

## WordBytes

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### The Evangelistic Prayer Today's Believers Need to Make

(Acts 4:29-31)

Prayer is a key to evangelism. So to gain insight into how the early believers achieved such incredible results in the face of fierce opposition, we need to look at how they prayed.

#### How Did the Early Believers Pray for the Spread of the Gospel?

This is revealed in Acts 4:29-31:

*"Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness."*

They asked God:

- for boldness to speak His word
- to stretch out His hand to heal, and do signs and wonders through the name of Jesus

#### Why Did They Pray for Boldness and Signs and Wonders?

They had just seen the effects of the dramatic healing of the lame man begging at the beautiful gate of the temple :

- a crowd rushed together amazed by the miracle:

*"Now as the lame man who was healed held on to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the porch which is called Solomon's, greatly amazed." ( Acts 3:11)*

- when Peter saw the crowd he preached boldly:

*"Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord" (Act 3:12-19)*

- about 5,000 believed the word:

*"However, many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand." (Acts 4:4)*

#### Signs and Wonders Continued to Produce the Same Results

Phillip in Samaria:

*Then Philip went down to the[a] city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed . (Acts 8:5-8.)*

Peter in Lydda and Joppa and Iconium:

*And Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus the Christ heals you. Arise and make your bed." Then he arose immediately. So all who dwelt at Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord. (Acts 9:34-35)*

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*And turning to the body he said, "Tabitha, arise." And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up. Then he gave her his hand and lifted her up; and when he had called the saints and widows, he presented her alive. And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed on the Lord. (Acts 9:40-42)*

Paul in Cyprus, Iconium and Lystra:

*"And now, indeed, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a time." And immediately a dark mist fell on him, and he went around seeking someone to lead him by the hand. Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had been done, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord. (Acts 13:11-12)*

*Now it happened in Iconium that they went together to the synagogue of the Jews, and so spoke that a great multitude both of the Jews and of the Greeks believed. But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brethren. Therefore they stayed there a long time, speaking boldly in the Lord, who was bearing witness to the word of His grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands. (Acts 14:1-3)*

### **Signs and Wonders are Part of Preaching the Gospel**

Jesus' commission to the Twelve to preach the Gospel to Israel included the healing, cleansing lepers, casting out demons and raising the dead:

*These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: "Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give. (Matthew 10:5-8)*

then Jesus gave seventy others a similar commission:

*After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go. Then He said to them... Whatever city you enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you. And heal the sick there, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' (Luke 10:1-9)*

*Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." And He said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. (Luke 10:17-19)*

After His resurrection, He gave what we now call the Great Commission to preach the Gospel to all the world which would be accompanied by healings, casting out demons and other supernatural signs;

*"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover." (Mark 16:15-18)*

Signs and wonders were a key part of Paul's preaching of the gospel:

*"For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ has not accomplished through me, in word and deed, to make the Gentiles obedient— in mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ." (Romans 15:18-19)*

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### **Signs and Wonders Confirm the Word**

The early church needed them:

*So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen. (Mark 16-19-20)*

Jesus Himself pointed His disciples to His works as proof of who He was:

*Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves. (John 14:11)*

And the apostle John tells us that he recorded signs Jesus did so that we may believe who He is and have life in His name:

*And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name. (John 20:30-31)*

If Jesus saw the need of signs and wonders to confirm the preaching of the early church, and even His own word, then surely we need them just as much today to confirm our preaching.

### **We Need to Pray the Same Way as the Early Believers**

Hebrews 6:12 tells us to:

*imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*

So if we want the same results as the early church, we need to pray the same way!

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JO-AL Bible Teachings & Publications

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JO-AL Bible Teaching & Publications is based in Melbourne, Australia, and was founded by Alan and Joan Taylor in 2009. Alan and Joan have experience in pastoring and pioneering churches, and in travelling teaching, worship and music ministry. At the same time they have established a successful secular technical consulting company.