[9 : 05] So the first point that I want to make is that desperate prayer is united prayer. Desperate prayer is united prayer.

They go to their friends. I think that's an incredible witness for us as a church. I know I'm a pastor's son. I know about church conflict. I've been around the block a few times.

It happens even all around the world. Do we consider the brothers and sisters who are here as friends and family? Are we united enough to get past our problems that when we are faced with opposition, when we are faced with struggle and with pain and with persecution, that the first thing we would do is not just go home, turn on the TV, and try and forget what happened.

Do we take the time to go to our brothers and sisters just so that we can pray, just so they can gather around us, and they can be encouraged that the Lord is continuing to march, that the church is continuing to march on, to be in victory with the Lord?

Do we go to our brothers and sisters with our hard times and our struggles and our opposition? Would you consider these people who are here gathered together, your family, your friends, when they heard, the first thing that they do is they start to pray.

[10:32] If you take the time to look into missions, if you take the time to look at what's happening around the world, you're going to hear a lot of things. Some are really encouraging.

The gospel is going forward. The kingdom is advancing. God is saving souls right and left. Miracles are happening. But another thing that you're going to see is a lot of opposition, a lot of hatred. You're going to see people groups like the Fulani who are in West Africa, who are proud of being the ones who brought Islam to sub-Saharan Africa. You're going to hear about what's going on in Afghanistan.

You're going to hear about North Korea, and places where Christians face death all day, every day. I have the honor of working with a partner whose name is Emmanuel.

He is in Sierra Leone. The Lord saved him from being a child sacrifice. His sister snuck him through the bush and saved his life.

[11:37] And at 12, he went to a church because he heard God speak to him audibly to go there to seek healing.

And he was healed. And then the Lord sent him eventually to his village to share the gospel. His brother came to him and said, I've heard that you became a Christian, and we want to hear what it's all about.

Well, he was afraid that they were going to kill him. But for where he's from, there's something called the secret societies. There are a group of black magic practitioners who go out into the bush, the wasteland in Africa, where they interact with the gods of the land, and they're trained up in the evil practices and ways.

And they have all authority and all power in these villages. One of the things that Emmanuel told me is that even the president is afraid of the people who are part of these secret societies.

Because if they cursed him, they would even be able to kill a president. When we face opposition like that, we have to be people of desperate prayer.

[12:54] When we have been given this honor of proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ, that these evil, foolish things that we have devoted our lives to are meaningless and they're wicked, and they are an affront to the holy God, and yet there's forgiveness, and there's grace, and there's salvation, and there's hope, and there's a living inheritance that we have through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we fall on our knees and we say, yes, Lord, I want that for me, but I also want that for others.

I want that for my family, for my household, for my children, but I can't keep this here in Bartlesville. I have to take that to every corner of the world, anywhere, at any time, that you give me an opportunity to proclaim this message, God, I want to do it.

But I have to have your power. I have to have your Holy Spirit. Because apart from you, I can do nothing. Emmanuel told me that the secret society was an obstacle, that if it was too big for the government, how could we as a bunch of just random people, grew up in villages who were part of a bloody civil war before we came to faith, and we have sins that we're ashamed of, but we found forgiveness and freedom in Jesus Christ, how could we have the audacity to walk from village to village, miles and miles and miles, and expect that they would listen to us unless the Lord was with us?

And now in Sierra Leone, brothers and sisters, the gospel is going forward. I had the privilege of sitting and hearing how villages had gone from slaughtering children day after day to having them. I saw chiefs say, when the word of God entered into our community, we no longer did these things. Look, there's kids, they're running around. That's the power of God. But the access to the power of God is through desperate prayer.

[14:56] And so the people, they lift their voices together. You might ask, why did they respond in prayer? If you've been in church long enough, you say, oh, because that's what we do, we pray.

But I think it's a little bit more profound a question than that, because there's a lot of things that we could do when we are confronted with opposition. We can complain and moan, bicker.

We can say, God, why me? Why are you doing this? I don't understand what's going on. But prayer uniquely expresses our utter dependence, our complete reliance on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer uniquely expresses our utter dependence, our complete reliance on the Lord Jesus Christ. And if you look through Acts, this is actually a normal part of what the early church did. When we first see them in Acts chapter 1, in verse 14, it says that all these, it names the disciples, and they're with the women, and it says all these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer.

[16:02] Then Acts chapter 2, after the day of Pentecost, we see the same thing. They're devoted to four things, to the teaching of the apostles, the breaking of bread, to gathering together, and to prayer.

