

Cameo Of A Praying Church

Acts 4:23-31

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I'm going to read the entire text; I want you to see it in its entirety. Then we'll go back and break it up or dissect it. Follow with me in your Bible from Acts 4:23-31.

"And being let go, they went to their own company, and they reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said unto them. And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and they said, "Lord, thou art God, which hast made the heavens and the earth and the sea and all that in them is. Who by the mouth of Thy servant David said, 'Why did the heathen rage and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against His Christ....'"—or against His Messiah—"For of a truth against Thy holy servant Jesus, Whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done. And now, Lord, behold their threatenings, and granted unto Thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak Thy Word, by stretching forth Thy hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of Thy holy servant Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and they spoke the Word of God with boldness."

The early church had none of the advantages that we today have: they didn't have modern buildings, they didn't have public-address systems, they didn't have air conditioning and beautiful pews, they didn't have the Internet by which the Word of God could go out to reach other people and they didn't have the printing press. They didn't have any of the modern ways that we have of reaching people with the good news of Jesus Christ. When we preach here at Revival Christian Fellowship every Sunday, the message is broadcast live, and we get input from all over the world. The early church did not have live webcasts, yet the church has grown, perhaps in a matter of weeks or months, from 120 meeting in the upper room on Pentecost, to 5,000, it says in Acts 4:4.

What was their secret? If they could go from 120 to 5,000 in just a few weeks, why is it today, with all our modern technology and all of our Internet service, that we have such a difficult challenge to reach the world around us? I believe the early church knew the secret of prayer. They were a praying church. When you go through the book of Acts, you find the church, in chapter 2, was born on its knees. And as soon as persecution arises, it gathers and prays. We're looking at that in chapter 4. Then all through Acts they're praying, and the Holy Spirit says, "Separate Me Barnabas and Paul for the work wherein I've called them." They sent out missionaries born of prayer. Everything they did, they did on their knees, seeking God and praying.

You might say the keys to their success were fourfold. Number one, they prayed to God; number two, they were filled with the Spirit of God; number three, they preached the Word of

God; and number four, they relied upon the grace of God. In Acts 4:33, it says, “And with great power gave the Apostles witness of the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great...”—or “mega”—“...grace was upon them all.” I want Revival Christian Fellowship to be a church that prays to God, is filled with the Spirit of God, preaches the Word of God and relies upon the grace of God. That’s the kind of church I believe God wants us to be.

I want to focus on the beginning of their success in prayer. The church was born in prayer, and they continued in prayer. St. Augustine said, “Pray as though everything depends on God, and work as though everything depended on you.” We roll up our sleeves, and we trust God to work. We pray—we get on our knees—but we also go out to work; we pray as though it all depended on God, but we work as though it all depended on us.

In our text, Acts 4:23-31, Dr. Luke gives us a cameo of a praying church. He allows us to eavesdrop on a powerful prayer. It’s like we’re going to be flies on the wall in this text; we’re going to listen to the prayers of this early, infant church.

What is the background of this prayer? Go with me to verse 23. “And being let go, they...”—who’s the “they”? “They” are Peter and John. It says that they “gathered with their own company...”—that’s other believers—“...and reported all that the chief priests and elders said to them.”

What did the chief priests and elders say to them? Here’s the background: in chapter 3, Peter and John were going to the temple. They were going there to pray. And when they went through the Beautiful Gate, there was a man there, lame from birth. He was about 40 years of age. He asked them for alms. Peter said to him, “Silver and gold have I none...”—I like Peter’s statement, because I can identify with it; those are words I can quote and take to heart. But Peter went on to say, “...but what I do have, I give to you.”

You know the story: Peter said to the lame man, “In the name of Jesus Christ, stand up and walk.” And he didn’t just tell him to stand up; Peter reaches out and takes him by the hand and lifts him to his feet. That took faith. Can you imagine how much trouble Peter would have been in if he had pulled this guy up and he fell down again? He’d get arrested for hassling a lame man.—Well, he does get arrested, but he gets arrested for healing a lame man, not for hassling a lame man. The man’s legs and ankles and feet were strengthened. Dr. Luke is the historian of Acts, and he goes into great detail about every bone and everything that happens. His legs, his ankles and his feet were strengthened. And the Bible says the lame man went “walking and leaping and praising God.”

