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## PRAYING THE BIBLE – ACTS 4:23-31

### GETTING STARTED

How do you respond when people oppose you? We tend to either react by avoiding the conflict or trying to fight back and conquer the other. Yet the call throughout Scripture is neither of those two options. Instead, it's to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us. It's a difficult option to choose because it means we have to engage with them again but not to fight back, instead to seek their good and share the news of Jesus with them. This is how the early church responded to opposition, their first reaction was prayer. They used the words of Scripture to shape how and what they prayed about and we are called to learn from their example. They placed their trust that God was ultimately in control and that he would determine the outcome, their role was simply to continue to speak boldly the good news of Jesus.

### READ THE TEXT: ACTS 4:12-22

<sup>23</sup> When they were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them. <sup>24</sup> And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, "Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, <sup>25</sup> who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit,

" 'Why did the Gentiles rage,



and the peoples plot in vain?

<sup>26</sup> The kings of the earth set themselves,  
and the rulers were gathered together,  
against the Lord and against his Anointed'—

<sup>27</sup> for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, <sup>28</sup> to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place. <sup>29</sup> And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, <sup>30</sup> while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” <sup>31</sup> And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.

## UNDERSTAND THE TEXT

1. Read Psalm 2. How does this Psalm speak about Jesus? How did the early church understand it relating to them and those who oppose them?
2. How does God's sovereignty and predestination relate to their prayer request for boldness in speaking the gospel?

*[Extra verses for studying this passage: Ps 135:6; Romans 8:28-30; Matthew 5:44; Proverbs 28:1; Ephesians 6:18-19]*

## APPLY THE TEXT

3. How do you normally pray? What do you pray about? How can the Bible continue to refine our prayer life?
4. How do you normally react to people who oppose you? How can you adjust your reaction to a more biblical one?
5. Do you trust that God is in control of all things? How does that work its way into your evangelism?

## SHARE & PRAY



1. As we study the book of Acts, think carefully about 1 or 2 people that you would like to actively share the gospel with. Share them with your life group and hold one another accountable in prayer and support.
2. In light of Acts 4:23-31, pray the words of this passage, that the God of all creation would work his will to bring many people to know Him and give us the confidence to speak boldly the message of Jesus Christ!