Are we known as people who are devoted to prayer? And it says that they were together, this phrase, this word, and the ESV is together, and the Greek is with one mind.

When we look at our lives, when we look at our households, when we look at our marriages and our church, could it be described as having that sole focus on the Lord Jesus Christ, united together for the sake of the gospel?

Are our marriages reflecting that? Are our households reflecting that? Is this church reflecting that we will do whatever it takes to see the gospel go forward?

And we realize that at the center of that is desperate prayer because we need the Lord Jesus Christ. They're together, and they're united in purpose, they're united in mission, they're united in prayer.

[17:18] One of the greatest joys that I've found multiplying overseas is the joy of talking with and praying with like-minded believers.

I feel like often people say, oh, you went off your seas, you give up so much to follow the Lord Jesus Christ. I say, no, no, no, no. One second.

When Peter says to Jesus after the story of the rich young ruler, what about us? What does Jesus say to him? He said, you will get a thousand times more, not only in the age that's to come, but right now, following the Lord Jesus gives us the opportunity to come alongside those like-minded people.

And then when you get to pray with him and you're ushered into the throne room of the living God, brothers and sisters, sports will not do. Brothers and sisters, a good meal, I love food.

I'm Southern Baptist. It does not compare. Now, eat before and then pray, that's even better. You know, all things are given to be received with Thanksgiving and with joy and with gratitude, especially with the brothers and sisters.

[18:29] Access to the living God. What can compare to that? We are not merely saved from sin. We are saved to the kingdom of the living and resurrected Lord Jesus Christ.

What a joy. You are not just saved from something to heaven, as if that's some distinct place apart from God. the gospel is we apprehend Jesus Christ.

We find life. We find hope in Jesus. And we live with him forever. I think of friends that I met overseas that man, I would go through a whole lot more than I had to to be able to sit down with him and learn from him and pray with him.

What a joy. So desperate prayer is united prayer. The second point I'd like to make is that desperate prayer is historically aware.

They knew their story and they saw the whole picture. They knew their story and they saw the whole picture. So they came together, they lifted their voices.

[19:36] This is verse 24. It says that they prayed, sovereign Lord. That word is master. some versions that's what it means. It's this picture of a slave owner, somebody who is over another.

They recognize who their God is. They recognize that their God is the true king, that he is their master. They also call him the creator, right?

It says you are the one who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them. They understood who their God is. They knew he was their savior.

Do we do we know who our God is? What great news! We can know the living God, the true God, the one who created everything, the one who loves you, the one who sent his son, Jesus Christ.

They also understood that Jesus is the Messiah or the king. They knew he had all authority in heaven and on earth. You heard that last week.

[20:45] And I like to talk about this. It's not just all authority in heaven, right? It's not just oh you have spiritual authority but no earthly authority. Jesus has all authority, right?

When he goes up to the right hand of the father, he's not just kicking his feet up with a soda in his hand, occasionally influencing certain human souls, hoping that the end will come soon so he can

come back and actually reign.

No, he is sitting at the right hand of God right now as the king who is reigning over the affairs of mankind. Jesus' ascension is an essential part of the gospel.

Jesus rules and he reigns, he is Lord. They also know their scripture, right? They quote from Psalm 2. I'll read that for us.

Psalm 2 says, why do the nations rage and the people's plot in vain? The kings of this earth set themselves and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed.

[21 : 52] That's the Lord Messiah. His anointed, anointed with the Holy Spirit saying, let us burst their bonds apart, cast away their cords from us. He who sits in the heavens laughs, the Lord holds them in derision.

Then he will speak to them in his wrath, terrify them in his fury saying, ask for me, I have set my king on Zion, my holy hill. I will tell you, I will tell of the decree.

The Lord said to me, you are my son. Today I have begotten you. Ask of me and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession.

You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Now therefore, O kings, be wise, be warned, O rulers of the earth, serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling.

Kiss the son lest he be angry. You perish in the way for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him. Psalm 2 could be a sermon in and of itself.

[22 : 56] I wanted to read it because when we get quotes from the Old Testament, the believers knew that passage. They knew all the context. They knew it was a very influential thing for them.

It wasn't just, hey, we take a couple words here and insert it here. This is a very essential passage.

This is a promise of the messianic ruler who was to come, the king.

The Messiah is the anointed one. If you remember the baptism of Jesus, right, what happens? The father says, this is my beloved son, right, this is a coronation moment, right, the old kingdoms of the past.

