**Bold Prayers (Acts 4:23-31)**

 In the face of difficulties, praying boldly is the best answer.

 Greetings dear brothers and sisters in the Christ, as we continue today looking at the Christian life through the lens of the early years of the Christian Church.

 However, before moving onto our topic, I just wanted to wish all fathers a happy and blessed Fathers’ Day. God has given us the blessing of fatherhood both to do His will and raise up children as well as to know His fatherliness well and to express that in our role as fathers on this earth. May the Lord bless all fathers today.

 As I said, today’s passage is an encouragement to us because we find in it prayers that can enrich our spiritual lives. Therefore, today we’re going to see what kind of prayers need to be said when we find ourselves against the pressures of the anti-Christian world. Once again, I believe the Word of God is saying to us that praying boldly is the best answer in the face of difficulties. Let us speak, then about this important aspect of our faith-walk…

 The world is going to oppose your faith – but your response is to be found in prayer and the use of Scripture. See what atmosphere was affecting the people of God when the Apostles told the account of the trial against them. The Bible says, “when they heard, they lifted up their voices to God in unison”. The members of the church were united in their conviction and desire. They remembered God’s identity in the prayer – that He is the Creator and true Just Judge. They remembered God’s Words from the second Psalm. They saw that Word coming true in their situation with the resistance against them. They understood that the leaders of the Jewish nation were warring struggling against Jesus ultimately, and not against them primarily. All that, however, did not bring them down, but rather moved them and became a cause for more intense prayer to be lifted up to God. After having declared the above truths about God, they asked God to answer the adversaries’ threats and to give them grace both to speak boldly and to perform miracles in Jesus’ name. And God, as a confirmation of His acceptance of their prayers, literally shook the place and increased their boldness in proclaiming Christ.

 A medical missionary captured by bandits in China, informed that he was to be shot at a spot ten minutes' distance away, tells how a terrible fear and helplessness came over him at the thought of such a death so far away from his native country, from his friends and his family. But he had strength enough to pray. This was his prayer: "My Lord God, have mercy on me, and give me strength for this trial. Take away all fear, and if I have to die, let me die like a man."

Instantly, he said, his terrible fear began to disappear. By the time he had reached the gorge where he was to be shot, he felt perfectly calm and unafraid. At the last moment, however, the bandits relented and his life was spared. In the days which followed, full of danger and suffering, the memory of this experience was cherished more and more. "My own will had failed in the most critical moment of my life. But the knowledge that I could depend on a Power greater than my own, One that had not failed me in that crisis, sustained me in a wonderful way to the very end of my captivity. What ingratitude it would be in me not to proclaim this Power."

In the face of difficulty and danger, people resorted to prayer. Today, if you are facing difficulties or an immediate obstacle in your faith journey, go to God. Approach Him boldly, knowing that with God comes the victory in surprising and unimaginable ways. Let us ask Him to lift the fear off of us. Let us ask Him for wisdom to answer our opponents with Spirit inspired words. Let us God for supernatural miracles to be done in Jesus name. Let us ask Him to give us courage in standing against all deeds and words that oppose the good news of salvation in Jesus. And may the grace that God gives in those situations lead us to even deeper relationship with Him.

In a word: when persecution, opposition and enemy activity arise against God’s work of the Gospel of Christ, let our answer be bold prayer. There is no one more powerful, wiser, far-sighted or loving than God. May the Lord remind us to lift up honest and bold prayers before His throne, especially in moment of great difficulty and persecution. In the face of difficulties, praying boldly is the best answer.

Once again, happy Father’s Day, and may the Lord Bless You all. Amen.