

# THE FEAST OF THE HOLY TRINITY

June 3, 2012

Sermon Text: Acts 4:23-31

"And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them. And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast 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. For of a truth against thy holy child, 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 grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, by stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness."

Fellow Redeemed in Christ,

Never before in the history of the world has Satan unleashed into battle his Anti-Christian forces of materialism, atheism, Romanism, and humanism to the degree he has called them forth in these times. Christian Faith, Christian values, Christian life, and the Christian home are all under unprecedented attacks from every side.

There is an all-out enemy action taking place! We cannot afford to sit back in pious amazement and simply exclaim: "Oh, my!". Against every enemy action, the Christian must counter-act. Not on his own or in his own way, but in the way our Lord God directs.

In our text, the Holy Spirit instructs us with an illustration of the proper "Christian Reaction" to Anti-Christian Action...

Here in our text we see:

- 1st: An increase in fellowshiping with those of like-mind.
- 2nd: More thought given to the powers of God.
- 3rd: More realization of the Bible's Truthfulness, and
- 4th: More prayer for boldness.

In the preceding verses of Acts 4, we are told that John and Peter had been arrested for teaching the people that Jesus was the long awaited Messiah. The priests and the captain of the temple guard had held them in jail over-night to await trial before the Jewish High Court, the Sanhedren.

Upon deliberating John and Peter's actions, the Sanhedren came to the conclusion that it would be in their own best interests to release Peter and John with strict orders not to teach in the name of Jesus, nor were they to talk about him amongst themselves. But Peter and John answered them, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to harken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak of the things we have seen and heard."

When they were released by their enemies with threats of persecution ringing in their ears, "they went to their own company". Here they found comfort and support as they told of their experiences and the threats of the chief priests and rulers. Oh, how uplifting the fellowshiping of these Christians coming together must have been! In these days of ours, as the forces of Satan become more and more threatening, and as the clouds of evil grow thick, we ought to follow the example of Peter and John. We should, whenever possible, take full advantage of the opportunities we have to worship and commune with those with whom we are in true fellowship. For here, we too, can be comforted, refreshed and spiritually strengthened for our on-going battle against the Devil, the World, and our sinful flesh.

As a piece of coal separated from other burning coals, grows weak and dies, so might the individuals resolve to fight on, weaken and die, when there is not the fire, the warmth of true Christian fellowship. The fiercer the attacks of Anti-Christian forces that surround us, the more fellowship "with our own company" is needed; in services, at the Lord's Table, and in Bible classes. Here we receive strength from the Holy Spirit and each other.

When the Christians of our text heard of the powerful enemies arrayed against them and the threats of the rulers and priests, they did not cringe in fear of what might happen to them. No! Their thoughts immediately went to the infinitely superior power of their God. They remembered that all the fury of the unbelieving people, kings, rulers such as Pharaoh, Herod, Pilate, the unbelieving Gentiles and Jews was futile. In vain these fought against the Lord Jesus and His Church, His believers. Before the omnipotent God, they were without strength!

Today, viewed through human eyes and understanding, there are mighty forces of evil surrounding and attacking us from every side, and it seems that we shall be overcome. But in the heat of battle, let us never forget that our Heavenly Father has ALREADY given us the victory over Satan, the World, and our flesh. This He did when He offered up His Son on the cross in payment for the sins of the whole world. Now, in His Son, the God-man Christ Jesus, we KNOW we have the forgiveness of all our sins and life-everlasting! For by His death, He has delivered us from sin and death. We know the final outcome of the War! Victory is ours in Christ Jesus! So, dear children of God, when the Devil tempts you to sin, tell him you belong to Jesus! And when he tries to remind you of your past sins, remind HIM of HIS future! A future of everlasting torment in the Lake of Fire prepared for him and all his evil angels!

Let us never take our eyes, not even for one moment, off Jesus, our Lord and Savior. Do not become fearful of the evil, if we do, we will begin to sink, as St. Peter did when he walked upon the water to go to Jesus till he looked at the storm around him and became fearful. But if we should find ourselves sinking in fear and despair, cry out as did Peter: "Lord, save me!". Jesus, in his great Love for you will stretch out his hand and catch you, even as He caught Peter and pulled him from the raging sea.



Let us be ever mindful of the saving power of the blood of Jesus Christ. It is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes. The more our mind dwells on this power, the more couragous and bold will we be when facing the enemies of our soul! Dear ones, If God be for us, who can stand against us!?!

In the hostility and resentment of the rulers and the chief priests against Christ and His followers, the Christians of our text saw a striking confirmation of the truthfulness of Scripture. They saw the fulfillment of these words of prophecy found in Psalms 2:1-4...

" Why do the heathen rage and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against His anointed, saying, let us break their bands assunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision."

The threats and persecution, therefore did not send them scurrying off in fear and trepidation, but instead served to strengthen their faith in God's Word and Promises, making them even more determined to carry out His counsel. This must also be our reaction to the furious sweeping action of the Anti-Christian forces unleashed by Satan against Christ and His people in our day.

We must not close our eyes to what the Bible has foretold of these latter days of the earth. If we do, our faith will surely be shaken and we will become perplexed and bewildered. Of these days Jesus said in John 15: 19-21...

"... if ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word I said unto you, 'The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me."

And again in John 16:2...

" They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service."

And St. Paul tells us in II Tim. 3:12-13...

"All that live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived."

If we but remember these words of Scripture, trials and persecutions will only serve to strengthen and confirm us in our faith. Here we point to the encouraging words of I Peter 4:12-14...

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified."

The Christians of our text, as one, lifted up their voice to God and prayed as the servants of God should pray. They prayed not merely for deliverance from their foe, but for boldness to speak His Word, that others might come to the knowledge of Salvation by Grace alone, through Faith alone, to the glorification of the name of Christ Jesus. So ought we today, in the midst of persecution and pain, lift up our voices in prayer. As we see the Anti-Christian forces threatening our families and our souls, warning us not to speak God's Word, let us pray ever more fervently for boldness to speak His Word in all of its Truth and Purity, for love of those who would come to Him for the forgiveness of their sins and eternal life!

"And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and they spake the Word of God with boldness."

As it was with those Christians of our text, So be it with us, Lord Jesus!

Amen.