

## Study on Acts no.2

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[ 0 : 00 ] Let us turn now to the chapter we read, the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 4.

And in the, considering the whole of this chapter, we might home in on one or two verses, for example, verse 12, Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

And at verse 23, and being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them. And when they had heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord.

And at verse 31, when they had prayed, the place was shaken, where they were assembled together, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

I discovered that one of the problems in trying to carry through a series such as this, and a series of studies in the book of Acts.

[ 1 : 29 ] In this part of the world is that, of necessity, the studies are interrupted because of engagements which one has to fulfill at communions and such like.

And therefore, we may tend to lose sight of the trend of the book that we're studying, tend to lose sight of the emphasis that is being struck by it.

So, again, I must seek your indulgence while we try to tie up a few loose ends and tie up this chapter with the preceding ones. We remember all the time that the book of the Acts of the Apostles is really the history of the progress of the Christian gospel and the progress of the extension and development of the Christian church from Jerusalem to Antioch and ultimately to Europe.

It traces that triumphant movement of the spreading of the Christian church through the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

And you remember that at Pentecost when 3,000 were converted, on that day Peter preached that great sermon. And then the following day, or shortly after that, he and John went up to the temple to worship, to pray.

[ 3 : 10 ] We noticed that the Christian church was still part of the Jewish church at that moment. It was functioning within that system. And they went up to the temple to pray. It was while they went up there, they met this lame man at the beautiful gate of the temple and they healed him.

And the healing of that man, who was over 40 years of age and who had been a paralytic from birth, the healing of that man drew a tremendous crowd around them.

And we noticed that this was part of the reason why the apostles were given the gifts of healing, the gift of healing and the gift of tongue speaking and so on. They were given these gifts so that in their exercise, people were gathered.

And when the people gathered, they then had the opportunity to preach the gospel to them. Every single time this happened, they seized the opportunity and they preached the gospel to the multitude.

And that day, hundreds of them must have gathered in the precincts of the temple to hear Peter preach to them. And there was obviously a bit of commotion going on.

[ 4 : 17 ] And so we read here that the temple guard and the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, being grieved that they taught the people and preached through Jesus the resurrection of the dead.

Now, they were imprisoned that night in the temple area by these people.

And we're going to look first of all tonight at the people who were instrumental in arresting them. Because this is interesting and it throws some light for us upon the history of the Christian church at that day.

Now, it's interesting because we may tend to think, and tend to think wrongly, that the Christians in those days were opposed by everybody who wasn't a Christian.

And that's not true. We read, for example, in chapter 2 and again in this chapter, that these people, the Christians, they had favor with the people. That is, this was a popular movement at the time.

[ 5 : 27 ] It was a popular movement. It wasn't, of course, popular with one section of the community, and that was the church. The church leaders, the Sanhedrin, the chief priests and the temple guards, these people didn't want this movement to proceed any further.

And they tried to suppress it. And this is the first intimation that we have in the New Testament, at least in the Book of Acts, the first intimation we have of the Christians being persecuted.

And they weren't persecuted by the Romans or by the people, the common people. They were persecuted by the church leaders. And this is what we call the first Sadducean persecution.

Now, who were these people? We read here that they were the chief priests, the capital of the temple, and the Sadducees. And then, at verse 5, the rulers, the elders, the scribes, Annas, the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John and Alexander, as many as were the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem.

Now then, the Jewish church of the day, or rather Israel, was ruled religiously by a body called the Sanhedrin. Seventy men.

[ 6 : 41 ] And at that time, the Sanhedrin was made up predominantly of members of the Sadducees, the Sadducean party.

And it was from that party that the chief priest was chosen, the chief priest being Caiaphas, being Annas, rather, and Caiaphas being the last or the ex-high priest or chief priest.

Now, these Sadducees were people who didn't want this religious movement to proceed any further, and we know why.

You see, in Israel, in Palestine at that day, as in this country from time to time, and though it has subsided to a large extent, and I hope that supporters of this movement present will forgive me for saying that, that it has subsided to a large extent, in Israel in that day, as here from time to time, you had a strong nationalist, nationalistic spirit.