That drew a big crowd. And when the crowd gathered around, Peter began to preach again. He told them that “This man was made whole by the power of Jesus,” the Jesus whom they had crucified. “And Jesus was buried, He rose from the dead, ascended back into heaven and is alive. And it was by the preaching in His name that this man was made whole.” The Jewish authorities didn’t like this; they had killed Jesus because He was healing people and crowds were following Him. Now there were two more guys healing and doing what Jesus did and

preaching about Jesus.

So they arrested Peter and John. Persecution came to the church. It didn't take long for the words of the Lord to be fulfilled, "If they persecute Me, they will persecute you." Peter and John were put in jail. The next day they were brought out after the council conferred. They said, "We're just going to tell you that there's nothing we can do. We know that this lame man was healed." They knew it was a miracle. How blind is their unbelief? They saw a miracle but they wouldn't believe. When a sinner wants to rebel against God, nothing will convince them of the truth. They said, "We command you that you no longer preach in the name of Jesus."

Go back up to Acts 4:18. "And they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said unto them, 'Whether it be right in the sight of God to harken unto you more than unto God, you be the judge. But we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.'" In other words, "We are going to obey God rather than man." The authorities were telling them, "Don't preach in Jesus' name." They said, "You judge whether it's right to obey God or you." Obviously, it's best to obey God; how could they argue against that? They said, "We're going to speak the things which we've seen and heard." Verse 21, "So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people; for all men glorified God for that which was done."

And that's why it says in verse 23, "And being let go, they went to their own company." Where do you go when you are let go? When you are persecuted, where do you go? I don't know about you, but I come to church. I want to be with my own company. "Birds of a feather flock together." We have a lot of feathers in this room. What a blessing, what a joy, what a privilege that we can congregate here on Sundays, Wednesdays and throughout the week, and we can pray for each other and encourage each other, fortify one another and challenge one another to go back out in the world and be bold for Jesus. So we gather to pray and we scatter to preach. That's the background in this setting.

Now I want to look at the prayer that they uttered, which starts in verse 24. There are three elements of this prayer I want to point out; I want to analyze their prayer. The first thing they did in their prayer was that they praised God. Prayer should start with praise and worship. Notice it in verses 24-28. They prayed and they praised God. "They lifted up their voice to God with one accord." Their "voice" is singular. So it seems that one person stood up—maybe Peter, maybe John, maybe one of the other Apostles—they began to pray and everyone else in accordance with their heart "amening" and agreeing with their prayer. Prayer was directed to God, verse 24—"They lifted up their voice to God"—and also they would begin to praise God. Prayer should be directed to God, and it should worship God, Who it is directed to.

I want you to note three things about their praise to God: First of all, they praised God because He is the God of creation. Notice it in verse 24. It says, "And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord and said, 'Lord...'—by the way, the word there is "kurios," which means "sovereign master." We get our word "despot" from that—"...thou art God, which

has made heaven, earth and the sea and all that in them is.”

So the first thing they prayed God for is because He is the God of creation. What this did was it helped them to get their perspective right. It's always important when you pray that you don't forget who you're talking to. God is sovereign. They had an understanding of the sovereignty of God, that God created all things. All through the Scripture, it affirms that God created all things. “In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth.” The Bible does not teach evolution. I don't believe in theistic evolution: that God created matter and let that evolve. I don't believe that's what the Bible teaches. I believe God has the ability to speak things into existence—it's called “fiat”; God will speak and things will be. God just spoke this whole cosmos, this whole universe, into existence by the word of His power.

The point is, when you pray, realize nothing is too hard for God. If God can create the heavens and the earth, God can heal your marriage. If God can create the heavens and the earth, God can provide the money for your mortgage payment this month. If God created the heavens and the earth, God can save your wayward, teenage son or daughter. God can heal and God can save. You need to keep your perspective and understanding that all things are possible with God. So they addressed Him as sovereign Lord.

