

When They Prayed - The Power of Prayer

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[0 : 00] Acts 4.31. When they had prayed,! God acts.

It says, When they prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together. Sometimes God does some shaking, and it's a good thing. The word here, shake, it means to agitate, to rock, to topple, to disturb, to incite, to stir up.

I heard a young person use slang to say, This church rocks. It's wicked. Now, by the way, I think it's likely that a church that rocks is wicked. But truly, God rocked His church.

Amen? God rocked His church. It wasn't a wicked thing. It was a godly thing. It was a God thing.

Amen? When God rocks the church, that's the kind of rock we need, isn't it? God's rock. God's shaking.

Jesus is the rock. Amen? And prayer is that rock as well. The prayer that we can pray, it makes us shaky of things that can be shaken. The things that are shaky are shaken.

[1 : 27] Shaken off, hopefully. Prayer. When they pray. Friends, prayer is powerful. Prayer is powerful. It's disruptive. It's going to make things happen. When we pray, we're holding the hand of the Almighty God.

Prayer moves the hand of God, it's been said. Prayer is going to get your attention. Prayer is even going to be destructive. And it can flow. That's the kind of prayer we need, isn't it?

That kind of prayer. We need to get to that place of dissatisfaction. That place of disturbance. That we need to be disturbed sometimes. But sometimes we can get such that we need to be shaken.

We need to be shaken. To be shaken from where we're careless. To be shaken from where we are stuck. To be shaken. Shaken up in a good way.

Wouldn't it be good if when the church prays, there was that kind of shaking that goes on, that heavenly commotion, that God in the heavens would shake the earth as it were.

[2 : 32] And you imagine what it would have been like here in this setting here, that the place was shaken. You know, maybe things started to fall off the shelves. And that church, that assembly of the people of God became an epicenter of a divine move of God.

Wouldn't that be something to see such a thing? In Isaiah 64 verse 1, Isaiah cries, Oh, that thou wouldst strand the heavens. Tear them apart, that thou wouldst come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence.

Isaiah 64 verse 1. That's the kind of prayer that the heavens could be torn open, that God would come down. We can pray and believe God can move.

He can move a mountain. He can move men and women. God, the one, the God that rends the heavens can come down. He can tear them wide open and come and enter in to our need.

He can intrude on our selfish ways, our fleshly ways. He can come on the scene and take over.

Don't we want him to? Oh, God, that thou wouldst rend the heavens. What a prayer to pray.

[3 : 45] When God intervenes, there's going to be a holy disruption. When they pray, they were shaken. Now let's pray and believe God for a divine intervention on the scene of our lives, on the circumstances that we're in.

When we pray, God doesn't work. Something happens. God shakes us sometimes out of our complacency, out of the status quo. You know, the tea party, as it were, that church sometimes is. He kind of disrupts things. He discomforts our comfiness. And we get to be a snug little church. We need to be shaken, don't we?

We don't want to get so comfortable that we're just coasting. That God will give us a vision of heaven and hell. That he would shake us from this earthbound thinking, that thinking that it's church just going through the motions.

We don't want that. That God will convict us of sin. That he will move on our part. That he will show his mercy as we cry out for his grace.

[4 : 54] That God will grab a hold of us and shake us and strengthen us. That he'll hold us in our weakness and he'll make us strong. There's a preacher Vance Havner that said, sometimes your medicine bottle has shake well before using.

Sometimes God has to shake us well, doesn't he? Some of his people, he has to shake them well. Sometimes we go through a shaking and we wonder, what's God doing for me?

What's happening to me? God, what are you doing? And that shaking is part of his plan. Because he's making you usable. Paul wrote to Timothy, stir up the gift which is in you.

Stir it up. He's got a sense of fan it into flame. There's a sense where Timothy had something he could do for God but it was kind of sitting on the shelf. It was gathering dust.

Paul said, Timothy, stir up the gift of God which is given and which is in them. We can all have something we can do and we need to be stirred up to put it into action.

[6 : 02] To put our faith into practice. God will shake us and shape us and shake us and stir us and that's a good thing. It's what we need. It's what we need to happen when they pray.

