

Sermon Title: "Unleashing the Voice of the Church"
Scripture: Acts 4:31-33
Date: 7-3

As we turn our thoughts toward God's Call2Fall on our knees this morning, I want to direct your attention to Acts 4 as we talk about Unleashing the Voice of the Church. And here in Acts 4 you find where the early church prayed and God answered with an earthquake.

Introduction: Earthquakes have always been a source of fear and fascination for me. We all watched the horrific devastation caused by the massive 9.1 magnitude earthquake that set off a tsunami that sent walls of water crashing over parts of northern Japan, taking the lives of nearly 15,000 people and threatening the lives of many others from the nuclear radiation escaping from the failing plants. How many of you have been in a quake? I would say that many of you could give some detailed testimony. Well let's visit the epicenter of a powerful earthquake of a different kind here in the pages of the word of God. Acts 4:31-33. Stand. Read. Pray.

Setting: If you go back and pick up the beginning of the story, Peter and John had been used of God to heal a disabled man in the Temple (3:1-7). So here is this formerly crippled man, walking and leaping and praising God. So there he was, doing a cross between a two-step and a tango right there in the Temple! If he had been around today, Carrie Ann, Len and Bruno would have given him all 10s and he would have won Dancing with the Stars... But I digress....

So a crowd gathered, Peter preached, and thousands were saved (4:4)! Meanwhile, the priests and the Sadducees had the Temple guards grab Peter and John and throw them into prison, then the next day they were brought before the authorities, who commanded them not to preach in the name of Jesus and threatened them. After Peter and John were released, they went straight back to the church and told them about how they had been threatened (v 23) and they lived their voiced to God in prayer (v 24). Listen, in the day in which we live, in the circumstances in which we find ourselves, and in the hostility we face as believers, the first thing we need to do is *Unleash Our Voices in PRAYER!*

I. Unleash Your Voice to PRAY!

A. Prompting of this Prayer: First, let's consider the threats that prompted their prayer. The Jewish leaders, who were also governmental authorities, arrested and threatened the apostles because of they preached Jesus. And those threats prompted this prayer. Time would fail if I were to chronicle all the threats and efforts to harass, silence and marginalize people of faith in America. But here are just a few to prove the point:

Candy Cane Case: Plano, TX District School officials banned eight-year-old Jonathan Morgan from handing out candy canes to classmates at Christmas because they had Jesus' name on them. Then they confiscated a little girl's pencils after school because they mentioned "God." Plus they even banned an entire classroom from writing "Merry Christmas" on cards to our troops serving in Iraq! (Candy Cane case is being heard this week by the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals).¹

Graduation Speech: High School valedictorian Brittany McComb began deviating from her pre-approved speech and reading from a version that mentioned God and contained biblical references and allusions, including one to John 3:16

and school officials turned off her microphone.² Whatever happened to Freedom of Speech?

Church Bells: The city of Phoenix handed out citations to three churches because of a city ordinance prohibiting the ringing of their bells. They allow church bells to emit up to 60 decibels, but ice cream trucks are allowed to emit up to 70. Bishop Rick Painter, of Christ the King Church, would not comply with this ridiculous ordinance and was initially sentenced to jail.³

Home Bible Study fined: Pastor David Jones and his wife Mary were told on Good Friday back in 2009 that they cannot invite friends to their San Diego, CA home for a Bible study — unless they are willing to pay tens of thousands of dollars to San Diego County.⁴

Prayer at the Legislature: One of our own Watchmen Pastors in North Carolina, Ron Baity, was relieved of his duties as an honorary chaplain of the state house of representatives last summer after he closed his prayers in the name of Jesus.⁵ The House Clerk asked to see the prayer, noticed that he closed it "In the Name of Jesus, and said: "We would prefer that you not use the name 'Jesus,'" and when he refused, she reported him to the Speaker of the House, and as Pastor Ron puts it, "I got fired."

I say God bless this Pastor for refusing this ridiculous demand. That is what Peter and John did. When they were commanded not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus, they refused: "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." (v 19-20) Bottom line: There is a lot of harassment and even threats to our religious freedom. And this threat prompted the church to pray.

B. Priority of their Prayer: Next notice the priority of prayer. Verse 24 says that the first thing they did after reporting what happened was to lift their voices in prayer about these governing authorities who were threatening and oppressing them. The Priority of prayer. Don't overlook this. Before we make a move, take a step, sign a petition, post on Facebook, tweet on Twitter, call our elected officials or cast our vote, we need to pray and get God's heart on the matter. Prayer is not the last resort; it ought to be our first response, Amen?