Secondly, they worshipped and praised God because He is not only the God of creation, but because He is the God of revelation. Notice that in verses 25 and 26. It says, “Who by the mouth of thy servant David.” I want you to note that verses 25 and 26 are a direct quotation from Psalm 2:1-2. So when they are praying, they are using Scripture; they are bringing the Word of God into their prayer. Here is the passage, verse 25: “Why do the heathen rage and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against His Christ.” They praised God that He is the sovereign Lord, and they praised God for the Scriptures. Their prayer was based upon God's Word. Prayer must be grounded in God's Word.

The context of Psalm 2 is that the psalmist, David, is talking about whenever a king would be appointed, their vassal kings would come to pay that king homage. When David took the throne, all the nations around them became vassal kingdoms, and they had to come to pay tribute to David. But some of them said, “No; we're not going to honor David's kingdom. No; we're not going to pay tribute to him.” We have an inauguration coming up, and it's sad to me that some leaders of our nation won't acknowledge our new president. They say, “We will not have Trump to reign over us.” It's almost a direct quote from Psalm 2. But in the context, it's talking about a king at that time, a vassal king who wouldn't pay their respect. When you get down to Psalm 2:4, it says that God laughs. That is the one and only place in the entire Bible where God laughs. He laughs out loud. If God could text them, it would be “LOL,” “laugh out loud.”

Today people think they can rebel against God, that they can resist God, that they can run from God, that they can thwart God's purposes and plans. God laughs. He laughs out loud. That's ridiculous. God sits in heaven, and He laughs at their rebellion.

How does this apply to their circumstance? Jesus predicted that "If they persecute Me, they will persecute you." This is a Messianic psalm that was actually fulfilled in Christ's first coming and will be fulfilled in His second Advent. Scholars disagree as to whether first or second Advent. I say both. When Jesus came, the kings rebelled and people resisted Him. As they interpreted in the next verse, they said Pontius Pilate and Herod and the people of Israel resisted the Messiah, the anointed one of Israel. So they gave an application to Jesus' first coming as well as it will have a future application in Christ's Second Coming. They also realized that we, also as believers, will be rejected, and we will be resisted and we will be persecuted.

It's interesting to me how their understanding of Scripture changed after the Holy Spirit came in Acts 2 on the day of Pentecost. Before Jesus was crucified, He said that He would be crucified, would die and be buried and would rise again. But they didn't understand it. It went in one ear and out the other; they didn't get it. They were looking for a Messiah who would conquer, reign and rule. Even Peter rebuked Jesus when Jesus said He would be crucified. Peter said, "No way, Lord. That be far from Thee." Jesus had to say to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan. What you're saying is not of God."

Even after Jesus was crucified and He rose from the dead, there were the Emmaus disciples in Luke 24 that Jesus appeared to. This is a paraphrase. They were walking along sad and bummed out and suddenly Jesus appeared to them incognito. He had dark glasses on and a black leather coat and His collar flipped up and He walked alongside these two Emmaus disciples and said, "Hey, what's up?" "What do you mean 'What's up'? Haven't you heard about Jesus?" And Jesus said, "What about Him?" They're talking to Jesus about Jesus, and they didn't know it. He's messing with them. They said, "Jesus came, and we thought He was a prophet, mighty in deed and from God, but He went and got crucified and He said He would rise from the dead. Some of the women said they saw Him, but we don't believe them. Those women are all messed up. They don't know what they're talking about. We were all bummed out and we're sad."

And Jesus began to speak to them. They still don't know it's Jesus. In my King James translation, which isn't the best here, Jesus said, "Oh you fools." Actually, it would be "Oh you simple ones. You simple of heart. Don't you realize that the Messiah has to be crucified, die, resurrect and ascend back to heaven?" Then the Bible says that as they walked, Jesus gave them a Bible study. I wish that was recorded. In fact, it was so good that later on they said, "Did not our hearts burn within us as He spoke to us about it? I thought He knew the Bible pretty well." And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, the Bible says He explained to them all the Scriptures: that He would suffer and die and rise again from the dead.

These guys took so long to get it, but now that the Holy Spirit had come, they get it. And how amazing to me that they're immediately able to say, "Psalm 2. Yeah, Psalm 2. 'Why do the kingdoms rage? Why do the heathen rage? Why do they resist?' God said that would happen. God prophesied that in His Word." So they based their prayer upon the Scriptures, the power of praying the promises of God, verses 25 and 26.