The place was shaking. Imagine if on the nightly news we heard there'd been an earthquake in Adelaide. It's 6.2 on the Richter scale and it's hit the northern suburbs and the epicentre is Elizabeth Park.

Wouldn't it be wonderful to think that our prayer could be so impactful? But really in a spiritual way it can be.

Can it? It can be that we can shape our city. God can shape the city as we pray. God can shake his church. Shake us from apathy, from unbelief, from complacency, from sloth.

Shake us from tradition, from ritual, from our sinful and selfish ways, from our cold, formal, lazy religion, lifeless religion. Shake us out of our lukewarmness, out of our powerlessness, that God would bring the heavens and come down.

[7 : 11] That God would grant us a holy fire, a power, a zeal, and make us a powerful, prayerful people of faith. Church needs a shake-up.

That's a good thing. Sometimes we can get in a rut, we can get where it's so comfy and casual. We need a stirring of God, an agitation, a conviction, a shock.

Sometimes life's heartaches can rock us, can't they? When we hear of someone we love passing away, when we hear of some disaster or some great trouble, strikes, there's a shaking and it makes us want to hold on to that rock in the stormy times.

God wants us to be a prayerful people and sometimes that shaking is what God wants for us, to be stirred up in a good way. That we'll be concerned for our soul and the souls of man all around us.

That we'll be alarmed, that God would send a holy alarm, that we would be shaken. Secondly, when they had prayed, they were filled with the Holy Ghost.

[8 : 25] Be shaken, be filled. They were all filled with the Holy Ghost. Someone was asking me lately, what's the difference between the Holy Ghost and the Holy Spirit?

Well, they're the one and the same, the Spirit of God. And sometimes we don't understand really the terminology, but it's the Holy Spirit, God's Spirit.

We need His filling, don't we? It says when they prayed, the place was shaken. When they prayed, they were filled with the Holy Ghost. Now, we need His empowering.

We need His Spirit. We've seen these numbers of times, this references to a filling, a filling of God's Spirit. It tells us in Luke 1 of John the Baptist, it says, He shall be great in the sight of the Lord and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink and He shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from His mother's womb.

Wow. I think someone could in the mother's womb fill with the Holy Spirit. That's amazing, isn't it? And Luke 1, 41, it says, When Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, they bleeped in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost.

[9 : 39] Not only was John filled, but the mother. And then Luke 1, 67, His father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost and prophesied.

Acts 2, verse 4, it says, They were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. Acts 4, verse 8, Then Peter filled with the Holy Ghost said unto them, He rulers of the people.

Acts 9, 17, Ananias putting his hands on him, on Saul said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus hath sent me that thou mightest receive thy sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost.

Acts 13, verse 9, Paul filled with the Holy Ghost set his eyes on him. That was Alamas the sorcerer. Paul was filled with the Holy Ghost. Acts 13, 52, And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost.

Ephesians 5, verse 8, it says, And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be ye filled with the Spirit. Acts 6, verse 3, As they were looking for men to serve in the church, the call was, Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among ye seven men of wisdom, seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom.

[11 : 01] Acts 6, verse 5, They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost and Philip and so on. Acts 7, 55, it says, But he, Stephen, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven.

And then of Barnabas, it says, Acts 11, 24, He was a good man and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith. So there's repeated occurrences of men and women being filled with the Holy Spirit.

And the church, as we read here in Acts 4, when they prayed, they were filled with the Holy Ghost. Friends, we need the filling of the Spirit to be filled with the Holy Ghost, to be full of the Holy Ghost. And it speaks really of the indwelling Holy Spirit of God. That's salvation. We receive His Spirit. And it could be said that there are fillings, repeated fillings.

And whether we call it the baptism in the Holy Spirit, whether we believe in a second blessing or many blessings, whatever the case, there's no argument that we must be filled, be filled, be being filled, filled, filled, filled, filled again.

[12 : 24] We need to be filled with the Spirit of God, with God's Spirit. The Scriptures often exhort us to a filling, a filling with godly virtues.

For example, in Romans 15, 14, it tells how we should be full of goodness. Full of goodness. How can we be filled like that? I'll put to you if you could consider, if you think for a moment, of a sponge saturated with water.

