



Approaching God

Read Psalm 8 and make this your opening prayer: *O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. Out of the mouth of babies and infants, you have established strength because of your foes, to still the enemy and the avenger. When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him? Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet...the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas. O LORD, our LORD how majestic is your name in all the earth!*

Acts 4:23-37

Passage Introduction:

Acts 4:23-37 recounts the response of the saints to the miracle God had displayed through Peter and John in the previous passage. The gathered believers respond to God in two ways: in prayer and in fellowship. As we will see, these two responses are distinguishing marks of the early church, and so ought to mark the church today.

Bible Reading, Study & Meditation

Start with Engaging the Text: Take a few minutes to highlight, circle, or underline key words.

Use the space in the margin to jot down notes, or themes/ideas that stand out as important.

→ Peter & John quote here from Psalm 2

Acts 4:23-37 - 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:

"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."*

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. **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."

31 After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was

Notes

shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

32 All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. **33** With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all **34** that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales **35** and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need. **36** Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means "son of encouragement"), **37** sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet.

Questions for Reflection & Meditation

- Take a few minutes to think carefully about the passage. What are some things this passage reveals about God (the Father, Son, or Holy Spirit) Try to list as many as you can.
- Are there any commands to obey, examples to follow, or sins to avoid in this passage that?
- God is utterly sovereign. What difference could this (or should this) make to your prayers today, and to how you respond to successes and setbacks today?

Key Takeaway:

What does today's passage show you about a need you have in your life? What do you need to do or become in light of this truth? How can you begin to petition God for it?

Close in Prayer:

List some of the needs of members in your church. How can you contribute some of what God has given you to help those who are less fortunate? Pray for these members and for opportunities to serve them.