The nationalists were quite powerful in Palestine at that time. Now, the Sadducees were not nationalists. As a matter of fact, they had no time for the nationalists.

[ 8 : 00 ] And they were afraid, therefore, that any religious movement which sprang up would bring upon them and upon the whole area, the Poland, the heavy hand of the Roman authorities.

And so they adopted a kind of less a fair attitude to politics. Let sleeping dogs lie. Leave things the way they are. And so when any movement sprang up which seemed to generate any kind of excitement amongst the people, they wanted to suppress it.

Plus, of course, the fact that at the heart of this movement was a teaching that they had no time for. They had no time for the teaching of the resurrection. In two ways. They didn't...

Now, remember that it was from this part that the chief priest was chosen. This was the religious party of the day. And they didn't believe in the resurrection of the dead.

And particularly, they didn't believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. And every single time that you find Paul, or any apostles, confronted with the Sadducees, anytime you find them confronted by the Sadducees, you watch this, they always strike the note of the resurrection.

[ 9 : 13 ] And that was calculated not just to raise the ire of the Sadducees, but was calculated to set the Sadducees on the Pharisees at each other's throats because the Pharisees did believe in the resurrection.

The Sadducees didn't. Now, that was one... That was a predominant party in the Sanhedrin. And the high priest, Annas and Caiaphas, belonged to that party.

There was also the temple guard, the people responsible for law and order within the precincts of the temple. It was from this band, probably, that... It was of this band that they chose soldiers to set a watch over the grave.

It was probably from this band, also, that people were sent to arrest Jesus. It was from this party, also, that people went to arrest him in an earlier time and came back with this message. No man ever spoke like this man, the temple guard, or the chief of the temple guard.

So, these people were opposed to the apostles and to the teaching. But there are two interesting characters here. Caiaphas and Annas, the high priest.

[ 10 : 21 ] Now, you remember this, but maybe two months or maybe three months before this, these two men had played quite a leading part in the trial and in the arrest, in the arrest and the trial of the Lord Jesus.

And they may very well have thought, these two men, that they had seen and heard the last of this man. but Jesus wouldn't go away. And here he is now confronting them through the apostles. And they try yet again to suppress his name and the moment. Now, they went about it perhaps in a perfectly legitimate way.

so they may have thought. They arrested the apostles and prisoned them over during the night because they're getting quite near dusk by now. And the following day they brought them out and they set them before the Sanhedrin and they asked them this question, by what power or by what name have ye done this?

Now, this was, in a sense, a perfectly biblical procedure because the book of Deuteronomy had told the religious leaders that, and this is what we do ourselves they had to be very careful about any teaching that came into the midst of the people.

[ 11 : 38 ] And they were to make sure that the teaching was right and so they asked, tell us, what is this that you're talking about? Whose name are you talking about? Who are you presenting to the people? Now, the first of that was this.

In Israel, they weren't allowed to bring any new religion in. Any religion that directed the attention of the people away from the God of Israel was anathema. And anyone who was found guilty of preaching any message like that could have been condemned to death.

And so they asked the apostles, what's this you're talking about? Is this a new religion you've got? In what name and by whose authority do you say these things and do you do these things? And Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, replied.

And here in verses 8 to 12, we have the third of Peter's addresses in the book of Acts. Not a very long one, but again it strikes home at the great pillars of the Christian faith.

He was filled with the Holy Ghost. Now, I said some time ago that you will come across from time to time teaching which might, in certain circles, which may encourage you to seek this blessing on this gift, the gift of the filling of the Spirit.

[ 13 : 01 ] Be filled with the Holy Spirit. And you know that there are times it takes this form, it used to take this form, I don't suppose take this form very much now, you may have heard of it.

Let go and let God. You see, what you and I need as Christians is for God to take over in our lives, let him fill you with the emphasis on let, let God fill you and carry you up unto a spiritual, unto a level of particular spiritual blessing and then you won't have any problems to confront, to deal with in the world.

Be filled with the Spirit. Let God fill you, a once for all experience. But that's not the way the New Testament speaks of this at all. Over and over again we have this that the apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit.