And if you put that sponge on a surface and push down your thumb, the water runs out of the sponge. We know that it's filled because those interior pockets of the sponge, once they're pressed, the water comes out from that sponge that is filled as the pressure is put on.

And I believe really for us as God's people, as men, as women of God, that we want to be so filled that we feel like the sponge would be filled. We'll be so filled with God.

We'll be full of his goodness. We'll be full of those good fruits. We'll be full of those virtues. And I think a lot of believers are not filled. They're running on empty.

[13 : 39] It's a bit like sometimes when you're driving along and the fuel light comes on and the warning light, you're low. If you were flying a plane, it'd probably be talking to you saying, you're in trouble.

The bells would be going off. Your tank is running out. And friends, when we pray, we feel the Holy Ghost. Maybe if you like that, that fuel light goes on, that warning light comes on, you're running on empty, it's time to pray.

Seek God. And maybe it's because we haven't sought the face of Almighty God for so long that the warning light comes on, the fuel, the spirit as it were, we start to leak and we need a refill.

We need to go back to the tank station and get a refill. And sometimes I think as believers when we've forgotten to pray, when we've neglected the word of life, that we need to seek his face again. To have that refilling, to have that new absorb more of God, to soak it in as it were. When we've grown somewhat cold or shallow, when we come to a task to be a Sunday Christian, that can be a trap, can't it?

[15 : 02] We should be a seven-day Christian. I was talking to someone lately saying, should we worship on the seventh day? We should worship on the first, the second, the third, right through the whole week.

We should be seven-day Christians. We shouldn't be Sunday Christians, certainly. We should be filled, be being filled, and we're overflowing, as it were, that our lives would be full.

Sometimes it can be true that our lives can be full. You see my diary, my life is full. Yeah, I'm filled. I've got, and it could be filled with self, filled with pleasures, filled with the pleasures of sin, and it could be filled with vain pursuits and interests, filled with vanity and selfish pleasures, filled with business or busyness, filled with the spirit of the world, but not filled with the Holy Ghost.

It's been truly said too, as the saying goes, how are you going? You say, I'm keeping busy.

I'm keeping busy. Sometimes we can be busy with the wrong things, can't we? It's not about keeping busy, it's about being effective, being an effective Christian, not necessarily a busy Christian.

[16:24] There was one time I spoke to a man called Bob from Elizabeth, and he said that the doctors had told him that he would be lucky if he lived the week out due to his health condition. He was literally on death's door, yet he wouldn't trust Christ.

His heart was closed to the Savior. What a tragic thing. Filled with his own thoughts, filled with his own ideas, filled with going his own way, filled with his own thinking, but not wanting to hear or heed the Savior's call.

What fills us? Will we be like Bob? Other things will crowd God out, and even on our deathbed will scarcely bear a thought for the Savior's call. What a tragedy, what a tragic thing.

I'm sure Bob's gone now. What fills us? What fills our heart? Will we go God's way? Will we come to him in surrender? To be filled with God, one must be emptied of self.

God. Now, I've heard it said, this is some years ago, that a former pastor of mine, a local assembly of God minister, was going around saying, and I quote, Andrew Craig has renounced the Holy Spirit.

[17:38] Now, I used to be in the Pentecostal movement. Andrew Craig has renounced the Holy Spirit. Nothing could be further from the truth.

I have renounced the false teachings of Pentecostalism about the Holy Spirit. Yes, I've renounced that. But we believe in the Holy Spirit, just as plain as the Bible tells us to believe, in the biblical teachings about the Holy Spirit, not the false ones.

you know, certainly, we do not deny the Holy Spirit. You know, some would say, oh, your church isn't a spirit-filled church. It's a spirit-filled church as one, with all the zany goings-on, the hoo-ha, and the raving, the emotionalism.

But no, we are spirit-filled. We don't settle for a cheap imitation, or a cheap substitute. We want the biblical truth. We want the Bible Holy Spirit, not some gobbledy-goo, not some, you know, the garbled supposed tongues, which are false, which are false, and not real.

But we want the real. And without his filling, we are empty and dry, powerless. We are a spirit-filled church. We are a spirit-filled people. We do believe in the Holy Spirit.

