

After this prayer, the meeting place shook, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. Then they preached the word of God with boldness.

Acts 4:31

When you pray, are you more likely to ask God to change a situation or change you within the situation? Why do you think that is?

1. Read **Acts 4:23-31**, what occurred immediately before this passage and prayer?
   - Who did Peter and John go to as soon as they were released? – is there any significance in this?
   - Why do you think Peter and John reported everything to their fellow believers?
   - What was the first thing the believers focused on when they began to pray? Why do you think they did that?
   - What is absent from this prayer, that some would say was an oversight?
   - According to verse 31 what is the resulted from the believers being filled with the Spirit?
   - What do you think would need to happen for the place where you are praying together to be shaken?

2. The believers in the Acts passage viewed their situation through the lens of Psalm 2 – why should we interpret our circumstances through Scripture rather than interpreting Scripture through our circumstances?
   - With that in mind, how does remembering that God created “the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and everything in them” change our perspective on the problems we face?

3. Read **2 Corinthians 12:7-10** How did Paul's experience of "the thorn in his flesh" shape his understanding of God's grace?
    - Paul says, "for when I am weak, then I am strong," how would you express this in your own words?
    - The message stated, "courage isn't the absence of fear. Courage is fear that has been prayed over." what is the difference between being fearless and choosing to trust God even when we are afraid?
    - Where might Christians need courage today to remain faithful? (think about situations with friendships, family, school, work, or speaking about faith etc.)
    - Would you say we are more interested in God making our lives comfortable or in God making us faithful?

4. When we read passages like **Galatians 6:2** and **Hebrews 10:24-25** what specific responsibilities do believers have towards one another during difficult seasons?
    - What barriers may prevent us from asking for help or prayer?
    - How can your group become a safer place for honesty, vulnerability and mutual encouragement?

5. Read **Philippians 4:6-7 & Hebrews 4:14-16** – Why do you think Paul says to bring our requests to God with thanksgiving?
    - How could thanking God for what He has already done, change the way we pray about our present circumstances?
    - Do you believe that shifting your focus from the size of a problem you are facing, to focus on the greatness of God will help you?

Application:

6. What spoke to you most out of the passages you looked at in this study?
7. Which of the following statements do you need to remember and apply this week?
    - God is bigger than this
    - God's will is better than mine
    - God will give me the courage to face this
8. How can I group be praying for you?