The third reason they praised God was because He is the God of history. Notice verses 27 and 28. They had just quoted Psalm 2 in our text in verses 25 and 26, and now they are saying in verse 27, while they are praying, “For of a truth against Thy holy child Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, and the Gentiles and with the people of Israel, were gathered together...”—notice verse 28—“...for to do whatever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done.” They only did what God planned they would do. God is in control. He’s the God of history. His ways are perfect; His plan is perfect.

God was not caught by surprise when Jesus was crucified. It was preordained by God before the foundations of the world. God is able to take the wrath of man and cause it to praise Him. What we see to be a tragedy, God can turn around and use it for His glory. He’s the God of history. So they opened their prayer that He’s the God of creation, He’s the God of Scripture and He’s the God of history. When you pray, it’s important to realize that God is in control; He sets up kings and He takes down kings. God rules from heaven. Even regarding the death of Jesus Christ, someone once said, “God turned the Cross, upon which men crucified their maker, into a stage on which He demonstrated the wonder of a saving grace.” Who but God would have the wisdom to take the death of His Son and make it become a theater on which He would display His majesty and power and His wisdom to save guilty sinners?

You might not be openly persecuted for your faith, but maybe you’re facing trouble and trial right now, so remember that God made everything, verse 24—the verb is You “made”—; secondly, He spoke His word, verse 25—the verb is You “said”—; and thirdly, He is in control, verse 28—the verb is You “determined.” You made, You said, You determined. You are in control. In verse 28 it says, “Everything that happened, happened according to Your counsel. It was determined by Your hand to be done.”

So this is how they opened their prayer: they praised God and worshipped Him. Then they moved to my second point, which is petition. They praised God and then they petitioned God. They got to their petitions, and that is found in verses 29 and 30. With their vision of God clarified, and they themselves humbled before God, they lay out their petitions. They asked God to do three things: number one, consider their threats. Notice it in verse 29: “And now, Lord, consider their threatenings.”

They’re not asking for protection, they’re not asking God to bring down judgment upon their enemies—I would be doing that if I were in the prayer meeting. I’d say, “Lord, bring down the fire; not on us, on them. Judge them, destroy them, wipe them out! Just take them out, Lord, in the name of Jesus. Hallelujah!” Precatory psalms are psalms in which the psalmist prays that God would take vengeance upon his enemies. One says, “God, break their teeth in their mouths.” The first time I ever saw that, I underlined it and put a star by that. “Break their teeth in their mouth”; praise God! Some of you are thinking, “We need to pray for you, pastor.” You do.

Jesus said that we need to bless those who persecute us. Bless and curse not. So I don’t advise that we pray like that. I was a baby Christian at the time. Then I read the whole Bible

and found out that we need to calm down a little bit. I had God knocking everybody's teeth out. Cool your jets.

They didn't say, "Lord, get our enemies. Lord, save us. Lord, deliver us." They just said, "Lord, consider what's going on." Does God know all things? Yes, God is omniscient. He knows everything; nothing is hidden from God. But when we pray sometimes, we just want to let God know what's happening in our marriages, what's happening in our lives. "Lord, do You see? Lord, do You know?" I believe that in faith, knowing what God knows, I rest. Knowing that God knows, I rest. All I need to know is that God knows and I can rest.

Yes, God knows that you just got diagnosed with cancer. Yes, God knows that you just lost your job. Yes, God knows that you're struggling in your marriage. Yes, God knows that you're having problems in these relationships. God knows that you're having financial difficulties. And knowing that God knows, I rest. I rest because I know that God is good, and God is in control. God made everything, God can do everything and God knows everything: I rest in that.

In the Old Testament, King Hezekiah, the king of Judah, got a blasphemous letter from Sennacherib, the Assyrian king, mocking the idea that the people of God would trust Him; that God could protect them, that God could deliver them. He blasted God and told God's people that they were going to be destroyed. Hezekiah had the letter in his hand and took it into the temple and laid it on the altar. He took his hands off the letter and said, "God, have You read this? They're mocking You. They're saying that You won't take care of us. God, we're Your people; what are You going to do about it? God, are You going to take care of this?" They basically, first of all, asked God to consider, and they rested in faith.