[19:00] Some would say, oh, you deny the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Absolutely not. We believe in the nine gifts of Romans 12, the nine gifts of 1 Corinthians 12.

We believe in the gifts of the Holy Spirit, in their setting, in their place, in their season, for their reason. Some have fulfilled their reason.

They fulfilled the season, the calling to judgment, sign before the word. Now we have the word. We don't need extra biblical revelation.

But we believe in the gifts of the Spirit, where they are applicable for today. We do not deny them. We believe in the biblical teaching about the Spirit of God and the gifts of the Spirit.

In some churches, there's always talk about the Holy Spirit, but they lack the real power over sin. It's almost like they have a form without the reality, isn't it?

[20:01] They don't have real power over flesh. They don't have real victory and assurance of faith. They don't have the real obedience. They're reaching out with the gospel. Some would say, what's the sign of receiving the Holy Spirit?

Is it some garbled gobbledy-goop coming out of your mouth? When they received the Holy Spirit, they went out as witnesses.

That's the sign of the Holy Spirit. Are we a witnessing church? Do we care about evangelism, about taking the gospel? people? Some of these folk are sadly missing out and misdirected.

Some of them say, but fooled and faulty with false doctrine, they're missing out on real obedience. They're reaching out with the gospel. They're missing the whole point of why the Spirit of God has been given, that we be his witnesses,!

They're empowering us to witness. And so, friends, I urge you today, as God helping me, I'm seeking that, the real thing. We want the real, not the false.

[21:09] We want real revival. We want when we pray, that we will be shaken. We want when we pray, that we will be filled with the Holy Spirit, that we will see awesome power in the trembling conviction of God's word, impacting men and women, weeping under the sound of the gospel.

Where we'll see people truly converted, dramatically, soundly converted, trusting in faith, trusting the crucified one to save them and sanctify them and set them free.

Where we'll be a church where whole nations can be turned upside down with our sister churches, with like-minded churches, with like-minded missionaries who share our faith, that we will see whole communities swept by the fear of Almighty God.

Where truly, men will be truly filled, filled with the Holy Ghost. And it's holy. His Spirit, He is holy. I think they miss that too. Somewhere, and I'm not meaning to say them all the time, because it can be true of us too, that there's much talk about the Holy Spirit, but they're missing the holy part.

[22 : 23] There's no holiness there. It's gone. There's no holiness there. There's flesh. We must have His filling. We must have His Holy Spirit come and fill us.

The godly preacher Martin Lloyd Jones said this, I want to talk to you today about the baptism of the Holy Spirit. You may call it what you want, but I want to know, have you experienced the fullness of the Spirit?

I know all of you listening to me come, as I do from a biblical background, but it's not good enough. I know that all of you want to say to my question about the Holy Spirit, well, we got it all at conversion.

There's no need for any more experience. Well, Lord Jones, I've only one other question to ask you. If you got it all at conversion, where in God's name is it?

There's a sense where we can just stay stale, need the filling, and the continued filling, I'll put to you, that dependence upon the Holy Spirit.

[23 : 25] I'm not saying it's about experience, but it's about a dependence. It's about tapping into God's strength when we know ours are so we, when without his enabling we're dead and lifeless, we need the Spirit of God, the Spirit of life to come sweeping, breathing, flowing, in and out and through us.

And we're not here saying we're all about some showy excitement or some emotional emphasis, but we're talking about a deep heartfelt conviction that God would move, that God would move, shake us, fill us, that we'd have a deep heartfelt conviction about the things of God, that the things of God will move us, we'll be moved by it, we'll be moved by the sinfulness of sin, we'll be moved by the dread fear of God, that we'll want to be right, we'll want to be close to him, that we'll have a sense, a conviction about the awesome peril of the eternally lost, of the crying need for obedience to God and surrender, that we'll have that contagious, overwhelming, overflowing love for souls, that will be moved, that the love of Christ will constrain us, that we'll have such a heart for God and the things of God, that that's really all that matters. Church, when you pray, you're going to be filled with the Holy Ghost.