It wasn't a once for all experience, it happened whenever the need arose in a particular situation, they were given a fresh infilling of the Spirit. given a new realization of the power and the presence and the love, the consciousness of God being with them.

And Peter having that consciousness addressed them in this way, we are examined by you about this healing, the healing of this poor man being known unto you by what means he was made whole.

[ 14 : 21 ] He was made whole in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, God raised from the dead. There you are again, the resurrection. And by him this man stands here before you.

And what's more, you ask us by what authority we do it. Do you not know your own scripture, Psalm 118? The stone that the builders rejected has become the head of the corner.

So the answer to your question is this, as though Peter was saying to him, I know all about that passage in Deuteronomy. I know that no one should come here with a new religion. I know that no one should come and direct the attention of the Jews away from the God of Israel.

And we're not doing that. We're preaching the same God, emphasizing the same scriptures, which clearly declare that Jesus' son was going to come and he has come, that Jesus was going to be crucified and he has been crucified, that Jesus was going to be raised and he has been raised.

And it is through faith in that person that this man is made whole. You see the same thrust, the same gospel, the same Christ, the same scriptures, the same God, the great pillars of the Christian church from its very beginning.

[ 15 : 40 ] And that's the emphasis that the gospel has today. The God of history unchanged, the Bible of the God of that God has given to us unordered. And the Christ revealed in that Bible, living as one who is alive with power from the dead.

The same gospel, time and time and time again. And you won't get another. You ever hear of the two men who were going to our church in Glasgow, two ministers going to our church in Glasgow one night, the beginning of the war actually, just before the last war broke out.

And they passed a picture house and there was a big queue waiting to get into the picture. And one minister said to the other, well he said, isn't that sad?

So many people want to get into the picture and so few people wanting to come to hear the gospel. I replied to the other, that may be so.

You'll find he said, you leave that picture house showing that same film year after year after year after year and you won't have any queue standing outside it.

[ 17 : 02 ] But the gospel is being preached tonight. After two thousand years, you've got churches throughout the land still filled with people coming to hear the same message.

And that's it. That was the thrust of the apostles, the same old story, the same old emphasis, the same approach, the same appeal, the same encouragement, and with the hand of the Holy Spirit always with results.

Why should you and I despair? When the gospel is the same, God is the same, Christ is the same, the Spirit is the same, and His power is the same, what more do we need?

All we need is what Peter and John had to be filled with the Spirit. So as they spoke to this great company of very learned men, they said to them, there's your answer, the Christ Christ, of the God, of the Bible, and it's through faith in Him that this man is healed.

And they went a step further, and if they had been living in Britain in 1984, there would have been an outcry in the media for saying such a thing as this.

[ 18 : 28 ] There may have even been questions raised in Parliament when they went on to declare how dare they say this. What's more, they say, there is salvation in none other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

I wonder how this would fit into the Race Relations Act. I just wonder if people may make this a test case, saying to someone, to every single individual, I tell you, on the authority of the word of God, you have no hope of ever getting to know God, of ever being saved unless you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And if I say that, and if my likes say that, what are we? We're bigots, narrow-minded, blinkered, and we don't know what love is.

We speak about the God of the Old Testament, and the light of the gracious God of the New has never dawned upon our dark and hurt, because we dare say that unless you believe in Jesus, you will never be saved.

Well, let people say what they will. This is what the Bible says. God isn't blinkered, God isn't narrow-minded, but I'll tell you what he is. God is intolerant.

[ 19 : 50 ] intolerant of any other way of salvation because there is none. Or you say, surely, surely we can live at peace with people of other religions.

Of course, I'm not saying that you shouldn't. By all means, do. There are many religions which can exist side by side and do.

But the Christian gospel will not allow a soul to be saved but through faith in Christ. And that is what we mean by the intolerance of the Christian faith. That's where it is intolerant.

It will not accept any other way to God. Don't you run away with the idea as some poor individuals have, that there are many ways to God. There is only one way to God.

I am the way, the truth. And the life. Hinduism won't lead you to God. Buddhism won't lead you to God. No religion in the world will lead you to the God of the Bible but the Christ of God and the Christian faith.