The second thing they asked for, in verse 29, was to "enable Your servants." So first they asked God to consider their threats, and the second petition was "Enable Your servants." "And now, Lord, behold their threatenings and grant unto Thy servants that with all boldness they may speak Thy Word." Enable us, embolden us and empower us. They're asking God to help them do what God commanded them to do, and that was to speak and not be silent. Jesus said to "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." So they were doing what the Lord had commanded them, and God would answer their prayer and embolden them or give them that ability. They did not ask again for protection; they asked for power to preach. The Jewish authorities commanded them, in verse 18, not to preach, but Peter said, in verses 19 and 20, "We must obey God. If we fear God, we won't fear what man can do to us."

If the time should ever come in the United States of America—and God forbid that it does—that it becomes illegal to preach the Gospel, we preach the Gospel. If our government ever says that we can't gather and pray and study God's Word, we gather and pray and study God's Word, and we scatter to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. "We must obey God rather than man."

You say, "But, Pastor, doesn't the Bible say that we must obey the authorities? That we must obey the laws of our land?" Yes, but when the government tells us that we must do something

that is disobedient to God, "We must obey God rather than man." That's our commitment.

The church has never been hindered by persecution. The fires of persecution have always fanned the growth of the church; it has never hindered it. So they took a bold stand: "Lord, embolden us. Lord, strengthen us." Jesus said, "Don't be afraid of those who can kill the body only and after that there is no more they can do, but fear God, Who has the power to both kill the body and throw the soul into hell. Fear ye Him." I believe, like John Knox, who said that he feared the face of God so much that he feared not the face of any man. Don't be ashamed of the Gospel, and don't be afraid of persecution. As Jesus said, "All they can do is kill you." If they kill us, we go to heaven. They can't take away what God has given you. They can't take your eternal life. They can't take your hope away. So let's pray for boldness in our witness and not stop talking about Jesus.

The third petition, in verse 30, is that they prayed, "God, stretch forth Thy hand." So they prayed, "Consider their threats, strengthen Thy servants and stretch forth Thy hand." Notice verse 30: "By stretching forth Thine hand to heal and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of Thy hold servant Jesus." Again, they don't ask for fire from heaven but a miracle of mercy. "Through us, God, bring healing, bring hope, bring restoration. God, help us to go out in Your name, and may Your Word be confirmed with signs following. Help us to preach the Word and heal, deliver and change lives." Basically, their motive is that God would be glorified through their preaching; that Jesus Christ is alive and people understand that He lives. When you go out and preach Jesus Christ and people's lives are changed, God is glorified. God will be glorified.

The third, and last, movement, in verse 31, was that they experienced God's power. They prayed to God in praise, they petitioned God in asking God to embolden them and they experienced God's power. "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit..."—and what did they do?—"... and they spoke the Word of God with boldness."

God answered their prayers. Notice the three answers to their petitions. The place was shaken, verse 31. I don't believe this was a coincidence. Imagine that you're praying "In Jesus name, Amen," and then the shaking comes! An earthquake. You say, "Well, that could have happened." Yes, it's possible; it just so happened that an earthquake came as they closed their prayer. But I believe God was saying something to them in the shaking of that place.

When Paul and Silas were in the inner prison of Philippi in Acts 16, they were praising God and singing praises, and God sent an earthquake. I believe that as they were singing, God was tapping His foot, and the earth started to shake. The prison doors were opened, they were loosed, Paul started preaching to the jailer and he was converted. So God again confirmed that He was with them, that He will answer. Though the place was shaken, the believers were not shaken; the building shook, but they weren't shook.

The second thing that God did, in verse 31, was that "They were all filled with the Holy Spirit."

This is the third time in these two chapters—chapter 2 and chapter 4—that the believers were filled with the Holy Spirit. Chapter 2, verse 4, says on the day of Pentecost that “They were all filled with the Holy Spirit.” In chapter 4, verse 8, Peter was “filled with the Holy Spirit” and preached boldly. In chapter 4, verse 31, again, “They were all filled with the Holy Spirit.” The Bible commands all Christians to be filled. In Ephesians 5:18 it says, “Be filled with the Spirit.” It’s an imperative in the Greek. In other words, it’s a command; it’s not an option.