Now we need to pray, to be shaken, to be filled, and thirdly, to be bold. When they prayed, it says they spake the word of God with boldness. It says they spake, not their opinion, they didn't speak their opinion, they didn't speak their views, they didn't speak their thoughts, or what some other teacher on the internet would teach, but they spake, it says the word of God, that's what they spake, the word of God, they spake the word of God, and they spake it with boldness.

You know, now's the time, friends, God helping us, we'll be a bold people, we'll be bold, we'll be willing to be bold, to be outspoken, to be frank, to be blunt, with assurance, and not necessarily to be, as it were, deliberately offending people, but that we won't be afraid to say, I'm standing for Christ, and this is where I stand, I can do nothing but stand for him, to stand, to speak the word of God, to speak the word of God.

[26 : 02] It says they spoke what? The word of God with boldness. And where are the men of God? Men of God with boldness, we ought to be such men, and such women, people with boldness, that will stand for the word of God, that will care about it, that will want to hide it in our hearts, will want to open it, and treasure it, and practice it, that it will be burning in our bosom, that will be set ablaze with this word, men on fire, in their very hearts.

I love the scripture, Psalm 94, 16, where it says, Who will rise up for me against the evil doers? Who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity? And I read a book one day that a preacher used this as his kind of life verse, and he was talking about open-air preaching, and he was saying, Who will rise up for me?

Now we need to be rising up, even going where it's hard to go, even being what it's hard to be, to be an out-and-out Christian, a full-on Christian. And in our text, we see an interceding, we see an infilling, we see an outgoing, there's a close connection, be bold, be bold.

Now one afternoon, I sat in a Satanist house, together with some others, we've been, this was some while ago, was going out with our church witnessing team at the time, and we met a warlock, and his name was Peter from Davron Park, and I shook his hand, and on his hand was tattooed the word Satan.

Friends, there's a battle raging in the heavenlies, for that man's soul. He's been in the very darkest, wicked pit of hell, of the devil, well, not hell yet, not yet.

[27 : 57] But friends, he knows he faces eternal peril, yet the devil has him in his evil greed. You know, I get mad at the devil when I think of people like this Peter, Peter from Davron Park.

Friends, they're all around us, aren't they? I know just yesterday, there's a woman in Davron Park, and she was off her face. Friends, and I don't mean to say that disrespectfully of a woman, but how sad.

It's a sad, sad situation. It's a grievous thing to see someone so in the grip of Satan that they're spouting things, and you can see they're under control.

No wonder the Bible talks about witchcraft and drugs as kind of allied. You know, this word pharmakian, drugs, of Satanism, of wickedness, of the worship of the devil, drugs.

It's got a hold on people, hasn't it? They're not in control of themselves anymore. They're in someone else's control, not his. That one. Friends, serious, isn't it?

[29 : 04] We should get mad at the devil, destroying lives, destroying families like that, people like that. Thank God some such people can be saved.

They're not outside of the reach of his hand. His word tells us that his hand is not shortened, that it cannot save. We should get mad at the devil and be bold. Be bold enough to say, I'm going to tell them whether they slam the door in my face, whether they spit at me, whether they throw an egg on my head, whatever it be.

We're going to tell them because we must. We have to tell them. So we must be bold. I think we need to be bold enough to go to the very gates of hell. Now someone was hearing in some exchange I had recently where we were talking about our witnessing team is going to Davron Park. And this is no casting, no dispersions, what's the word on Davron Park. Now there's some godly, lovely people in Davron Park. But when they said that, oh, that's dangerous.

So that's a dangerous place. It's no more dangerous than Burnside. It's no more dangerous than the plush suburbs of Ridgehaven.

[30 : 15] The devil is all over the place, isn't he? Should we be afraid to go to Davron Park? God helping us, that's where we should be going.

Go to the very pit of Satan and reach to the drowning ones, pulling them out of the angry wave. We should be bold. I spoke to a man called Barry at Davron Park.

This was a while ago too. But he was grieving his young wife to be who had just passed away. He was close to receiving the Savior and he described the streets of the area in which he lived as a cesspit.

He described some of the vileness of sin that was all around him. He said he lived next door to a devil. And I thank the Lord God reaches out to such. Because, but for the grace of God, we would be in the cesspit still, wouldn't we?

