

Union Methodist Church

Sermon Outline: **The Acts of the Holy Spirit, Part 3: Filled with The Holy Spirit in Prayer**

July 2nd, 2023. Pastor Michael Larbi

Readings: **Acts 4:8-31**

1. **Recall**

○ **Part 1: Our Commission: GO, PREACH, APPLY**

“Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness.” Matthew 9:35 NIV

Jesus said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.¹⁹Therefore **go and make disciples of all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,²⁰and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.” Matthew 28:18-20

Like Jesus, we are to **GO** where the need is, **PREACH** the gospel, **APPLY** the name of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit

Compassion is Key

Matt 9:36 **When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them**, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.”

John 4:35 Don't you have a saying, 'It's still four months until harvest'?

I tell you, **open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.**

○ **Part 2: The Holy Spirit Enables Bold Witness**

As we step out to obey Jesus' command, we can expect fear and persecution, as we see in Acts 3 and 4. However, the key to our bold and successful witness for Christ is to **be filled with the Spirit, and preach the right message:**

8Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them ...

Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John and realized that they were uneducated and ordinary men, they were amazed and recognized them as companions of Jesus.” Acts 4:8,13 NRSV

“It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed.

12Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.” Acts 4:10,12 NIV

2. The Choice We Face: Compromise or Bold Witness for Christ

○ The Compromise Option

Acts 4 states that at the trial of Peter and John, since the rulers, elders, and teachers of the law in Jerusalem

“ could see the man who had been healed standing there with them, there was nothing they could say. ... 16“What are we going to do with these men?” they asked. “Everyone living in Jerusalem knows they have performed a notable sign, and we cannot deny it.

17But **to stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn them to speak no longer to anyone in this name.**

18Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.” Acts 4:14-18 NIV

• Power in the Name of Jesus

What is the devil afraid of? **The name of Jesus.**

It has power to transform lives, to bring healing, ...

“Being found in human form,

8 he humbled himself

and became obedient to the point of death—
even death on a cross.

9 Therefore God also highly exalted him

and gave him the name

that is above every name,

10 so that at the name of Jesus

every knee should bend,

in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

11 and every tongue should confess

that Jesus Christ is Lord,

to the glory of God the Father.” Philippians 2:7-11 NRSV

The devil is always actively working, sometimes through people, to stop us from leaning and depending on the name of Jesus. To stop us from invoking the name of Jesus. His purpose is to stop the power of God and the spread of the gospel. Because the devil is powerless before the name of Jesus!

And Jesus himself said to us, his disciples, that:

“If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

¹⁶You did not choose me, but **I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.**” John 15:17-8,16 NIV

“Very truly I tell you, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.²⁴Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.” John 16:23b-24 NIV

- **What was the compromise here?**

Just don’t speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus and you’ll have no trouble. You’ll not be arrested, you’ll not be insulted, you’ll not be abused, etc.

Reminds me of the story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego who refused to bow down to the golden statue of king Nebuchadnezzar. The king was enraged and said to them:

“ Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods and you do not worship the golden statue that I have set up? **¹⁵Now if you are ready when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, drum, and entire musical ensemble to fall down and worship the statue that I have made, well and good. But if you do not worship, you shall immediately be thrown into a furnace of blazing fire, and who is the god that will deliver you out of my hands?**” Daniel 3:14-15 NRSV

It is the same choice that every Christian is faced with today. Who are we going to bow to? Are we going to refuse to speak and teach in the name of Jesus? Are we going to yield to the threats of society, the media, etc.? Are we going to deny those in need the power of God out of fear of human beings?

- **The Bold Witness Option**

The apostles demonstrated what it means to choose the path of boldly standing up and being a witness for Christ.

19But Peter and John replied, "Which is right in God's eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! 20As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."

21After further threats they let them go. They could not decide how to punish them, because all the people were praising God for what had happened. 22For the man who was miraculously healed was over forty years old." Acts 4:19-22 NIV

3. Fighting the Good Fight: Turn on the power - Praying with Our Own

- **Gathering with Our Own in Prayer**

"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. **24When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God."**

Acts 4:23-24 NIV

When we are in trouble, especially due to our stance for righteousness, our witness for the power of the Gospel of Christ, this is a great a model of what we are to do. We should join with our own people in prayer.

Who are our own people?

Here it is referring to people of like faith. People who would stand with them in prayer and faith and trust God for a breakthrough.

- **How the people of God pray then?**

- **Solidly based on Scripture - reminding God of what is said in Scripture**

"Sovereign Lord," they said, "you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. **25You 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?

26The kings of the earth rise up

and the rulers band together

against the Lord and against his anointed one.”

27Indeed 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. 28They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen.

- **They asked for more power!**

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

30Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders

through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” Acts 4:29-30 NIV

In other words, **TURN ON THE POWER!**

This was bold prayer!

This was fearless prayer!

This was a prayer of faith based on scripture and a knowledge of God’s will in the situation.

This is a great part of how we fight the good fight of faith. As Paul says,

“11But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. 12**Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life**, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. ” 1 Timothy 6:11-12 NKJV

- **The Result**

“After 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.” Acts 4:31 NIV