God would never command us to be filled if we were already filled. You say, “Well, I thought all Christians have the Holy Spirit.” They do, but the Holy Spirit doesn’t have all Christians. You might have the Holy Spirit—and if you’re a Christian, you do have the Holy Spirit—but does the Holy Spirit have you? Do you have Him all boxed up in a nice little compartment, and He kind of bubbles up on Sunday morning and you put Him back when you go to work on Monday? If the Holy Spirit has you, it’s Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday; 24/7. The question is not: Do you have the Holy Spirit? The question is: Does the Holy Spirit have you?

Not only is Ephesians 5:18 a command, but it’s in the passive voice. That means let the Holy Spirit fill you. You can’t fill yourself. To be filled with the Holy Spirit means you surrender and you yield. The Holy Spirit life means that the Holy Spirit is controlling you—your heart, your attitudes, your actions. It means that everything about you is under the control of the Holy Spirit. Harry Ironside once said that “If you’re not kind, you’re not spiritual.” That has always convicted me, because if I’m not kind to my wife, I’m not understanding of others or I get crabby or irritable—Yes, Pastor John gets crabby and irritable. You know why? Because I need to surrender to the Holy Spirit. Sometimes my wife will say, “You’re getting crabby. You need to go pray.” She’s right. When I’m not kind or loving or gentle or understanding or sympathetic toward people, it’s because I’m not in the Spirit; the Holy Spirit isn’t controlling me. It’s John Miller coming out. It’s my flesh and it’s ugly.

If you’re struggling in your marriage, it could be that you just need a “dose of the Ghost.” You need to surrender more to Jesus. Your mind, your attitude and your actions need to be under God’s control. The word “fill” literally means “control.” When we’re filled with the Spirit, we’re not getting more of the Spirit; the Spirit’s getting more of us. He’s controlling us. It’s that simple. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, kindness and self-control. Those are indications that I’m a Spirit filled Christian.

The command in Ephesians 5:18 for everyone to be filled is in the passive voice. “Let the Spirit fill you.” It’s in the present tense in the Greek, so it is translated “be being filled” or “be continually being filled.” That’s why we read three times that “They were being filled with the Spirit.” I not only believe in the second blessing. I believe in the third blessing, in the fourth blessing, in the fifth blessing, in the sixth blessing, in the seventh blessing, in the eighth blessing, in the ninth blessing and on until the Lord takes me home. We need to continually, ongoingly be appropriating the filling and the power of the Holy Spirit. That’s what it means to be filled with the Spirit.

So they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and then the third answer to their prayer came, in verse 31. "They all spoke the Word of God with boldness." Spirit filled people speak the Word. They pray, they praise the Lord and they preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Acts 1:8 says, "You shall receive power after the Holy Spirit shall come upon you, and you shall be witnesses to me in Jerusalem, in Judea and Samaria and to the uttermost parts of the world." This is a prayer meeting. See what can happen in a prayer meeting? See what you miss when you don't go to prayer meetings? "We'll do everything but pray. We'll give, we'll work, we'll serve. But pray? Boring." This was a church that was filled with the Spirit, because they were on their knees and they were relying on God's Spirit.

God always answers this kind of prayer. In the book of James it says, "You have not because you ask not." If the church lacks power, it simply needs to pray. The Bible says, "The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much."

A story is told of a big New York City church that had just purchased a massive pipe organ. They had it installed, and there came the dedication service at which they were going to play this organ. The church was filled to capacity, and everyone was anticipating the sound of this beautiful new pipe organ. The organist sat down to play and hit the organ keys but nothing happened. Silence, then panic. She tried again but nothing happened. Someone realized that they should pray, so they stood up at the front of the church and prayed. Then the church janitor realized that he hadn't turned the organ electricity on. So he quickly scratched out a note on a piece of paper and handed it to the organist. As someone was praying, the organist opened the paper and read, "After the prayer, the power will be on." How perfect is that.

Let's pray.