



Enormous Prayers

Acts 4

About *Enormous Church: How Church is Supposed to Be*

Two thousand years ago, a gathering of people in a Middle Eastern city began a movement that would circle the globe and leave its mark on individuals and cultures on every continent. This movement eventually became known as The Church. The church isn't a place; it's a movement. And ... it's still moving. Whether you consider yourself a church person or not, *Enormous Church*, seeks to reveal the story and meaning of the earliest gatherings of Christians.

Bottom Line

Small prayers are for small churches. How we pray is an indication of if we've strayed.

Introduction

How did the story of Jesus make it out of the first century?

The answer is, something happened that launched this movement known as The Church. The foundation of what we believe is something that happened, not something that was simply taught a long time ago.

Jesus rose from the dead and instructed eyewitnesses to talk about it.

The church was launched around the good news that Jesus is the Holy One of God and that man's primary obstacle – sin – has been defeated through his death and resurrection. The ultimate penalty for sin – death – has been overcome.

The church launched as a multicultural, multiplying movement with a specific mission: to make disciples/followers of Jesus.

From that day forward, there has always been a group that refused to let go of this ideal. They refused to make it a building. But the majority, has not.

Struggle

The gravitational pull for the local church is always toward the reached rather than the unreached.

We are not immune. We would be arrogant to think we are. But how do we know? How do we know if we are slowly sliding toward becoming just another old, stuffy church?

How a church prays indicates whether it has strayed.

How church people pray indicates whether they have strayed.

Think about your prayers for a moment. Who and what are they mostly about? Isn't it true we pray mostly insider prayers?

Do you know why your prayers never seem to get past the ceiling? You know why there's no urgency or expectancy? Because most of your prayers probably do not really require God's intervention or attention.

Today, we're going to talk about the first recorded prayer of the first church right after opening day in Acts chapter 4.

Truth

Read Acts 4.

What would we be praying? Wouldn't we be praying for protection, help, blessings, give me...? Not the apostles.

Notice in verses 29 through 30, the apostles are praying for boldness, courage, and confidence.

Then Luke suddenly seems to switch gears in verse 32. It seems disconnected. A case of generosity broke out in the church. Then, in verse 33, he's right back to the matter at hand.

The church was not generous with their stuff because someone told them to be. They were generous with their stuff because they couldn't help themselves. There was a natural and powerful connection between their **boldness** and their **generosity**.

Their money followed their prayers.

Your money follows your prayers as well.

I don't want us to be an enormous church that prays small prayers. We dishonor God with our little prayers. Beginning today, let's begin praying for boldness.

Conclusion

Let me be **bold** with you: chances are, if you pray like most Christians, and if God answered all the prayers you prayed this past year, the only difference it would have made is in your life and in your family's lives.

That's not very big. That's not very bold. That's how Christians get small, insider-focused, and off mission. Now, the boldness of the first century church through the power of the Holy Spirit is what got the message of Jesus out of the first century. It also got them into some trouble and we will pick it up there next week.

In the meantime, I want you to begin praying bigger, bolder, God-honoring prayers. We are the church for this generation, and that's how we been called to pray.

Enable me to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.

— Acts 4:29-30

Next Steps

- Memorize Acts 4:29-30
- Pray fewer me-centered prayers.
- Pray bigger others-centered prayers.
- Pray Acts 4:29-30