[ 20 : 59 ] There is salvation in no other name because there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. And you take your stand there on your own good ground.

Never you mind if they say that you are blinkered or narrow minded or free church or Lewis never you mind these things. You are none of these things.

You are Bible orientated the day you take your stand here and don't move from it. Don't dare move from it. So this is the emphasis of the intolerance of the Christian faith.

No salvation apart from Jesus Christ. Salvation what do we mean? Well the total restoration of men and women boys and girls from a position in which they have saved sin and from a condition in which sin dominates their lives.

That's what we mean by salvation. Salvation from salvation from them to the service of God to love the Lord Jesus to believe in him to give oneself to him.

[ 22 : 11 ] No I don't deny that there are other religious systems which may have elements of truth in them. I believe that every single religious system has some element of truth in it.

but there is only one system known to this world of which the Bible says it is the truth.

I am the way the truth and the life and there is no other way. That's what Jesus said and this is what Peter is emphasizing that there is salvation over as Jesus alone saves.

Now when the Sanhedrin heard this they were astounded and here we read what they did.

They were in a panic. They adjourned. It's a favorite. If you're in a committee or an assembly and there's a real problem the answer is adjourned.

[ 23 : 19 ] Think about it before you come to a decision. So this is what these people did. They saw the bones of Peter and John and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men. They marveled and they took knowledge of them.

They had been with Jesus and behold the man which was standing with them. They could say nothing against it. So they told the apostles to get out. You go back to yourselves for a minute while we deliberate on this.

You see them, you hear them talking. What do we do to these men? We can't deny that a miracle has been done by them. We can't deny that everyone in Jerusalem knows what's happened.

But I'll tell you what we'll do so that the message that they're talking about won't spread any further will threaten them and tell them to any man anymore in the name of Jesus.

They called them and delivered to them their decision. Now isn't this interesting? What astounded these men?

[ 24 : 23 ] Well this that they were Peter and John were ignorant and learned men. That is they weren't trained men.

You see the Sanhedrin were learned men. They had spent years in rabbinical colleges. They knew the scriptures inside out. They spent hours memorizing the word of God and memorizing all the laws that were added to the word of God.

They were clever men these fellows. In our day they probably most of them would have had a degree. And here these two fishermen standing before them. And they confound them with the scriptures.

You know that some of the ablest minds that this island has ever known have been men like that who were filled with the Holy Spirit of God.

Men who had a deep, deep interest in the things of God. Men who had close contact with the living God. Men who spent hours in prayer. Men who knew their Bibles inside out.

[ 25 : 29 ] some of them couldn't even read. Couldn't even read. But they listened to others reading. They listened to men preaching. They listened to people discussing and debating the word of God.

They got to know the Bible. And this is what it means when they said they took note to them that they had been with Jesus. And remember what representatives of that same body had said about Jesus.

never man spake like this man. And here now were his followers imbued with the same spirit having the same deep interest in the things of God.

Their minds filled with the word of God and the Holy Spirit shedding light from them upon the word of God exactly what Jesus told them. There's a day coming he said when you'll stand before councils for my sake.

There's a day coming when you but don't be afraid in that day the spirit will tell you what to say. And here are these men confounded by the depth of the apostles knowledge.

[ 26 : 40 ] My friend you get to know the Bible get to know the deep things of God so that the enemies of the church of Christ will take note of you that you have been with Jesus.

And this is how they noticed it. Their knowledge of their ability to substantiate their arguments from the word of God saying almost at every turn this is what the Bible says.

You get to know your Bible and you too will confound the critics. It's the only way you'll do it.

Standing four square on what the word of God says.

And notice also not just the fact that the San Heaton noticed this but notice how ignorant they were at the same time. How did they go about time to silence these people?

Well, we'll threaten them. Not allowed to speak in the name of Jesus anymore. Their fear was that you see they had an awful dilemma.

[ 27 : 42 ] They would have loved to have kept these people locked up for the rest of their life. But they couldn't for fear of the people. And also if they let them go. They wanted to stop them talking about Jesus so they threatened.

