

PRAYER: OUR FOUNDATION & OUR FUTURE

Week 3 | *The Boldest Prayer* | Teacher: Michael McKibben
Sermon Questions for 7.19.2026

OPENER

Michael opened by reflecting on Bent Tree's 50th anniversary, comparing it to a long marriage that has weathered both seasons of harvest and seasons of famine. Looking back on nearly three decades at Bent Tree, he named prayer, and specifically the discipline of praying for others, as one of the most important things he has learned here.

That set up the focus for the message: intercessory prayer, speaking to God on behalf of others in the circumstances they face. Unlike petition, which most of us already know well, intercessory prayer takes our eyes off ourselves and fixes them on someone else's need, and ultimately on God's Kingdom.

Michael invited us to see this kind of prayer modeled by the early church in Acts 4, and to consider what it would look like to pray this boldly for one another today.

READ

Acts 4:23-31 (primary text: Acts 4:29-30)

MAIN POINTS

1. The God Who Creates (v. 24)

The believers begin their prayer by lifting their voices together and calling on God as the one who made heaven, earth, the sea and everything in them. Calling God the Creator reminds them, and us, that every ruler and every threat is subordinate to him. Before asking for anything, they root their prayer in who God is.

2. The God Who Reveals (v. 25)

The believers recall that God speaks. He spoke and creation came into being, and he continues to reveal his plans rather than keep them hidden, first through David in Psalm 2, and now through his Spirit and his Son. Quoting Psalm 2, they recognize that what is happening to them (rulers and nations conspiring against Jesus) was revealed by God long before it happened. Their circumstances were never a surprise to him.

3. The God Who Remains (v. 28)

Against the Sanhedrin's threats, the believers pray that whatever God's hand and will had predestined would still take place. Rulers and kings come and go, but God remains. Michael quoted Charles Spurgeon: "He has already done that which the enemy seeks to prevent. God's anointed is appointed, and shall not be disappointed." No earthly power can out-power the God who remains.

4. The God Who Enables (v. 29-30)

Instead of praying for the persecution to stop or for judgment on their enemies, the believers ask God to enable them, to grant them boldness to speak his word, and to perform signs and wonders. Their first response to a real threat was not complaint, not political maneuvering and not retreat. It was bold intercessory prayer, asking God to work through them for the good of others.

ENGAGE WITH GOD IN A GROUP

- When you think about the different types of prayer, thanksgiving, confession, praise and petition, which comes most naturally to you, and which is hardest?

- Michael defined intercessory prayer as speaking to God on behalf of others in the circumstances they face. Who has interceded for you in a season of harvest or a season of famine, and what did that mean to you?
- The believers in Acts 4 called on God as the one who creates, reveals, remains and enables. Which of those four names for God do you find easiest to pray from, and which do you need to lean on more right now?
- Instead of asking God to remove their threat, the believers asked for boldness to keep speaking. Why do you think that was their instinct, and what would it look like for you to pray that way?
- Michael said we often pray with our tail between our legs instead of praying with boldness. Where in your life right now do you need to pray a bolder, more intercessory prayer for someone else?
- This week, who is one person you could specifically intercede for, naming their season of harvest or famine before God?
- Intercessory prayer is expectant. What would change in your prayer life if you prayed expecting God to actually move on behalf of the people you are praying for?

BOTTOM LINE

Intercessory prayer is bold because it fixes our eyes on God's Kingdom and not our circumstances.