In fact, the Scripture teaches in 1 Tim. 2:1-4. "I urge, then, *first* of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone— for kings and all those in authority." One of the things on the heart of God is government. Why? Because when government functions the way God intended – rewarding the good and punishing the evil - His people can "lead quiet and peaceful lives in all godliness" and carry out God's Great Commission so that everyone has an opportunity "to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth" (v 2, 4). So as you devote yourself to prayer, and seek to get the heart of God, remember that Scripture teaches that government, and especially its leadership, should have a place of prominence in our petitions to the Father.

So I invite you to sign up for the weekly Prayer Target email to equip you to pray with knowledge, discernment, and focus, and I am thankful that this church is participating in the Call2Fall that is based on God's "call to fall" in 2 Chron. 7:14. But remember, the promises of 2 Chronicles 7:14 depend on God's people humbling ourselves, God's people seeking His face in prayer, and God's people turning from sin to biblical

righteousness. Thankfully, the future of America does not depend on those in the Houses of Congress, or in the State House, or in Court House, or in the White House, it depends on the Christians in God's House! It all depends on the people of God who get on our knees, and pray and seek the face and favor of God.

Desperate times call for desperate prayer. I want to take you back to the First Continental Congress that met at Carpenter's Hall in Philadelphia during September of 1774. They had assembled to discuss what to do about the latest injustices of the British government, which had closed the port of Boston with warships and fortifying it with British troops. Armed conflict seemed inevitable.

Among the 56 delegates in attendance at this meeting were two future Presidents: George Washington and John Adams, John's cousin and Patriot leader, Samuel Adams, John Jay, the first U.S. Supreme Court Justice, a fiery 38-year-old lawyer from Virginia named Patrick Henry, and they elected Peyton Randolph as their President. A day into the meeting came the call to have a chaplain pray over their deliberations.⁶

So the next morning, Rev. Dr. Jacob Duché, an Anglican minister of nearby Christ Church, came and read out of their Book of Prayer for September 7, and the Scripture for that day happened to be Psalm 35, which begins: "Plead my cause, O Lord, with them that strive with me: fight against them that fight against me (v 1)."

This Psalm spoke directly to their desperate situation because only one day before they received the rumor, though unfounded, of the British bombardment of Boston. John Adam's believed it was "Providential." Pastor Duché followed this psalm with prayer asking God to support the American cause:

O Lord, our Heavenly Father, high and mighty, King of kings, and Lord of lords, who....reignest with power supreme and uncontrolled over all the Kingdoms, Empires, and Governments; look down in mercy, we beseech Thee, on these our American States, who have fled to Thee from the rod of the oppressor, and thrown themselves on Thy gracious protection, desiring to be henceforth dependent only on Thee; to Thee have they appealed for the righteousness of their cause; to Thee do they now look up for that... support, which Thou alone canst give;...Heavenly Father...give them wisdom in Council and valor in the field; defeat the malicious designs of our cruel adversaries...All this we ask in the name and through the merits of Jesus Christ, Thy Son and our Saviour, Amen.⁷

The Scripture reading and prayer moved the whole assembly. John Adams wrote to his wife Abigail: "I never saw a greater effect upon an audience. It seemed as if heaven had ordained that Psalm to be read on that morning..."⁸ George Washington was kneeling there with the President of the Congress Peyton Randolph, and the first Supreme Court Justice John Jay, and by their side there stood, bowed in reverence, the Puritan Patriots of New England, who at that moment had every reason to believe that Boston was under fire and some of their homes being laid to waste by the British.

According to John Adams they prayed fervently "for America, for Congress, for the Province of Massachusetts Bay, and especially for the town of Boston." "It was enough" said Adams, "to melt a heart of stone. I saw the tears gush into the eyes of the old, grave, Pacific Quakers of Philadelphia."⁹

Picture these Founding Fathers, some on their knees, others standing with head bowed, still others weeping - all there joining their hearts together in prayer to God on behalf of the American colonies. Well this was the first prayer at the first Continental Congress, but it was not the last. In fact, they not only had a chaplain lead prayer, but the Second Continental Congress called the American people to pray no less than 15 times during the War for Independence. God heard their cries and after eight long years of war, they won their freedom. Are these not desperate days? Do they not call for desperate prayer? The Priority of their Prayer.