And how did Peter respond to this request with this demand? Peter and John answered in verse 19 whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than God judge ye for we cannot but speak the things which we have heard.

So when they had further threatened and let them go finding nothing how they might punish them because of the people for all the men glorified God for that which was done. You see what Peter did was this Luke he says this is the problem now for us do we listen to you or do we listen to God do we obey you or do we obey God the classic case of a man standing on principle and the principle is this this is what God says to me I have to do and you tell me that I mustn't do it well for me it's what God says that counts this is the stand that Peter took because any other stand would have been a violation of revelation a violation of conscience and a violation of his experience based upon what God had said to him this wasn't a case of a question of civil disobedience this wasn't a case of Peter saying I'm not going to obey the law that we've heard so much about in recent days it was nothing of the sort it was this straightforward case of a man being refused the liberty that God gave him to preach the gospel and for Peter there was no issue there at all I can't listen to you he says I have to speak what God has told me to do now before take passing on to the last point here tonight I just want to apply this in the passing slightly there are two things here that come to light there is first of all the nature of the opposition to the Christian gospel and then secondly there is the secret of the Christian church's power as it preaches the gospel now very briefly let me deal with the opposition to the Christian church we have it in the world today we have it in

Scotland we have it in Stornoway we have it throughout loose people who are opposed to the Christian church and their opposition is based upon prejudice now there's no point in turning a blind eye to this we all know that it exists if you don't know that this exists my friend you're going around with your eyes closed and your ears closed there are people who are really prejudiced against the Christian faith not just against the free church and the FP church and the church of Scotland but against the Christian faith prejudiced they won't there are some people who won't even allow you to speak to them about the Christian faith their hackles are up immediately all you have to do is mention the word church or minister or bible and they're on their feet at once and they try to suppress you you have no right to speak to them and they become you know they become very voluble and vociferous and powerful and before you know where you are a powerful body like that will lobby people and you might see another day when parents won't even be allowed to teach their children the

[ 31 : 25 ] Christian faith we've almost got that set of our faith in schools today tell them about other religions every religion whatever you do don't press the claims of the Christian faith and there are many people who are angry with Christianity because they just can't square the spiritualism and the supernaturalism of the Christian faith with their own materialism and intellectualism you see the two things don't go hand in hand and they're so big you see they're so great they're so intellectual and they're so powerful and this thing is this Christian faith which is bringing people under its sway and people being juked into an acceptance of things that you can't prove and you possibly can't believe the prejudice against it that's very often the case with the opposition that you have directed against the Christian faith and then of course there are some people who are angry with the Christian faith because believe it or not the church at times is actually doing good in the world doing good there are some people who find it terribly difficult to accept that terribly difficult to accept it

I'll tell you something something if there's something newsworthy about the church if there's something that is scandalous in certain quarters at least if there's something that's scandalous you mark my words I'll be displayed across every newspaper you'll turn on every radio and television

you'll hear it blaring in your ears people are only too apt to find fault with the Christian church look at what it's doing look at what it's not doing did you hear about this and you hear about that the next thing how much do you hear about the actual good that the church is doing in the world you always wonder if the church is doing any good what is the business of the church in the world the business of the church in the world is to go around seeking the lost bringing to bear upon the lost the power of God here was this man and this remember it all revolved around this 40 year old man there he is standing with the apostles he's healed he's full of the joys of life glorifying God and they can't deny it and they're mad mad because something has happened to this man through an amen and a power that they know nothing of and they want to discredit it and they want to divert attention from the evidence of the healing power of God to these men what are you talking about same thing today same thing today you never hear about what's happening in the church throughout the world conversions men and women boys and girls are lives reformed by the saving operative power of the spirit of God never hear a word about that oh no never hear a word you hear enough about the church suppressing people in this part of the world the church won't allow a pub here and the church won't allow a public house there they won't allow this and they won't allow that the church the church the church keeping people down all the time this is the picture isn't it there's never a word about this that never in the history of this island have so many young people throughout the island committed their lives of the