Here's the king. He's ushered onto his throne. This is the king, da, da, da, da, da, da, right, and everyone's like, woohoo, this is the king. That's what happened. The triune God exposed who the Messiah was at the baptism of Jesus Christ.

It wasn't just, oh, he got wet, right, baptism is important. The Holy Spirit comes upon him, anoints him. He is the Messiah.

[23 : 59] It's a fulfillment of Psalm 2. King Jesus is established over his enemies, right? He destroys death and he destroys sin and he came to undo the works of Satan.

The kings of the earth must submit to our Lord Jesus Christ. A lot of the political problems that we see in the world is their source is the fact that they do not understand that their power is derivative. All authority is our Lord Jesus Christ. It's not the presidents. It's not some dictator in Central Asia. All authority.

He sets up kings and he establishes kingdoms and if they do not bow at his footstool, they will be destroyed. We pray for them because we don't want that to happen.

We pray for them because we want them to acknowledge that Jesus is Lord. Jesus is Lord means Caesar isn't. Right? That's definitely a political statement but it's not merely a political statement.

[25 : 09] It's much, much more than that. Politics are a little thing when we talk about ruling the cosmos. Right? Our Lord is Lord.

Caesar isn't. And that costs the believers a lot. Right? Like if you really think about it and look into church history saying that Caesar isn't the true Lord but Jesus is, you get ostracized, you get threatened, you get killed.

Right? We're led to a slaughter day after day. We're like sheep to be slain. That's what it means to follow Jesus but it's worth it because he is Lord.

He loves you and he is in control. He is also the Lord over households. Right? Our roles, our activities, the choices and behaviors in each household ought to reflect the reality of Christ's kingship.

It's why we must think about things like how we educate our children, about how we use our homes as a blessing and not just a fortress that we retreat to.

[26 : 17] It's why hospitality ought to be an important thing in the church. They're not our castles that we defend. They are welcome spaces that we bring in the broken and the hurting and those

who are lost and definitely our brothers and sisters.

Homes are for family and if we're family we live in each other's homes. We spend time together. We have meals. We break bread. We pray over each other.

We love each other. So, so far we see they understood who God is. They understood that Jesus is the Messiah. Right? Desperate prayer understands its role within history is historically situated.

They also understood that there would be opposition. Brothers and sisters, a question I had as I was preparing this sermon is are we aware of this? Are you aware that when you were called to the Lord Jesus Christ you were called to a living hope and to joy and to salvation with persecution and trials if necessary in the present so that your faith according to 1 Peter 1 would be proved to be of more value than gold that is that is refined by fire.

Right? if gold is even more pure when it goes through the fire how much more is our faith? Do we understand that persecutions are a normal part of the Christian life?

[27 : 49] Are we willing to be obedient even in the face of death? Are we willing to give up a land of comfort and safety at least for now we'll see what happens in the coming years to faithfully follow our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ?

Globally our brothers and sisters are very aware of this. They're kicked out they're beaten up they're killed their churches are burnt down their houses are destroyed they are like sheep that are led to the slaughter.

Are we aware of the cost of following Jesus? Have we count that cost? And do we faithfully pray desperately pray for those who are currently in that position?

It was a great story from Richard Warmbrand that when he was in prison in Romania he was eating disgusting food and a Muslim man came up to him and said how do you do this?

And he said well I know friends in America are enjoying their steak right now and I know my friends and the UK are having some nice fish and chips and they love me and they care about me and they're grateful for what they've been given and they're also faithful in praying for me.

[29 : 09] If they can remember me I must remember them and so with joy I receive what I've been given and I partake in it and that motivated him to start the voice of the martyrs because the idea was that we are one family and we ought to desperately pray for one another and we ought to remember those who are suffering right?

