



**Acts – Can I get a Witness?
Wk. 14 Sovereign JOY
By Pastor Jody May 12/18/2022**

Acts 4:23-31 ESV

The Believers Pray for Boldness

²³ When they were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them. ²⁴ 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, ²⁵ 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?

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

²⁷ 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, ²⁸ to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place. ²⁹ And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, ³⁰ while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus." ³¹ 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.

[INTRODUCTION/RECAP]

1. Sovereign over Creation.

The Believers Pray for Boldness

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In our prayers for boldness, it all begins with recognizing the fact that God is **Sovereign** over all of creation, not just the earth but the physical reality of the Universe.

The Apostles in their ministry to Jesus, while He was with them in the flesh, had always been made aware and were frightened, of Jesus' power over the physical reality of this world:

- They had seen his control over the flesh of man in supernatural healings, (leprosy, lameness, blindness, and even death)
- They had seen his ability to manipulate their food sources (feeding of the 1000s on the mountain top, coin in a fishes' mouth Mat. 17:27)
- They had seen His ability to manipulate the weather and the seas (walking on water, calming the storm, turning water into wine).

Out of all of those it was that power over water that always gets them, being that to the Jews water represented chaos and uncontrollable nature and here Jesus has power of that as well. It causes Jesus' worshippers to proclaim what they see in the Psalms:

Psalm 135:6-7 ESV

⁶Whatever the LORD **pleases**, he **does**,
in heaven and on earth,
in the seas and all deeps.

⁷ He it is who makes the clouds rise at the end of the earth,
who makes lightnings for the rain
and brings forth the wind from his storehouses.

The prayer for boldness starts off with the reminder that the God that can change physical realities by His will, He **can manipulate whatever reality** we are in **to bring Him glory**. Every time Jesus manipulated this creation it was to bring awareness to people about God, that's it.

That's important for us to remember because when we go through life and we run into sickness, when we run into events caused by nature, and then we pray for intervention and when it does not happen, we automatically go to one of two beliefs:



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- We either think God is **unable** to affect this world,
- OR we think He is **unwilling**, which means He doesn't care about us.

Both beliefs are wrong, both beliefs are unbiblical, and both beliefs neglect to embrace God's Sovereign choice to bring His glory to people how he sees fit; **Whatever the Lord pleases, He does Ps. 135:6.**

Jesus was unwilling to use His power for people's personal means, He never entertained Herod's desire to be court magician, He never did a trick for those that asked for a sign, but He was always compassionate and if it benefitted the kingdom, He moved.

Praying for boldness means I first realize God is sovereign over creation, and if He so desires can manipulate any physical reality to ensure our success in making Him known. Let's not get caught up in the false beliefs of powerlessness or an unwilling God, and instead let's embrace the reality He does as He pleases.

2. Sovereign over History.

²⁵ 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?

²⁶ The kings of the earth set themselves,
and the rulers were gathered together,
against the Lord and against his Anointed’—

Just as important as remembering God's power over all of creation we have got to keep in mind, therefore, that God is Sovereign over all of History, ALL of it! Not just the good stuff but the bad stuff too! To ensure that all things will one day *as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.* – Ephesians 1:10 ESV God does not only use the willing, he does not only use the righteous but He is **SO** Sovereign that He uses those in rebellion against Him – Imperfect Servants & Hateful Enemies.



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- Through imperfect servants.

I just need to point out that the one person mentioned here is the greatest example of all imperfect servants, and we have been reading a lot about them in our reading plans, like Moses, Saul, Samson, to name a few but this guy **David**, he takes the cake.

C'mon, you just read his story, I mean how many things did you pick up in his life that if you did not know better you would have thought he was worse than Saul. David lies to get what he wants, he schemes to accumulate wealth before he becomes king, he steals the affection of Saul's son for his own protection, he sleeps with another man's wife and has him killed, he allows blatant treason to happen under his nose putting the kingdom into upheaval, he's prideful and counts his troops and God punishes his self-idolatry of strength by using a plague to kill thousands, I mean the list goes on and on. And yet Paul affirms in Acts 13:22 the words of Samuel that he was a man after God's own heart!?

God has a plan, to unite all the world in Jesus, and had already promised David that Jesus would come from Him, and God never breaks a promise. It is God's Sovereignty over faulty, broken, but redeemed servants that ensures His promises will never be broken.

- Through hateful enemies.

“Why did the **Gentiles** rage,
and the peoples plot in vain?

²⁶ The kings of the earth set themselves,
and the rulers were gathered together,
against the Lord and against his Anointed’—

This is actually taken from a direct quote of David from Ps. 2:1-2. Above everyone else he saw the futility of trying to ruin God's plans.

The Gentiles in the text points to those who were not God worshippers, they were pagans. These people plot in vain for their gods are powerless against



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God. We see in the Bible that yes demon deities like, Molech, Baal, and Ra, can deceive people with tricks, they can give hidden knowledge, but none of that can thwart Gods' plans, and as a matter of fact, God is using their scheming to fulfill His plan of redemption.