Lord Jesus Christ never a word about that no no never a word but what the reviving power of the spirit of God has done through the years in this place how it has rescued people from the ravages of sin never a word about it and yet this is the church's great function in the world to bring the Christian message to bear upon the society in which it exists and you also find opposition people angry in spite of the evidence confronting them the reality of it all is there for them if it only look at it the reality of the power of God and the gospel demonstrated by results in the community oh yes God is working God has worked and God will work in spite of what people say the church of Christ has got enemies and plenty of them in this part of the world you don't need to cross the munch to find an enemy of Christ and of his cause there are plenty of them up plenty of them moving around and if I may say so there are plenty of them whose views are being expressed and reported don't you be afraid of that my friend God is greater than any one of them and greater than every one of them put together and that was the secret of the church's power in Peter's day and in John's day and here I come now to the last point here when these two men were let go when they were released what they do verse 23 being let go they went to their own company and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them and when he had heard that they lifted up their voice to God with one accord now what happened here well something very important and very interesting I'll just deal with this in about five minutes and I'm finished something very important and interesting you see while Peter and John were being questioned and imprisoned the rest of the Christian church were gathering praying now I don't want to deal with this tonight the Christian church of that day was characterized by various in various ways you see they always met together to study the Bible they always met together to take the Lord's

Supper they always met together in Christian fellowship they always met together for prayer there was a spirit of love and joy and peace in their fellowship they were one you see it was a wonderful time and so when Peter and John got out of prison what did they do they went straight to their own people and they told them all that happened the story of the healing of the man their arrest their questioning their response the command that they were given not to preach and the reply that they gave they told all this what did this company do one thing they did they prayed they prayed they all with one accord lifted up their voice to God in prayer in prayer you know my friend this is a great example for you and for me no matter what happens to us no matter the experiences in life when you get home pray about it pray about it gather a few people together and pray about it and if you're very interested at all in the gospel of

[ 38 : 41 ] Christ come with this company who meet to pray it's a great privilege to pray and notice something else here the insight it gives us into the prayer life of the church you notice it's been said that the prayers of the apostolic age reveal with startling clearness the apostolic conception of God it tells us clearly what they thought of God and our prayers have been said fall short because our idea of God is so different to their idea of God look at this prayer you read it when you go home verses 23 onwards look at what they said they lift up their hearts to God and they addressed him as the almighty God the creator of the ends of the earth the one who had made the sea and the heavens and all that in them is this is the idea that they had of a great infinite transcendent God far

above anything that they were themselves but a

God who ruled and reigned and they quote Psalm 2 in their prayer why did the heathen rage why did the people imagine vain things kings of the earth stood up rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against his Christ and they apply the words of Psalm 2 you see these men were full of the spirit they had tremendous insight into the Bible they knew what that Psalm was talking about it was talking about Christ's suffering in this world at the hands of Herod and Pontius Pilate and the Gentiles and the people of Israel Lord Lord thou art great thou art the creator of all things but we bless thee Lord that thou dost rule over all things in thy creation you see do you have a picture of God as though he's hopeless and hapless as though he's allowed things to slip and you ask yourself why this and why that why the next thing do you not realize that God is ruling God is reigning nothing happens by chance not a thing not a thing not even the crucifixion of Jesus not even what Herod did to John the Baptist not even what Pilate did when he washed his hands of Jesus and he thought well that's it I'm away out I've got out of all this I'll wash my hands and remember that he did it publicly he washed his hands well off you go he says I'm free of this man's guilt I'm free of the guilt of this man's death but was he the Bible tells us that Jesus that Pilate was involved in his death and there's no escape there's no way out you're there Pilate you're there you're here tonight and you're under the controlling hand of God you may think you're not but you are and this is the idea that they had a reigning ruling transcended God who was above everyone and yet ruling and governing the affairs of this world you know I'm appalled at times fortunately not in this part of the world but appalled at the way people tend to address the almighty there is such a familiarity amongst people familiarity so called with

God that they can bring him down to their own level and you've almost got a situation where people are conjuring up names for the almighty to show how pally they actually are and how friendly they are with the almighty he is as someone put it just a chief friend amongst friends well my friend may God be your friend but may he always remain God the infinite eternal unchangeable Jehovah who is holy and eternal and transcendent but yet the God who rules in the affairs of men lay hold of the God of power and this is what these people did the prayers of the New Testament church are characterized by a sense of awe and reverence and dignity see that you're dignified in your approaches to

