

A Prayerful Release

Living for God, especially in the face of opposition, should lead to both the exultation of and a greater dependence on Him.

²³ 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. ²⁴ When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. "Sovereign Lord," they said, "you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. ²⁵ You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David:

'You made' reminds us that God is Creator while 'you spoke' reminds us that God reveals.

"Why do the nations rage
and the peoples plot in vain?

²⁶ The kings of the earth rise up
and the rulers band together against the Lord
and against his anointed one.'

Prayer is our talking to God; the Scriptures are God's talking to us, and the two always go together. You pray in a right way when you pray scripturally. You study the Scriptures in a right way when you study prayerfully. That is what the church was doing. James Boice

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

'You decided' reminds us that God is in charge of history.

²⁹ Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. ³⁰ Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus."

The opposition Jesus faced is extended to the community He formed who face that opposition not by praying that their opponents be crushed nor that they escape the persecution but rather that they be empowered to point their persecutors to Jesus and that He would authenticate their message through miracles of mercy. You don't need to be consumed with God taking care of you because He already has.

This prayer is an expression of complete dependence on God, a recognition of His sovereignty, a call for God's justice and oversight in the midst of opposition, for an enablement for mission, and for the working of His power to show that God is behind the preaching of the name of Jesus in healing and signs. Darrell Bock

³¹ 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.

The place was shaken but they were not. Jesus was shaken to pieces on the cross, so you could be unshakable. Tim Keller

The reliance on God, the resting in God's justice, the willingness to suffer persecution, the desire to preach Jesus, and the call to God to show Himself – all are signs of a healthy community.
Darrell Bock