Hebrews says that we ought to remember those who are in prison as if we are in prison alongside them and those who are suffering for we are also in the body and I don't think that merely means just physically in a body but we are part of a body we are brothers and sisters if one part is hurting all parts ought to grieve not to support persecution may come for us here in the US persecution will come in your life if you are obedient to boldly proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ and making disciples but when we desperately pray when we're united when we understand our role in history we can face that with confidence because we are filled with the spirit we are filled with courage we are filled with perseverance one of the fun parts of being a dad is teaching children concepts like courage when you're a child you think ah

I'm not brave I can't I can't be courageous and what they don't often see is that courage is facing fear not lacking fear courage courage is often being empowered to do what we have to do or what we're called to do even in the face of fear we ask the Lord for strength for powers why we rely on his Holy Spirit through desperate prayer one other thing as far as them understanding their place in history they understood that all of history was under the sovereign control of their God it says here that those who raged and what's interesting is it's the Jews alongside the Gentiles in the passage in Psalm chapter 2 it's the Gentiles and the peoples raging but we see that in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ it's also the Jews and so it'd be easy to say wow well that's bad

Jesus is God and he died and that's pretty bad God must have had an off day that day but if you're biblically informed we have passages like Isaiah 53 that say it was the will of God the Father to crush him it's incredible here it says in verse chapter 28 that what Herod and Pontius Pilate the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel did was according to what God's hand and plan had predestined to take place nothing takes our God by surprise I don't know what you're facing right now I know even here in America we have hardship we have death we have sickness we have pain nothing takes our Lord by surprise trust him cry out to him call upon him because he cares for you that right there is humility it's crying out to the living

God nothing takes him by surprise and in fact it's the Lord's plan that the church triumphs through opposition and suffering and persecution right it's a joy set before our Lord Jesus Christ that

allowed him to endure all he went through mocking the shame of the cross likewise brothers and sisters when we are confident of this reality that nothing happens except for that which our Lord has ordained to pass and then when we're empowered by his Holy Spirit and desperate prayer we can go out and face whatever the world might throw at us bring it on we can take it why our God is for us and he is in charge and he rules and he reigns and the Lord Jesus is on his throne and nothing can thwart his plan right what are we told about the rock and the against the church how's hell going to do it's going to prevail right no right the church will always go forward says in

[34 : 11] Isaiah 9 about Jesus Christ the increase of his government and peace shall what shall see no end bring it on it's game time right I'm an athlete I love sports bring it on man if I was told that our baseball team was garbage if I had been told that no matter what happened right that the Lord was really going to empower us and be with us and right we were going to persevere through being down 15 to zero in the first inning and we would come back and win I'd be pretty pretty game to play unfortunately I knew that reality was not that so there were sometimes put in on the jersey I was like it's 42 I'm in Portland it's raining and we're about to get destroyed praise the Lord that that's not how the kingdom works praise the Lord that no matter what happens we get to see the kingdom advance we get to see the

Lord Jesus Christ reigning we get to see the peoples gather to the cross when I'm lifted up I will pull all men to me right we have those promises in Revelation 5 and 7 all peoples all tribes all languages it's really hard on the field sometimes because you don't see that sometimes you pray and you cry and you share and you're alone and it's easy to forget that one day Uzbeks and Turkmen and Africans and Fulani and North Koreans will be alongside us because oftentimes we don't see it have you been praying for somebody for years and years and years and they haven't come to know the Lord yet continue to cry out desperately get brothers and sisters to come together fast seek the Lord's will pray for these individuals in your household in your workplace globally so do we believe these things that our God is a true

God that Jesus is the Messiah the King the people the nations the rulers will oppose us even with great hostility even at the point of death right with violence but the kingdom of God will continue forward Jesus has all authority in that all history it's in the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ if we do we can confidently do that task that Albert shared with us last week that we're well aware of we can have confidence in making disciples and leaving our house and leaving the place we grew up in and going to take the gospel to them so desperate prayer is united desperate prayer is historically aware thirdly desperate prayer humbly!

God's work there's two requests here right the first one is that the Lord would be the one who concerns himself with their threats where's that that's in verse 29 look upon their threats man it's so easy to want to take vengeance up on our own your wife says something and I've never done this at all but I just have to have that final word right or your children embarrass you and instead of focusing on raising them we're embarrassed and we lash out or co-worker or boss treats you terribly how much more so when we're faced with persecution when people physically hurt us for the sake of the gospel it's so much it'd be super easy for them to start scheming and we're going to get back at them they don't they know that vengeance belongs to the Lord and they say you you do this you concern themselves they are threatening us you are aware right they don't act as if it didn't happen they don't act as if no big deal you know they just told us not to do it but whatever right we can downplay persecution and opposition and it's not healthy we cry out to the Lord desperately we say you have to do it

