

# **Acts 4: 23-37**

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## **The Believers Pray - Acts 4:23-31**

1. Peter and John were released (v. 23–24).
2. They had a conviction of God's power (v. 24).
3. They had a conviction of man's futility and God's plan (v. 25–28).
4. They had a conviction of God's mission and of God's concern (v. 29–30).
5. They experienced astounding results (v. 31).

## **The Believers Share Their Possessions - Acts 4:32-37**

1. They were of one heart and mind (v. 32).
2. They gave a great witness to the resurrection (v. 33).
3. They took care of all who had need (v. 34–37).

1. Where did Peter and John go after they were released by the Sanhedrin? (4:23)

## Acts 4: 23

**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.

They went to their own *companions* and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them.

Companions – their own

2375 - ἰδίους, *idious* - their own

The Sanhedrin has repeatedly warned Peter and John not to preach and teach in the name of Jesus (vs.18).

How frightening it must have been for the rest to hear what had happened to Peter and John.

This same Sanhedrin had arrested Jesus in the middle of the night, held a kangaroo court, turned Jesus over to the Romans and had Him killed. Now, the Sanhedrin has turned its attention on the disciples of Jesus.

## 2. In the prayer, how did the believers express their view of the persecution they faced? (4:24-26)

### Acts 4: 24-26

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,

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.'

1. O Lord, it is You who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that is in them,
2. 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?
3. The kings of the earth took their stand, And the rulers were gathered together Against the Lord and against His Christ.'

3. How was God's hand in all that was plotted and done against Jesus? (4:27-28)

## **Acts 4: 27-28**

**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.

1. You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel.

2. To do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur.

4. How would God orchestrate the destruction and defeat of Jesus' enemies?  
(4:28-30)

**Acts 4: 28-30**

**28** to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur.

**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.”

1. Grant that Your bond-servants may speak Your word with all confidence.

## 5. What did the Christians ask God to do? (4:29-30)

### Acts 4: 29-30

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.”

You extend Your hand to heal, and signs and wonders take place through the name of Your holy servant Jesus.”



6. What did the Christians experience and do after they finished praying? (4:31)

## **Acts 4: 31**

**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.*

1. The place where they had gathered together was shaken.
2. They were filled with the Holy Spirit.
3. They began to speak the word of God with boldness.

# Acts 4: 23-31

## A. Reported to their own

## B. They prayed to God.

All the saints prayed to God. They acknowledged the power and authority of God in this world. The saints recognized that this was the fulfillment of what David spoke in Psalm 2.

### Psalm 2: 1–3

- 1 Why are the nations in an uproar. And the peoples devising a vain thing?
- 2 The kings of the earth take their stand  
And the rulers take counsel together  
Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying,
- 3 “Let us tear their fetters apart  
And cast away their cords from us!”

## **B. They prayed to God.**

In Acts 4: 27, the disciples apply Psalms 2: 1-3 to Herod, Pilate, the Gentiles, and the people of Israel as the ones who stood against God.

The Anointed is the holy servant Jesus. Yet all of what has happened thus far has been according to God's plan, determined from the beginning.

# B. They prayed to God.

## **Jeremiah 29: 13**

**13** 'You will seek Me and find *Me* when you search for Me with all your heart.

## **Matthew 18: 19**

**19** "Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven.

## **Mark 11: 24**

**24** "Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be *granted* you.

## **1 John 5: 14–15**

**14** This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

**15** And if we know that He hears us *in* whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.

# What was requested in their prayer?

1. They never prayed that evil men would be taken out.
2. They never prayed for the persecution to stop.
3. They never prayed that God would allow them to stop witnessing until things quieted down.
4. They prayed for Boldness!
5. They prayed for more courage to bear testimony of Jesus Christ.
  - a. No matter the abuse or the danger, they asked to be fearless and for God to remove their fear.

# What was the result of the prayer?

1. It was **unity**. All the believers were already of **one in heart, mind, and purpose**. The Body of Christ showed no disharmony.
2. **It was a response to growing persecution**. The believers were surprised that the Jewish leaders continued to reject Jesus as Messiah, despite the strong testimonies concerning the resurrection by those who had walked with Him.
3. **Prayer for boldness in preaching**. They didn't want to step back from their confident proclamation that Jesus is Lord and He had conquered sin and death.
4. **Prayer for healing power, for signs and wonders**. They wanted a God who is real and working in the world.
5. This is the prayer they prayed, and they received an immediate answer- they were **filled with the Holy Spirit** and **went out to preach the word boldly**.