C. Perspective of their Prayer: They saw God as the Almighty Creator and Sovereign Lord. They had the proper perspective. They said: "You know the High Priest and 70 members of the Sanhedrin have governmental power. But Lord, you are the Creator, you made them, and you have Almighty Power." In fact, they spoke of God as the Absolute Sovereign Lord. Notice in v 24b. Now in the Greek its just one word: despota, from which we get our word "despot" or "dictator." Obviously, our Lord is a benevolent dictator because everything He does, He does out of His heart of love. But make no mistake, God is Sovereign, God is on this throne and God rules over all. Listen, God didn't just create the universe, wind it up, throw it out, and let it spin, which is classical Deism. The God of the Bible is very much involved. The Founding Fathers called that Divine Providence, and with a firm reliance upon God's Providence, they pledged their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor.

Look at v 25-28. They prayed from Psalm 2. And they're saying: "Lord, this is the direct fulfillment of that prophecy. You said that the nations would rage, you said that the peoples would plot, you said that the kings and rulers of the earth would rise up against you and your Son. Lord, it happened exactly as you said it would. They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. They were saying: "Lord you're not only the Almighty Creator, but you are the Absolute Sovereign!" Nothing is out of His control. Our God has everything well in hand, Amen? And that perspective will make a difference in how you handle problems, it'll help you learn to glance at your problems, and gaze on your Great God, who is the Almighty Creator and Absolute Sovereign! We need to recover that perspective, Amen?

Let me give you an example from American history that happened nearly a century before the Revolution. In 1682, King Charles II of England, made some demands of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, among them where that they had to repeal their restrictions on who could vote and allow Church of England clergy to form tax-payer supported churches in Puritan New England - or lose their charter, which basically gave them the right to self-governance. The leadership of the colony refused, and upon that word, King Charles II demanded the charter in 1683.

Pastor Increase Mather was the Pastor of what we call the Old North church in Boston, the one from which the signal would be sent to Paul Revere years later. In early 1684, Pastor Mather joined a town hall meeting in the Old South Church. Mather mounted the pulpit and spoke in favor of resisting the King's edict, citing the biblical example of Naboth who said "No" to King Ahab when he asked for Naboth's vineyard. The people were persuaded and voted unanimously to reject the King's demand. Then they held their collective breaths.

When word reached King Charles II, he flew into a towering

rage, and laid plans to send Colonel Percy Kirke at the head of 5,000 British troops to force the colony into submission. "Bloody" Kirk, as he was known, was the ruthless governor of Tangier, and it would take some time to dispatch Kirke and his force to America, so by the time word leaked to the colony it was February of 1685. Well the moment Pastor Mather heard that the full weight of Britain's military might was about to be deployed against them, he went into his study to fast and pray and seek the Lord. But during the afternoon, his burden was strangely lifted and the Lord gave him assurance that the colony would be spared. In the meantime, the colony was filled with dread and despair... But nothing happened.

In fact, two months later, word arrived that Charles II had died of an apoplectic seizure, that James II had succeeded him to the throne as King, and that Bloody Kirk was not coming after all. Joy replaced all the dread. And Pastor Mather got caught up in it as well, but he noticed something very interesting. When he worked back the date of the Kings death, he found that it was the same day that he had shut himself up to fast and pray for deliverance. Do you realize that the God we pray to "changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings!" (Dan. 2:21).

Do you realize that we serve the God who created heaven and earth? He weighs the mountains in a scale and the hills in as balance; He holds the seven seas in the palms of His hands; He is the God who divided the sea for Moses. He is the God who brought down the walls of Jericho for Joshua. He is the God who delivered Goliath into the hands of David and the Hebrew children from that fiery furnace. He is the God who came in human flesh in the person of Jesus Christ, who commanded the winds and the waves, who cast out demons, healed the sick, and who raised the dead. He is a God of might and majesty. He is a God of power and great glory. He is the living God and beside Him there is no other! Glory to His name!

Listen, if prayer changed the outcome of a desperate situation in colonial America, then prayer can change the outcome of the desperate situation we face right now. But do you pray? I mean do you really pray? Let me ask you, if every believer in this nation prayed like you, would the Devil's legions breach the walls and the light of the Gospel go out in America? Pray like this nation depends on it because it does. It does, Amen?