To reach to the very cesspit. Psalm 40 verse 2 it tells us, He brought me out, also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay.

[31 : 26] He set my feet upon a rock and established my goings and he hath put a new song in my mouth. Even praise unto our God. Many shall see it and shall fear and shall trust in the Lord.

Now some that are in the miry clay live in flashy houses with neatly kept gardens. They're in the miry clay too. They've got the best of everything but they're missing the most important thing.

They spurn the Savior. They're still in the cesspit. They're just as much in the cesspit as anyone else. And they don't spare a thought. I know sometimes as we've gone witnessing and the more you could say well to do in our suburbs that they're more opposed to the gospel because they don't need God.

They've got it all ready. This side of the grave. But friends, it'll all be lost. They'll leave it all behind. Friends, why don't we go to the cesspit and tell of His saving grace?

That's what we ought to be. To be bold. There's a Chinese proverb that says he who deliberates fully before taking a step will spend his entire life on one leg.

[32 : 38] It takes a step, doesn't it? It takes a step to say, yes, I'm going to go and tell somebody. And it may not be joining these radical, fiery, on fire men of God who knock on doors and brave the dangers of Davin Park.

But it might be just in your workplace, in your neighbourhood, talking to a neighbour, telling one of the saviour, friends. But it takes a step.

And we're going to be deliberating, standing on one leg, spending our whole life on one leg, like this Chinese proverb says. But we're going to say, yes, I'm going to take that step. We need to just be bold, don't we?

As the saying goes, just do it. And could it be that we could look at our diary and think, I could plan to pray, to come to the prayer meeting, perhaps, or to pray, to make time to pray at home, pray.

I could plan to have a talk to Peter and Trent, say, tell me how to witness. I want to learn. Show me how. You can have a one-to-one personal training session, I'm sure.

[33 : 54] Or it could be, look, at least take some tracks on the way out, on the table. I think there's a supply there. Take some tracks, take some leaflets, take them to your street, drop them in your area.

This week, one step, doesn't it take? I will do that. I can do that. At least make time to pray. Now, William Carey said, expect great things from God, attempt great things for God.

We believe in a prayer answering God, the God who shakes the heavens, the God who will shake the place when we pray, the God who will fill us with his Holy Ghost, the God who will make us a bold people to speak the word.

He's a great God. He's more than able to use such as we. If we would, but take a step. Now, some would wait for training. You know, it's kind of funny that you come across Christians who think, I've got to be trained.

You know, I've only just become a Christian. I don't know anything. Well, that's a good place to start, isn't it? To start where you are, where you are. Some will wait for some training. They'll say, I've just got to do a course.

[35 : 02] You know, I've got to learn all the objections and answers and, you know, I've got to be well-versed in all the scriptures. I've probably got to have to take two or three years to get trained to tell somebody how to be saved.

No. You can find out tonight. Peter and Trent will give you that session, I'm sure, throwing them in. Some would wait. Some would wait for some kind of tingling feeling, some kind of sensation.

I've got to hear the call. I've got to hear him. And I'm not decrying that you do need to wait on God for his call. To wait on God to hear what he wants us to do to be.

But don't just wait. Do something. It talks about being in the way the Lord led me. As you go, step after step, he will lead you step after step, walking with you one by one, day by day, as you're going forward.

You can learn as you walk with God. He will teach you as you walk with him. He will speak to you as you walk with him. Some would even see the need and yet say to God, here am I, Lord.

[36 : 10] Send someone else. Somebody else can do that. I'll pray for them. Just don't ask me to go. Some will be obedient, won't they?

They'll be obedient and be bold and will go. And look, I'm not putting you on a guilt trip here today. I'm just saying, go. Just go. Dear folk, we live in a world where God's people need some Holy Ghost boldness because of ourselves.

We're weak. We're unable. We need Holy Ghost empowerment. Friends, there's some nations, some countries where believers have to be bold. I've got a story here.

I'm not going to read you the gruesome detail of it, but our brothers and sisters in Sudan, they get asked the question, are you a Christian or a Muslim?

