

## **Monday, 10 September 2018**

*Acts 4:23-25*

*When they were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them. 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, who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit, "Why did the Gentiles rage, the peoples plot in vain?*

How often do we gather as a group to lift our voices together to implore the LORD, God, the Almighty? How often do we seek out appropriate Scriptures as guidance from the Holy Spirit for our prayers? Peter and John went directly to their friends (indicating a close, loving relationship) to report in and share the "orders" from the Sanhedrin. The immediate response was to lift their voices together (as one) and call upon the LORD, beginning with the words of Psalm 2:1-2 and then requesting boldness to resist the threats and speak the Word.

Should we not continue to use the example set for us by the Spirit? Gather to pray for boldness in our witness and our willingness to serve as His Ambassadors of Reconciliation. Let search the Scriptures to guide our prayers.

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## **Tuesday, 11 September 2018 Acts 4:31**

*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.*

Wham! The past tense in this verse is significant, "had prayed," "were gathered," "was shaken," "were all filled," and "continued to speak the word of God with boldness." I have never been in a prayer meeting where the place was shaken, where all were filled by the Spirit, and where we all continued or were even encouraged in our determination to speak the Word of God with boldness.

I'm reminded about the story of the football coach whose halftime talk to his team was so encouraging that half the team was injured in their enthusiasm to get through the door at the same time. Lord, that it would be the same with Your people today. We must speak with boldness! Our lives must reflect our commitment to You and our part in bringing the Kingdom of Heaven to earth in the here and now.

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## **Wednesday, 12 September 2018 Acts 5:1-5**

*But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, and with his wife's knowledge he kept back for himself some*

*of the proceeds and brought only a part of it and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to man but to God." When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and breathed his last. And great fear came upon all who heard of it.*

Why is it in the early Church that lying to the Holy Spirit or partaking of the Lord's Supper unworthily (1 Cor. 11:29-30) is equivalent to committing suicide but does not seem to be a problem in the present day Church? Have we grown so callused that we are deaf to the Spirit? Should we not be on our knees, lifting our voices together in confession and remorse, acknowledging that we are so self-centered that we will only do what is right in our own eyes?

LORD, be merciful to me, a sinner.

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## **Thursday, 13 September 2018 Acts 5:27-33**

*And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest questioned them, saying, "We strictly charged you not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you intend to bring this man's blood upon us." But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. **And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.**" When they heard this, they were enraged and wanted to kill them.*

Here's the key. The Holy Spirit is not given to those who say the Sinner's Prayer and then continue to live as they please, at best with a taste of this Scripture and a nibble of that. He is given to those who after declaring the Jesus Christ as their Savior, their Lord and Master, strive to live in accordance to His Word. No buffet line, or as my mother used to say, "Eat what's on your plate, every bite."

When was the last time someone became enraged at my testimony? Is the answer, "Never?"

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## **Friday, 14 September 2018 Acts 6:1-3**

*Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. And the twelve*

summoned the full number of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty.

There are the criteria for selecting local church leadership: good reputation, filled with the Spirit and demonstrated wisdom. Proverbs 9:10 *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.* Luke could have written that the individuals must demonstrate the Fear of the LORD, but he was led to spelling it out for us. This must be our guide for everything that needs to be done among our congregation. It is a guide as we practice "all member ministry" among us. Everything from elder-ship to janitor-ship must be filled by someone who lives in the Fear of the LORD.

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**Saturday, 15 September 2018 Acts 6:8-10**

*And Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing great wonders and signs among the people. Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of those from Cilicia and Asia, rose up and disputed with Stephen. But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking.*

If I am living in the Fear of the LORD, there will be opposition. I must rejoice with Peter and John that I am counted worthy to suffer for my Lord. (Acts 5:41). If I am unwilling to rejoice, then probably the root is a desire to have the appropriation of men rather than to hunger for that "Well done, faithful servant" when I face the Judgement Seat.

Forgive me, Lord, and lead me in the way I should go.

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**Lord's Day, 16 September 2018 Psalm 119:160**

*The sum of your word is truth, and every one of your righteous rules endures forever.*

There is no expiration date, no sunset clause in any of Your righteous rules. The same yesterday, the same today, the same tomorrow.

# VOICES TOGETHER

Daily Meditations from the Scriptures



September 10-16, 2018

**Prayer of the week, based on Paul's prayer in: Romans 15:30-33**

*I urge you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me. Pray that I may be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea and that my service in Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints there, so that by God's will I may come to you with joy and together with you be refreshed. The God of peace be with you all. Amen.*

Lord Jesus Christ, we come to you as a small band of saints, joined in common struggle to bring an understanding of the presence, promise, and power of the Kingdom of Heaven to those who claim to know You, but don't and to those who deny You. We pray that our ministries will be protected from attacks by unbelievers and by the misalignment of the established church.

Lord, we also pray that each of us will find great encouragement and joy in Your service; that our hearts will be filled with an outpouring of praise and thanksgiving as we revel in the righteousness, peace and joy that is life in Your Kingdom. Amen

**To fear or not to fear, that is the question.**

The fear of the Lord, an expression that occurs many times in Scripture, 142 in the ESV in various forms, is not well understood in the Church today. For many, the phrase represents a weak and flabby description of an overly saccharine spiritual being of some sort. It certainly does not include the concept of the LORD, God the Almighty who spoke all things into being and who controls all things.

Join with me in examining the fear of the LORD and seeking an understanding of life in the Kingdom of Heaven in the here and now as guided by that fear.

Voices Together is published daily on the website of the Fellowship of Ailbe, [www.ailbe.org](http://www.ailbe.org); along with material by other writers to encourage and assist in our walks as disciples of Jesus Christ. These messages can also be received as daily emails or in a monthly printed version by sending a request to:

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