But notice not only their perspective of God, but the perspective they had of themselves (v 29). Underscore that word servant. That word literally means bond-slave. "Lord grant to your slaves, your bond slaves that we might speak your word with boldness." Now I submit to you that the reason why many of our prayers are unanswered is that we don't have this perspective. As Paul said (Phil. 2:5-7a): "Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God as something to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant"--a bond-slave--same word. You want God to answer your prayer? Do you want to see God bring real revival and true awakening. Do you want to see Him move with power and great glory? Then get the right perspective of God and of yourself. Submit yourself to Him as the Sovereign Lord! And there is no better way to do that than get on our knees, to get on our faces before the Lord. Unleash your voice to PRAY!

II. Unleash Your Voice to PROCLAIM!

Now the second thing I want you to see is not only the need to unleash our voices to PRAY, but also to unleash our voices

to PROCLAIM! Notice that they prayed that God would enable them to speak His word with boldness. Is that the desire of your heart? To obey the Great Commission and spread the Good News of Jesus Christ? "Lord, give us more boldness to speak your word!" If we want to see real change in this city, real change in this state, and real change in America, we need to be on our faces in prayer and then we need to get on our feet and be winsome witnesses to the grace of God in the person of Christ!

Question: What got them into trouble in the first place? Speaking the word of God. Question: What are they praying for? More of the same. They're praying for more boldness, more courage, more bravery. They say: "Lord, we got into trouble for speaking your word, now Lord, just give us boldness to do it some more!" Amen? "We want to speak your word!" Listen, Jesus Christ didn't come to get you out of trouble. He came to get into trouble with you! He said: "I didn't come to bring peace but a sword." And that's true of those who followed Him. Think about Paul. Everywhere he went, it was either riot or revival. And as you read the book of Acts, the early church stayed in trouble because they were bold witnesses.

What are we to proclaim? One of the most important things we can do as believers is to proclaim the Good News about Jesus – His miraculous birth, sinless life, sacrificial death, victorious resurrection, triumphant ascension, and promised return to judge the living and the dead and to reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords! And proclaim the Good News that even though we are all sinners by nature and by choice, if we will turn from our sin and place our trust in Jesus, we can experience forgiveness of sin, a fresh start, a new beginning, love, joy, and peace now and ultimately life forever with Him. That's Good News!

Obviously, we are to proclaim the Gospel, but also the practical implications of the Gospel for everyday life. As Paul told the Ephesian Elders in Acts 20:27, he did not shirk his responsibility to preach the *whole counsel* of God! That includes proclaiming the clear standards of Kingdom living, that we are to have a Salt and Light influence in every arena, that we have a responsibility to God and to Caesar. That includes declaring that human life is not disposable, but made in the image of God, sacred in the sight of God and should be protected in public policy. It means declaring that sexual intimacy is not to be cheapened by casual hook-ups and perversions, but it is reserved for one man and one woman in a marriage covenant because it reflects the image of God, points to the relationship between Christ and the Church, and it produces children who need a dad and a mom. It means declaring that when people try to silence us and take away our freedom to express our faith openly and publicly that, like the Apostles, we cannot stop speaking the things we have seen and heard!

CONCLUSION

Well how did God answer this audacious prayer for boldness to proclaim Christ? In v 31, it says they were filled with the Spirit. They had prayed: "Lord give me courage to speak your word!" Notice the disciples had been filled with the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, Peter was filled with the Spirit every time he preached, and now they are filled with the Spirit again. That tells me that we can't operate on yesterday's experience. There must be a fresh filling! We need power for today!

So don't tell me what the Lord did in your life 3 years ago or 3

months or 3 weeks ago. I want to know right now, today: Are you being filled with the Spirit? You can be. Surrender to Him. Lay your life at His nail pierced feet. Give him the keys to your heart and mind. Let Him probe your soul and spirit. Confess what He points out as sin. Thank Him for the blood of His cross. Tell Him how you love Him. How you adore Him. How you fear Him and how you will obey Him. And He will flood your life with His Spirit!

Notice also it says they became one in heart and soul (v 32). One of the greatest marks that we belong to the Lord is our unity with our brothers and sisters in Christ. Psalm 133:1 says: "How good and perfect it is when brothers dwell together in unity." It is like the oil poured on Aaron's head and dew on Mt. Hermon. Now unity is not uniformity, not sameness, not cookie-cutter Christianity, but unity on the core doctrines of biblical faith. And that's why the devil would rather start a fuss among God's people than do anything else. On the night before His death, the Lord Jesus prayed to the Father: "...that they may be one even as we are one. I in them, and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me..." (John 17:22-23). And here is the fulfillment of that prayer. God wants that for every church – more unity thru the power of prayer and the presence of the Holy Spirit.

