

Church on Purpose: Part 4- The Prayer  
Acts 4:1-31

**I. ME**

- A. Church on Purpose
- B. Review
  - 1. Purpose of the Church- Ambassadors of God
  - 2. Power of the Church- Relying on the HS
  - 3. **THANK AARON** Process of the Church- Working with God's process to create ambassadors
- C. Sounds nice and easy... but this **story of the spread of the Church is full of martyrs and persecutions, missteps and difficulties.**
  - 1. How did it survive and even thrive through those hard times?
  - 2. Throughout the centuries how has the Church been able to keep joining in God's process, relying on the HS, and fulfilling its purpose?
- D. Not by doing what I usually do when things get difficult...
  - 1. My reactions...

**II. WE**

- A. It's not just me is it? Our reactions to hard times
  - 1. Uncontrollable events... **Worry/Fear**
  - 2. Mistreated... **Anger**
  - 3. Not going your way...  
Disappointment/Frustration/**Complaining**
- B. Is that any way to live? What does it accomplish?
  - 1. Effects...
    - a. Anger, depression, exhaustion, health issues from constant worry.
- C. Is this how Jesus us expects us to live and fulfill our purpose?
  - 1. **John 10:10**

- D. So how can we thrive even in hard times in our lives and as a church?
- E. The first church has the answer and it all has to do with two simple things... **Perspective and Priority.**

**III. GOD- Acts 4:1-31**

- A. Acts Background
  - 1. Luke
  - 2. Action Story- **Read it**
- B. Passage context
  - 1. Jesus tells them to start the church- **PURPOSE**
  - 2. Gives them the Holy Spirit- **POWER**
  - 3. 3000 join- **PROCESS**
  - 4. Peter heals beggar lame from birth at temple gate
  - 5. Everyone sees it and Peter gives a sermon...
- C. **Read Acts 4:1-22**- Comments...
  - 1. **V. 4** If you only like small churches you would've hated this one and heaven wont be too fun either...
    - a. "Everyone known not everyone knowing everyone"
  - 2. **V. 6** Ruling class of Jerusalem
    - a. Religious/Political/Economic
    - b. The most authority and power in the city besides Rome
    - c. Same guys who tried Jesus
  - 3. **V. 10**- Whom you crucified [7 Weeks ago]
    - a. Gutsy
  - 4. **V. 11**- Jesus is the cornerstone of God's plan to save the world

5. **V. 12-** Offensive...
  - a. Sets Xianity apart from all other religions.
  - b. Not list of rules to follow
  - c. One person to trust in to save you.
  - d. House keys example**
6. **V. 14** Interesting they didn't argue about Jesus being raised...
  - a. Didn't produce the body
  - b. Didn't accuse them of stealing the body
  - c. Had nothing to say to the obviously changed men.
7. **V. 20-** Not "what we believe" but what we are eyewitnesses of...
  - a. Can't help it.
  - b. Compelled... like Paul.
  - c. **Witness-** What have **you** "seen and heard?"
  - d. What are **you** compelled to tell others?

#### 8. V. 21-23

#### **D. Apostles' response**

1. Put yourself in their shoes... What feelings?
  - a. Freak out! We're done for! They killed Jesus.
2. What's the normal response?
  - a. Complaining, organize a protest, try to overthrow the evil rulers, write your representative, rant on social media? Hide.
  - b. Holy answer... pray.
    - 1) Save us! Get us out of this.
    - 2) Get them
    - 3) Make it stop
3. What did apostles do...?
4. They chose to change their perspective and it changed their priorities.

**5. The right perspective gives you the right priorities. Elaborate**

#### **E. Acts 4:23-30 (Exegesis)**

1. **V. 23-24a** (Stop at "prayer to God")
2. What did they do? Prayed
  - a. What did they pray? Will show us their perspective and priorities.
  - b. Your prayers reveal your perspective and priorities.**
3. **V. 24-28 Acknowledged God was sovereign-** Absolute power and unrestricted authority.
  - a. **He made everything v. 24b**
  - b. **He controls everything v. 25-27**
  - c. **He has a purpose for everything v. 28**
4. What a comfort and relief.
  - a. Peace.
  - b. Where is room for fear when you really understand and trust this fact? When you have the right perspective of God.
  - c. Boys scared of storms**
    - 1) Who made the storm? -Jesus
    - 2) Who can make a storm stop just by saying the word STOP? -Jesus
    - 3) Who loves you so much that they died for you? - Jesus
    - 4) What is there to be afraid of? - Jesus : )  
Nothing.
5. Since he has all the power... what did they ask for?
  - a. Safety? Rescue? Vengeance? Validation?
  - b. Nope