And the answer to that question determines whether they'll live or die. this is happening now.

[37 : 20] If you ever in part dangerous, come on. Honestly, if you're an African Christian, you'd have to be bold, friends. You'd have to be bold. And the Bible says, the righteous are as bold as a lion.

Proverbs 28, verse 1. Don't say the righteous are as quiet as a mouse. Oh, it's a lion. I haven't stood too close to a lion, but there's some in some times when you get, when they're behind, well and truly behind the bars of the zoo and you can imagine, yeah, don't want to get that little guy upset too much.

You know, they're ferocious, commanding, powerful creatures. Friends, we should be bold as a lion. That's a real picture, isn't it? How bold should we be?

1 Thessalonians 2, verse 2, it says, we're bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God. Acts 4, 13, it says, when they perceived the boldness of Peter and John, they perceived they were unlearned and ignorant men.

These people haven't been to Bible school. These people aren't qualified. These people haven't got a reverend doctor in front of their name. It says, they are unlearned and ignorant. They marveled.

[38 : 33] They took knowledge of them. They had been with Jesus. That's what made the difference. Acts 4, 29, it says, as the believers were threatened, Lord, behold their threatenings, and grant unto thy servants that with all boldness they may speak thy word.

In Acts 28, 31, it tells of Paul, it says, he was preaching the kingdom of God and things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. It says, he was preaching, he was teaching with all confidence, same word, with all boldness, no man forbidding him.

And then in Ephesians 6, 19, there's a prayer there. It says, pray for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth with boldness, that I may open my mouth boldly.

Boldness, something, it can be a missing ingredient, I put to you. And it doesn't come naturally for me, really. In many ways, I'm not naturally bold.

But God helping us, we can be bold for God, can't we? It's not who we are, it's what God enables us to be. Jonathan Edwards says, true boldness for Christ enables Christians to prefer to offend all rather than to offend him.

[39 : 52] That's the boldness we need, isn't it? Not that we're going out to be obnoxious, or of course fights, or be off-putting, but rather to offend all than to offend him.

Pray for your preacher, whoever it be at the time. Pray that we all have boldness in the pulpit, that we'll speak the word of God with boldness, that we'll all be bold in our own different life, in our different interactions, that we'll be bold in our God, in our personal witness, that we'll be stirred up and provoked in a good and godly way, to even offend if it be, or upset, than to offend our great God, to please him.

That's our ultimate aim. 1 John 5.14 says, this is the confidence, it's the same word again, the boldness, that we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.

1 John 4.17 it says, we're going to have boldness in the day of judgment, that we'll be so bold, that boldness will go on the other side of the grave, as we answer, as it were, the place of judgment, the day of judgment, not our boldness even then, not some braggard, not some inflated, ego, vain boldness of our own making, but the God boldness, that we can boldly answer in, that we can boldly answer in, even in the day of judgment, by a boldness, because we're in Christ.

Friends, it says, as we know, of the armor of God, put it all on, the whole armor, that you're going to stand against the wiles of the devil, all of his tricks and trickery, for we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against four things, against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places, there's a wrestling going on.

[41 : 52] we could conceive of prayer as being a wrestling as well. We can wrestle with God in prayer.

We can get a burden for souls, get a burden to pray, and we've got a wrestling match on this week. You're going to be wrestling this week. Where are the believers?

Where are the witnesses? Who is witnessing? What makes me maddest of all? And more determined, more boldly, to be bolder than ever, is what we sometimes see as we go about our lives, and we see them on the streets.

Beelzebub's witnesses. They're out there. Mind you, I've heard it's one of the good things about the COVID, they're not doing so much door knocking right now.

But the Beelzebub's witnesses are out there preaching another Jesus. They cannot save another gospel, people. And they've got, they're neatly dressed, they're well trained, they're bearing colourful professional pamphlets, blind leaders of the blind.

[43 : 02] I know I was talking to one of our team lately, and they're so good. Bad witnessing. They're so good because, you know, they come across someone who doesn't speak English, English, and they check in their little satchel, and sure enough they've got something in the language.

So you can't even, they will even get those who speak another language. They are there, JWs. The streets are crawling with them. Weekend after weekend, what are we doing?