They were filled with the Spirit, they were unified, then it says they preached Jesus with boldness (v 33)! See God's Spirit doesn't fill you just so you can feel good; He fills you so you can bear witness to Jesus. He gives us power for a purpose. Acts 1:8: "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you will be my witnesses." Are you surrendered to that purpose? Is this church surrendered to that purpose? The early church prayed for boldness to witness, and the Bible says that when the Spirit filled them, that with great power, they continued to bear witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus."

See a witness is someone who has had an encounter with the Living Lord. Remember what struck the Sanhedrin about Peter and John (v 13)--they took note that these men had been with Jesus! They had been with Jesus! The reason why there's so little witnessing going on today is because so few spend time with the Lord. Friend, if you spend time with God in prayer, it'll show. Like Moses, you'll come out of that encounter with your face aglow with the glory of God, and there'll be no hiding it. When the Holy Spirit fills you, it will make you say with Jeremiah, it was like a fire shut up in my bones and I could not stay quiet!"

People tell me: "Well I just can't witness for Jesus because I'm shy." Give me a break. When you will allow the Holy Spirit to reign and rule in your life, they'll have to hold you back with a rope from turning the world upside down. And that's my prayer not only for myself, but for everyone in this church--that you would discover the real Jesus, that the power of His presence would take over your life, and that He would transform your timidity until you are a Lion for God! Until you are unashamed and unstoppable! They spoke the word of God boldly.

The Bible says: "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so!" (Ps. 107:2). That's a word for you and for me. This nation needs to hear again the voice of the Church of Jesus Christ, pulpits that proclaim the Gospel and flame with righteousness, churches that teach humility and holiness. Christian couples who get married and stay married, Christian parents teaching their kids right from wrong, the value of a hard day's work, loving their neighbor and their nation, duty to God and

country, and sharing the good news about Jesus Christ with everyone, everywhere! The Bible says: Shout it aloud, do not hold back. Raise your voice like a trumpet! (Isa. 58:1a).

The Pastors and Churches at the founding of our nation understood this obligation to unleash their voices. These Patriot Pastors gave the biblical basis for the Holy Cause of Liberty and dramatically influenced public opinion. Speaking of his native Virginia, Thomas Jefferson observed, "Pulpit oratory ran like a shock of electricity through the whole colony." John Adams observed, "The Philadelphia ministers 'thunder and lighten' every Sabbath against George III's despotism." British Colonel Hugh Percy "No body of men are so extremely injurious to peace and tranquility as the clergy. They preach sedition openly from their pulpits." A prime example could be found in Lexington, Massachusetts, the site of the first battle in the War for Independence.

On the night April 18, 1775, Paul Revere made his famous ride to warn two patriot leaders who would later sign the Declaration of Independence. You know their names: John Hancock and Samuel Adams. John Hancock signed his name on the Declaration with big, bold letters, said he, so that King George III could read it without his spectacles. He was wealthy and many call him the Financier of the Revolution. But what many don't know is that John Hancock's uncle was a pastor and that John preached on occasion, and he also issued a number of Proclamations as Gov. of MA, calling for prayer.

Then there was Samuel Adams. Most people know him for the brand of beer, but he was also the leader of the Tea Party movement and organizer of the committees of correspondence, which was a communications network that connected the colonies – just think of it as the Facebook and Twitter of that day. Many call him the Father of the American Revolution. But what many don't know is that he entered Harvard to study to be a minister, that one of the mottoes of the committees of correspondence was: "No King but King Jesus," and that he also issued Bible-based proclamations calling for prayer as Gov. of MA.

But even if you know about the faith of these two great men, I dare say most have never heard the name of the Pastor with whom Adams and Hancock were staying the fateful night of Paul Revere's ride: Jonas Clarke. See this Patriot Pastor not only preached the Gospel, but taught his people how God's word applies to the great moral issues begin debated in the public arena.

In fact, from 1762 until 1776 Pastor Clarke he drew up a series of reasoned responses to the British Parliament's oppressive rulings. When the Stamp Act tax passed in 1765, he called it "a door to numberless evils." When the Quartering Acts passed in 1765 and the British quartered troops in the Colonies, he condemned it as "an infringement of their natural, constitutional, and chartered rights." When the Tea Act tax on tea and other goods passed in 1773, Pastor Clarke argued that any citizen of Lexington who purchased or consumed British tea: "should be looked upon as an enemy of the town."