I can't do it I don't want to do it plus you told me not to do it and if I wanted to do it's probably not good right so you do it you do it in your own time either may there be justice at the cross for this individual and you come back and deal with him right so they that's their first request the second is that they would be granted the ability to speak with boldness with signs and wonders could it possibly be that we do not see God work in power because we don't desperately pray for him to could it be that we're too focused on physical things on material things we don't see God's power his wonders miracles right could it possibly be that we rely too much on doctors and we don't ask the Lord to do miracles anymore could it be that we we simplify the Christian life as if it's a three step plan and if you do those things things will work out instead of asking God to break through to lead us in his voice and for us to humbly accept what he says and do it no matter what the cost because the reward is better the reward is better and could it be that we don't really believe that he saw that powerful or that we don't truly desire to see him work powerfully because typically when

we ask the

[40 : 05] Lord to do that it means discomfort opposition maybe leaving home maybe I don't know it's uncomfortable desperate prayer is a normal part of the early church right we see this throughout if you read Acts you'll notice a few things one there's miracles everywhere right it's pretty indicative of the church age like God's just like bam bam awesome things everywhere it's cool I love it and two they're always praying right Acts 13 how does Paul's missionary career start they're fasting they're worshipping God pretty sure they're praying and they hear something that's really hard for a church to hear send out your key leaders you don't get them anymore they're gonna go are our leaders even ready to go the Lord says tomorrow are we ready to send them up and are we doing a good enough job of discipleship and obedience and relying on the

Lord that if the pastors called tomorrow to go up or see somebody could fill his shoes and we don't have to rely on business practices to bring in leaders because they're already here because we know how to desperately pray because we're all involved we all play we all pursue the Lord Jesus Christ something that's really cool here is that God loves answering desperate prayers God loves answering desperate prayers so there's two things one the earth is shaken I mean that that would have been weird and cool but it's actually pretty significant because the earth shaking is more than just being in California on the tectonic plate right it's a sign of God's presence if you look throughout the Old Testament and New Testament you'll see that whenever God comes and descends on the earth the earth shakes so if you jump into a pool and the water displaces something of greater substance is here in Exodus chapter 19 verses 16 it says that the people tremble when Yahweh comes down at Sinai the word in Hebrew for holiness was a word that meant weighty substantive we tend to think of glory that's the word for glory as radiant and light which is more of like the Roman influence on us and being Westerners but in the Hebrew mind it was this weightiness this sense of gravitas right the sense of substance God the sins and things shake in Psalm 114 7 it says tremble the earth at the presence of the Lord of the presence of the Lord we see it in Isaiah 6 right holy holy holy is the Lord God almighty and the earth trembles right we see it in the New Testament anybody have an idea where at the cross right at the resurrection the earth is shook there's a great book

I commend it to everybody called God of all things by pastor in the UK Andrew Wilson and he helped me see this what's the case he calls it a sin quake and a death quake because when the Lord descended not even sin or death could remain at the presence of God he destroys them he overcomes them he shook them up so the earth is shaken here clearly God is in the midst of his people isn't that the promise isn't that the hope that we have said God forever will be with his people the second thing that we see is that they're filled with the Holy Spirit and they speak the Lord in boldness that's a direct answer to the prayer they just spoke!

in the Greek which doesn't matter much other than it means to be filled with and with his phrase with the Holy Spirit is used eight times in Luke's works it's almost like it's a technical term and there's a lot of debate on what does it mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit there's another pastor Jack there I think he's done a great job he goes into all of them and he shows that when the people of God were filled with the Holy Spirit of God they testified about the Messiah who is Jesus that's what they did in verse eight if you look at verse eight here in chapter four it says that Peter filled with the Holy Spirit Peter is filled with the Holy Spirit it launches into this great testimony to the Sanhedrin to the Jews and we other places in Luke and Acts we see it in Acts chapter two verse four right

[45 : 14] Paul's great sermon at Pentecost and this was what Jack Deer wrote he said with these eight examples Luke has shown us that the filling of the Spirit is a supernatural empowerment to proclaim Jesus as the Christ it would be a whole sermon we're not going to do it we could look at all eight if we must be filled with the Spirit to do the task of the Great Commission hence desperate prayer is the key to empowered witness I can't make God give me a spirit but I can cry out to him and say I need it I need your spirit we can cry out and say God we need your spirit we're desperate we don't want to rely on our own methods and our means we need you and you alone isn't that the point of salvation I need you

I'm at the end God can't do it I'm full of sin I'm wicked I'm evil but I believe that you can I believe that you can save me and you and you alone so we cry out desperately in closing I thought of a few reasons we don't desperately pray one I think sometimes we don't others tend to be individualistic tend to focus on our own problems sometimes we just don't care sometimes we don't believe God

is all powerful we may think yeah God did those things then but we act as if he can't do it now that's kind of silly or we might doubt that God wants to work through us right I know God can do those things but through me I mean y'all don't know my mess you don't know my life you don't know my evil thoughts surely