We see them there, active, busy, ever-present. The question is, where are the Christians? What's so good on TV that they aren't out there?

What's more important than the lost souls of men, women, and children? What could be more valuable than a lost eternal soul on its way to Christless darkness and torment forever?

Do we really believe this book? Friends, let's get a burden. I had a call 10 o'clock one night. There was a man called David going through a crisis, and he was seriously considering the things of God. [44 : 16] He was handed a track at Elizabeth Railway Station. Somebody, one of our number, this wasn't a recent example, but someone of our number was at Elizabeth train station giving out leaflets, and it prompted him to call.

I don't like getting calls at 10 o'clock at night, but he called. I don't know who gave him that track. He could have been a man that I knew of who was just new to witnessing.

He came out witnessing, and it was really the first time that he'd gone out witnessing in his whole life. And he probably wasn't feeling particularly bold, but he was bold enough to be obedient.

And that same day, the JW stopped on David's door. The same day. And they talked to him, and they left him a book to read. Who will David listen to?

Big question, isn't it? Let's pray for people like that. This is a real example. It's not a contemporary one, but it did happen. Friends, there's people like David out there, people like Peter, the Satanist, and they're in that dangerous place called Davron Park.

[45 : 28] We've got to reach them, don't we? That's why we've got a burden for souls, and that's why we must pray. We must be shaken. We must be filled. We must be bold.

Friends, time is short. We've got no time to waste. We can have a tremendous boldness and assurance and confidence in our God, a sure and certain faith.

This faith that we have is short. And we can have a bold, aggressive conviction. And friends, you might say, well, what can I do?

Look, there's leaflets you can take. There's some tracks. Can you do that tonight? Hopefully, there's enough tracks for all of you to have some. Take away today. I urge you to do that. Just some simple things we can do.

Simple things we can do. Who knows if it might be David, someone like David that you'll reach before the JWs do. Friends, it's got such a, this message should be burning in us.

[46 : 27] Pray, church. Pray. And be shaken. May God shake us. Shake out all the things. You know, it's like you've got to get the vacuum filter.

And you've got to shake it. Get all the dust out of it. So that it works. We've got to be shaken. We've got to get all the rubbish, all the things that are in the way, that are blocking. Shake. Be shaken. Be filled. Filled. Filled not with some emotional, goose bumpy, false filling, but the real filling of God. The filling of the Almighty God.

The filling of the Spirit of God. The filling of His empowering, of His changing, transforming power. The power of God, Almighty God. Be filled with that and be bold.

Be bold in your God. You've got a message that matters. You should be filled with the Spirit, speaking the Word of God with boldness. This message is too important for you not to tell somebody.

[47 : 27] To have, even if it be an aggressive conviction, that God will even transform your personality such that you can be confident and bold in your God.

Let's pray. Dear God in Heaven, we thank you that your church prayed. Help us to be such a people that we'll pray. We'll pray through.

We'll pray and keep on praying. Lord, we won't stop praying. Lord, we'll keep on in that prayerful heart. That you'll shake us in such a way that you'll shake us from being too settled, too comfortable.

That we'd rather be disturbed in a good way. That you'll disturb us, Lord, and convict us in a good way. And Lord, that will be provoked in a good way. Such that we'll be shaken into action.

And Lord, that we'll be a bold people, bold in our God. That we'll be bold like a lion. That we'll be bold to speak the word of God with boldness. Help us, Lord, to be your witnesses. You know this.

[48 : 32] The devil's witnesses are out there in so many forms. So many false churches and teachings and philosophies of men. Damnable heresies.

Lord, we pray we'll be ones who'll take the truth, that it will burn in our hearts and it will come forth from our lips. That you'll give us the words that we must impart to the ones around us.

Lord, help us to be such a people. We pray if there's any yet to trust you that they won't dilly-dally.

Lord, they won't be standing on one leg. They'll take that step of faith and they'll say, I trust you now.

Lord, I trust you now. I receive you now, your salvation. I want to be in your number. I want to be one of the saints that go marching in. Lord, I want to be in that number.

Lord, help us to be such a one that we will be your people. God, give us grace to be such a people. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.