When the other so-called Intolerable Acts were passed, Pastor Clarke guided the town to prepare for armed conflict. It was the Pastor himself who prompted the town's decision to raise and train a militia for the purpose of defending their town should the British use force, preaching biblical sermons like: "The importance of Military Skill, Measures for Defense, and a Marshall Spirit in a Time of Peace." The town's resolve

is the voice of Pastor Clarke: "We shall be ready to sacrifice our estates and everything dear in life, yea and life itself, in support of the common cause."

That brings us to the evening of April 18th 1775, when the Pastor Clarke hosted John Hancock and Samuel Adams on the night of Paul Revere's famous ride from occupied Boston to warn them of the approaching British troops, whose aim was to seize the ammunition at Concord and capture these two patriot ring leaders, clap them in irons and send them back to England to be tried for treason and hanged. So here are patriot leaders Paul Revere, John Hancock, and Samuel Adams in the home of Pastor Jonas Clarke, asking him this question: "Will the men of Lexington fight?" According to historian George Bancroft, Pastor Clark's immortal reply was reportedly this: "I have trained them for this very hour." Pastor Clarke believed his men would fight, and if need be die, to defend their families and their freedom.

As dawn broke, Captain John Parker assembled the minutemen into two lines on the Lexington green, outnumbered by British troops nearly 10 to 1, and Parker called out: "Stand your ground! Don't fire unless fired upon. But if they mean to have a war, let it begin here!" Soon the shot heard round the world rang out right in the shadow of the *church*. Nearly every man in the militia attended Clarke's *church*. They drilled on the green in front of Clarke's *church*. The ammunition and gunpowder for the militia was stored in Clarke's *church*. And when the smoke cleared, Pastor Clarke looked down on the seven men who died, men who were a part of his flock, and later said: "From this day will be dated the liberty or the slavery of the American world." Thus began the War for Independence in the shadow of a church whose pastor and people were willing to unleash their voices and sacrifice their very lives for the cause of liberty. Listen, that is not only our heritage, but that is our calling.

What could happen if we all unleashed our voices in prayer and then get off our knees to proclaim Jesus boldly? The impact of that could literally shake this nation! Speaking of that, notice that when the church finished, God said "Amen" to their prayer with an earthquake. WOW! God rocked the place where they met! Now why did God shake that place? I believe God was giving a physical sign of a greater spiritual reality. When Jesus died, Matt. 27:51 tells us that the earth quaked and the rocks were split. When Jesus died on that cross, God said "Amen" with an earthquake because it was an event that would shake the world! And when Christ was raised, Matt. 28:2 says that there was a violent earthquake, and God said "Amen" to the resurrection of His Dear Son with an earthquake, because it was an event that would shake the world!

The earthquake of redemption, the earthquake of resurrection, and here in v 31 we find the earthquake of revival. For when they prayed, they were filled with the Holy Spirit of God, and God said "Amen" with an earthquake.

I believe God wants to do it again, right here, this morning, with this church, with you! Not literally and physically, but spiritually, He wants to shake this place and each of us. Listen, this could be the epicenter of a Great Awakening. Wouldn't you like to see that happen? Isn't that what we need? Then let us get on our knees in prayer and then rise up to proclaim Christ with courage until the presence and power of God descends on us and shakes us in this place, until He shakes this state, until the shock waves reverberate out to the nation and the world around us, and until He shakes the very gates of hell off the hinges!

Prayer: Father, I pray that everyone here this morning would have a supernatural encounter with the Living Lord. Fill your church with your presence right now Father. Make the church in America a praying church, a proclaiming church, a powerful church. And may great grace be upon us all for your glory!

¹ http://www.2dialog.com/libertyinstitute/main.php/micro_sites/showpage?id=163

² <http://www.firstamendmentcenter.com/%5Cnews.aspx?id=17034>

³ <http://www.alliancedefensefund.org/Home/ADFCContent?cid=5058>

⁴ <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,522637,00.html>

⁵ <http://www.foxnews.com/us/2010/07/09/pastor-yanked-capitol-jesus-prayer/#ixzz1NJGAJje7>

⁶ George Bancroft, *History of the United States*, 4:64.

⁷ The Library of Congress recorded remembrances on a historical placard the effect of that first prayer upon Congress on September 7, 1774. First Prayer in Congress - Beautiful Reminiscence (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress).

⁸ Charles Francis Adams, ed., *Letters of John Adams - Addressed to His Wife* (Boston: Charles C. Little and James Brown, 1841), 1:23-24.

⁹ Library of Congress historical placard.