6. **V. 29**- Boldness to keep being witnesses while God heals and works.
7. Their concern was not for their safety/Comfort/Image
8. Their priority was fulfilling their purpose as God's ambassadors.
9. **Their prayer was not for them but for them to fulfill their purpose.**
10. **The prayer of a church on purpose is for the courage to work with God to save others.**
11. We speak and God acts. **V. 30**
12. And God's response to these prayers? He answers them, sometimes theatrically... **V. 31.**

#### **IV. YOU**

- A. How do you usually respond when things get difficult or don't go your way, or you are treated unfairly?
- B. Anger, Fear, retaliation?
  1. Has that made life better or worse?
- C. If you want to change it ask yourself two questions...

#### **D. What's your perspective?**

1. Is God sovereign or not?
2. Can God handle the situation or not?
3. Does God love you or not?
4. Have you messed up so much God can't fix it?
5. Have you sinned so badly Jesus' death wasn't enough?

#### **E. What's your priority?**

1. If your priority is always you... then life will be one crises after another b/c everything is a potential threat to your safety and especially your comfort.
  - a. You are trying so hard to keep something that is impossible for you to do anything to keep.
  - b. You are impossibly trying to control the uncontrollable.
  - c. And it's an exhausting and depressing cycle.

#### **2. What if your priority was bigger?**

- a. What if your priority was to be God's ambassador to others?
- b. What if every situation, good or bad, was seen as an opportunity to bring God's love and peace and comfort and transformation to others?
- c. What if the priority of your life wasn't to save it or keep it comfortable... but to give it away for your Savior?
- d. **If you want a full life... you must prioritize giving it away.**
- e. **Matthew 16:25**
3. What do your prayers reveal about your perspective and priorities?
4. Do you pray?
  - a. Do you believe God hears and cares and can do anything about your life?
5. If God answered every one of your prayers YES... would your neighborhood/city change? (Well yeah there'd be a bigger house in it)... would your church change? Would anyone be transformed by Jesus?
  - a. Or would you and your family just be happy and healthy?
6. What are you praying for that can only be accomplished through the power of a sovereign God?
7. What are you doing/praying for that will completely fail unless God shows up?

## **8. Prayer Experiment**

- a. We ARE his ambassadors
- b. Let's pray for lives to be transformed

9. Maybe we haven't seen Him do amazing things... b/c we haven't asked Him too?

10. Maybe you're bored in your Xianity b/c you haven't asked for boldness to do things that can only be done through the power of the Holy Spirit?

F. The right perspective gives you the right priorities.

## **G. Challenge**

### **1. Xian- Everyday this week...**

#### **a. Ask Yourself...**

- 1) Who made everything?
- 2) Who controls everything?
- 3) Who has a purpose for everything?
- 4) Who loves me so much that he died for me?

#### **b. Then Pray for boldness to be an ambassador.**

#### **c. Then Pray for our neighborhoods.**

2. **Non-Xian-** Everyday this week ask God to show you that he is real and loves you.

- a. What do you have to lose?

## **V. WE**

A. There is nothing like a life lived on purpose.

B. There's nothing that can stop a church that is on purpose.

C. But we will never do anything of importance if we don't change our perspective and let that change our priorities.

D. It's up to you.

E. Will you worry and complain and try to hold onto what was never yours to control...

F. Try and stress about staying comfortable?

G. Or will you be a part of saving lives both now and for eternity by coming along and being the church on purpose?

H. Accept your purpose, rely on the HS, jump fully into the process, change your perspective, pray for boldness, and watch what God will do.

## **I. Pray for Neighbors.**

## Church on Purpose: Part 4 The Prayer Discussion Questions

From Jon:

1. Give an example of the last time life threw you a curveball and describe your reaction.
2. If God answered all of your prayers with a “YES” what would change/happen?
3. What do your answers to Questions 1 and 2 show about your priorities?
4. Assuming you have some priorities that aren't what you want them to be, how could changing your perspective about God change those?
5. Read Luke 9:23-24. This week Jon said, “If you want a full life you must prioritize giving it away.” What can you do this week to prioritize “giving up yourself?” How can your group support you?