**Their need was also for power to heal and for signs and wonders.**

**1. God's power would prove their claim that:**

- a. God's Son did come to earth.
- b. God's Son did die.
- c. God's Son did arise.
- d. God's Son was exalted to the right hand of God.
- e. God's Son was still active and working in men's lives.

**2. The power of the living Lord in signs and wonders would confirm the message of the Gospel.**

- a. The power lies "in the name" of Jesus.
- b. The power is for the glory of Jesus alone.

## 7. How did the Christians show their unity? (4:32)

### Acts 4: 32

**32** And the congregation of those who believed were of one 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.

1. All those who believed were of one heart and soul.

2. "All things were common property to them"



# Unity

**Brotherhood—Unity:** The early church was of one heart and of one mind and of one purpose.

**The Christians were complete and displayed:**

- a. Oneness
- b. Unity
- c. Accord
- d. Harmony
- e. Love

8. What godly quality enhanced the unity and service of the early Christians?  
(4:33)

## Acts 4: 33

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

The apostles with great power were giving testimony to Jesus' resurrection and the abundant grace was upon them all.

9. How was the command of Deuteronomy 15:4 exemplified by the members of the early church? (4:34-35)

**Acts 4: 34-35**

**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.**

**Deut. 15: 4**

**4 "However, there will be no poor among you, since the Lord will surely bless you in the land which the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance to possess,**

All who were property owners gave the proceeds of the sales to the apostles so that they would be distributed to any who had a need.

# Attitude of Peter, John and other believers

First, they “shared everything they had.” They did not claim owner’s rights; their attitude was “what’s mine is yours.”

Second, those with the means voluntarily sold their own property and brought the proceeds to the apostles for distribution to the needy.

# Attitude of Peter, John and other believers

Third, **they were of one heart and soul**. The believers were joined together relationally. Their hearts were joined together where there was a deep care and concern for each other. Their lives were joined together.

Fourth, "*no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own.*" **The believers were joined together financially**. They were willing to take care of each other and help the believers who had need. Nothing was held back and possessions were sold to help take care of these believers.

Finally, **they were joined in the grace of God**. Through their belief in the resurrection of Jesus Christ and their obedience to the will of God, these believers experienced the grace of God in their lives. We have a commonality in Christ that we can share with one another. There is no deeper connection than the spiritual bond and foundation we have with one another.

## 10. What was exemplary about Barnabas? (4:36-37)

### Acts 4: 36-37

**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.

He owned a tract of land, sold it and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

# Barnabas

This is the first mention of Barnabas, the Levite, who was from the Island of Cyprus. His name means “Son of exhortation” or “Son of consolation.”

Barnabas was an extremely important person in the life of the early church.

His life is a dynamic example to all.

# Barnabas

He was gifted by the Spirit of God with the gift of an *apostle* (Acts 14:14; Eph. 4:11).

He was totally committed to Christ and to helping others, even to the point of selling land to help (Acts 4:36–37).

He stood up and defended Paul before the early believers who feared Paul because he had been a spy and had persecuted the church (Acts 9:26–27).

He was sent by the church to exhort believers in the Gentile church at Antioch (Acts 11:22f).

He sought after Paul, wanting Paul to serve as his associate. (Acts 11:25–26).

He served with Paul (Acts 11:30; 12:25; 13:2–15:40).



# Barnabas

He was one of the first two missionaries, Paul being the other (Acts 13:2–3).

He worked with John Mark (Acts 12:25; 15:37–40).

He was called upon to defend Gentile salvation before the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:2, 12).

He differed and split with Paul (Acts 15:36–40).

He backslid, drifted away for a brief period (Gal. 2:11–13).

He is mentioned by Paul as an example to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 9:6).

He was John Mark's cousin (Col. 4:10).

# Lessons in Acts 4: 23-37

1. Trust in God
2. Be committed to fellowship
3. Pray to God with humility and thankfulness
4. Present the Gospel with great boldness
5. Be united with one mind, heart and purpose
6. Be an encouragement to others
7. Help those who are in need