God speak to him reverently he is not one of us he is God supremely the infinite God who has given you being and never ever bring him down to your pool ever but beseech him to bring you up to his now this is the picture we have of the New Testament church praying to this God and what did they pray for ah well they prayed for help Lord they said thou art sovereign verse 28 nothing happens by chance nothing is out with thy predetermined will and Lord look at the threatenings of our enemies and behold them what did they say Lord stop them threatening us no did they say [ 43 : 59 ] Lord stop their mouth no Lord do away with Sanhedrin no what they do Lord they're threatening us Lord give us to speak thy word Lord stretch forth thy hand to heal Lord continue to perform signs and miracles in the name of thy holy servant Jesus this is what they prayed for are you confronted tonight with trouble or difficulty or distress or persecution in your house at school in your classroom in your office wherever you work are there people making life difficult for you because you're a Christian what do you pray for well I'm not surprised if there are times when you pray Lord take them away or take me out of their way that's a sort of natural reaction to these situations here's what you should be praying for Lord give me boldness make me courageous to stand up in the face of all that people say to me and of all that people do to me give me boldness to speak thy word remember what

David said we sang it here tonight Lord he said I'll speak thy word to kings so will you and I if the spirit of God encourages us I was delighted to hear this week last week there's a poster up in the Nicholson Institute are you big enough to attend SU well my friend of God has made you courageous enough to go bold enough to take your Bible under your arm and to stand out on the side of the Lord ask for more boldness that's the best witness you'll ever give to the people who are persecuting you don't you run that you'll ever get away from persecution you won't people always laugh at you you be bold you seek grace to sustain power to enable the love of Christ to constrain you pray that

God will give signs amongst people that he's working and he will he will you mark my words he will and these people who are persecuting you today I know that are seeing these signs they don't want to accept it you see the prejudice they blink you they don't want to see the signs they would rather

see you give your life to the devil than you give your life to Christ isn't that dreadful isn't that dreadful don't don't you give place to the paralysis of fear be bold ask God to make you bold and he can do it you go home tonight if you haven't said the grace in your house and you want to say you go home and it depends upon his grace say the grace they may laugh at you they may be shocked but you say it you make a start you want to say you want to conduct family worship oh you you're so you're so timid well you go home and go on your knees and ask God to strengthen you take your Bible and read it and you'll find it easier tomorrow if God spares you you go and do it may I say it here tonight to you people why don't you sing better to the Lord oh I would love to but I'm afraid that the person sitting beside me starts laughing at me singing never you mind I put the laugh of the person sitting beside you you sing to the Lord you couldn't sing to a better person and you couldn't sing a better thing than the praises of your God why Lord give us boldness to speak thy word Lord show thyself in mighty saving power give evidence of thy presence when they had prayed the place was shaken where it here and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and they speak the word of God with boldness would it be wonderful tonight if this building was shaken with the power of God the power of the Spirit of God you know perhaps I've heard people talking about this I've never seen it physically literally buildings actually shaken with the power of the Spirit of God there was a revival in South Loch before the war this happened some houses the power of the Spirit of God has it happened in your life has it shaken your life has it been filled with the Holy Ghost have you gone out from my house and from my church wouldn't it be wonderful tonight if you went out from this church saying to you said well I don't care who meets me I don't care who comes who cross my path I don't care who's going to be with me at home or wherever I go I'm going to speak the word of God with boldness that's what the spirit of [ 49 : 21 ] God can do for you and for me and this was a secret of the apostolic church they prayed to a God in whose presence and power they believed whose greatness they revered and honoured they believed that God could do for them what they asked and more than they asked remember the words of him what he's done for me he can do for you do you believe that can you bend the knee tonight in the presence of this God and say to him oh God give me strength and power and boldness to stand up for thee no matter what it costs me if you do it my friend God will answer your petition people will notice power operating in your life as someone once said you put God to the test let us pray