God doesn't want to work through me we might also lack desperate prayer in our lives because we're afraid of what it costs we're afraid of leaving home or facing opposition or saying something that's distasteful culturally or it could be not that we're afraid of what it costs but we're comfortable with where we're at could be that we're comfortable with our lives as they are I've got just enough of God on Sunday and Wednesday check I'm good I don't need them throughout the week I like my couch on that recliner get me some ice cream preferably my wife and I disagree on that could be that we're distracted could be that we're distracted there's a lot in our lives especially with technology that can distract us from what we're called to be could be that we rely on methods I see this a lot on the field we see a movement of God and then we write a book about it and then we're like oh if I apply that then I'm gonna have that as if that's the key the key is do things the right way we do that with parenting right I read the book on parenting their kids turned out okay if I do that then my kids will turn out okay no pray for your kids desperately cry out to the Lord Jesus Christ that he will fill them with Holy Spirit and they will love Jesus more than they right I think that's pretty true about a lot of our churches it's a pastor's job we hired a youth pastor that that's a youth pastor's job to take care of my teenage kids they're mess I don't want to do it or we have to have a program right David Platt former president of ours asked this question can we make disciples without relying on performances professionals and programs it's a good question to stare in the face as a church are we making disciples based on the word and the spirit or do we have to conjure something up to make people walk with

Jesus or the final thing I could come up with and I'm sure there's a lot and I'm not accusing you I know this in my own life right these are things I'm preparing to swim and I'm like whoa I was on the field plenty of these reasons were reasons I didn't desperately cry out for the Lord the final one I could come up with was we don't believe prayer impacts anything and no one would say that right like let's just get right no one's gonna say ah prayer doesn't do anything you may not even think it if you're a good Christian grew up in Oklahoma like that but definitely not you Okies right but at the end of the day we act as if that's a reality and if we act like that and we take the time to get past you know the phony person we put in front of people so that they accept us as we want them to and not as we are I think we believe that and so in conclusion

[50 : 47] I want to share not true these excuses are excuses 1727 the Moravian community of here sorry if you're German I apologize Saxony Eastern Germany sorry that I mispronounced it that is in Eastern Germany this church commenced around the clock prayer watch that continued for who wants to guess how many years do you think it went 24 hours a day seven days a week for how long anybody 30 anybody else 7 20 I heard the number of numbers 110 years 300 people 110 years 2 to 3 people they did it in community often were too individualistic I left that they did it together 2 to 3 people an hour for 110 years over a 15 year period this small group of 300

Moravians sent 70 missionaries overseas one of their churches they planted sent 200 people to go do the missional task globally they went and lived among unreached people groups learned their language and their culture and told them about Jesus Christ one of the Moravian missionary teams voluntarily sold themselves into slavery so that they could be with the people man this was the first large scale protestant missionary movement and one quote one comment I saw said they would give the churches to established denominations that were already there said if they didn't they'd probably be the largest denomination in the world all because they humbled themselves enough to constantly pray they desperately relied on the

Lord Jesus Christ count Zisendorf one of their key leaders said this I have but one passion it is he it is he alone I don't know that I could say that brothers and sisters if I'm being honest I want to be able to say that what if that was something we said every day their motto I just will leave on this our lamb has conquered let us follow him amen right brothers and sisters amen our lamb has conquered let's follow him and I would add let's rely on him in desperate prayer so that we may be empowered to take the gospel to every people group to every person in our neighborhood so that the kingdom of

God may be fully established here on earth and his will our father's will will be as it is in heaven it will be on earth I'm honored thank you once again for letting me join you also thank you for giving to

the lot of offering we were with I and people like you graciously praying for us giving that allowed us to be witnesses!

to be sent out from you it's an honor to be here with you I want to pray for you and then we can conclude the service here in a little bit Lord I thank you for Lord I pray that Bartlesville would be completely different because we humbly submit ourselves to praying for your power for your glory for your kingdom to come here on the earth Lord I pray for people who do not know you to be brought into your kingdom to be encouraged to know that Jesus Christ died for them and rose that they may live forever Lord we love you teach us to pray with the disciples Lord I just feel like we need to say teach us to pray God we love you may your name be lifted high in Jesus name Amen