The greatest of these plans was the Devil's own plan to kill Jesus, yes, we are taught that Satan entered into Judas to deliver Jesus over to the Sanhedrin himself. When Satan couldn't get him to bow down, Satan schemed with the hidden power of the nations to destroy the true king. Wasn't the first time, this Christmas when you read the story of the Wise men in Matthew 2 keep this in mind:

- Satan tried to have the Jews wiped out to stamp out the promise of the Messiah.
- God raised up Daniel and his friends Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah all from the tribe of Judah, to protect the kingly family, to send the Jews back home, and to orchestrate a calendar system by which Daniel taught the Wise men about the coming Messiah.
- The Wise men travel to Bethlehem, mark Jesus for the future Gentile nations as the King of Kings, avoid Herod on the way home so as to keep Jesus safe.

In the thwarting, scheming and planning of the enemies of God He uses their intentions to bring about His glory and to further progress the plan of Eph. 1:10 to unite all things in Christ.

Family today you may think you have done too much wrong to be used by God, but the example of David says you are never too far gone that the Gospel cannot save you. Your sin is the canvas on which God will show this world how He never abandons His people but will keep a promise to save them AND make them more like His son.

Today you may suffer from a good dose of media inoculation which is instead of **informing** you of current events is **transforming** you into a fearmonger. Please understand if God uses the devil's own schemes for His glory do you really think He can't use a: *Vladimir Putin, a Volodymyr Zelenskyy, Kim Jong-un, a Joe Biden, Elon Musk or a Bill Gates* to do His will. Fear is what sells the news



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but the **TRUTH that God's plans ARE being fulfilled by His SOVEREIGN REIGN is what gives JOY!**

3. Sovereign over Redemption.

²⁷for 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, ²⁸**to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.** ²⁹And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, ³⁰while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus."

The Apostles and their constituents in observing God's mighty Sovereign power confess with their mouths that all events that had happen up to that moment was God's plan of redemption. They recognize that the threat of arrest, the threat of pain, and the threat of death is not to be the negating factor of whether to share the gospel or not, it was the determining factor that they should not stop.

The prayer for boldness is the prayer that recognizes God's plan of redemption runs through the evil schemes of man, and the God intends for His people to not just continue in the work of the Gospel as a robot but to up their game. They expected more miracles, more healings, more signs, and more Salvations. **And I really want us to see this last part,** they saw themselves in the equation, ***grant us your servants to continue to be bold....***

And with reality dawning on them that this was all their calling God answers their prayers:

³¹And 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.



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God sends the HS to them all, with a shake of the earth itself, to equip them for the sake of ministry. Oh, family may that be what we experience here, may we all begin to pray in such a way that we stop praying prayers of spare us but send us - hide us but display us - withhold from us but employ us!

This should be our corporate confession and prayer today, this Christmas ask for His power, ask for boldness, and don't look back. If that's you I want to close out with some of the blessings of Christmas you can also expect this year:

[CHALLENGE]

Because God is Sovereign, we CAN enjoy what Advent brings us this year:

We can live with HOPE:

Philippians 2:10-11 ESV

So that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Because you trust in God's Sovereignty you function with the belief that all things in life bring to climatic conclusion that all will bow to Christ, there is nothing in your life wasted to bring about this event.

We can live with LOVE:

2 Peter 1:3-4 ESV

Spiritual Blessings in Christ

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.



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Because God Sovereignly loves us first, gifting us all spiritual blessings, we have what we need to love others and love God.

We can live with JOY:

James 1:2 ESV

Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds,

Speaking in Boldness is what makes a critic and the critics are what brings joy to your life. It's not about picking out someone to make them an enemy, but people are at war with God already. Our taking on the trials of sharing the Gospel is about receiving the Joy when the work is done. Joy comes from when you know that your boldness is having an effect on this world for the better.

We can live with PEACE:

John 16:33 ESV

"I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

Because of God's Sovereignty, we know the trials we go through is what brings peace to this world.

Through Jesus' trials we are justified.
Through our trials we are sanctified.
Through the church's trials we will be glorified.

Through excepting God's Sovereignty in our lives, even in the bad things, will bring us the peace that surpasses all understanding.

Take Joy and take comfort my family this week for God Sovereignly is working to unite all things in Christ, so pray for boldness, and seek to enter into the Joy that comes from celebrating Jesus this year.



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[PRAYER]

[COMMUNION]

[BENEDICTION]

Go in the name of the Father, that is Sovereign over all working to ensure His Son is glorified.

Go in the name of the Son, that Sovereignly leads His people with His bold proclamation in His cross and resurrection.

Go in the name and power of the Holy Spirit, that gives us the boldness to speak about a Sovereign God that will not quit till all bend a knee to Him .