

# **First Baptist Church Smiths Falls**

April 7, 2019 - Communion Sunday

**Scripture:** Acts 4:23-31 New International Version (NIV)

23 On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. 24 When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. “Sovereign Lord,” they said, “you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. 25 You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David: ““Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? 26 The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the Lord and against his anointed one.” 27 Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. 28 They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. 29 Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. 30 Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” 31 After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

**Congregational Prayer:** “Our Father”

Our Father, Which Art In Heaven, Hallowed Be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom Come. Thy Will Be Done, On Earth As It Is In Heaven. Give Us This Day, Our Daily Bread, And Forgive Us Our Trespases, As We Forgive Those Who Trespass Against Us. And Lead Us Not Into Temptation, But Deliver Us From Evil. For Thine Is The Kingdom, The Power And The Glory. Forever And Ever. Amen

**Message:**

"Prayer 13: Specific & Strategic Prayer: 1"

Introduction:

- In the American Football league of 1940 The Washington Redskins beat the Chicago Bears 7-3 just three weeks before the championship game. The Finale was between the same two teams,

and was to be played in Washington, so naturally the Redskins were favoured again to win over the Bears. But this time to Chicago Bears won by the score of 73-0. So what triggered such an unexpected and complete trouncing by the Bears? The answer is the ‘T’ formation. This was the first time in the history of the sport that a team featured a new strategic formation—having two players who could potentially run with the ball instead of just one. With this seemingly simple strategy the Chicago Bears easily won the championship..

- Since sports have opponents that have studied each other, should not our prayer life be strategic like that? It is time to take the next step in the journey of prayer: praying strategically. Today, let’s talk about strategic prayer, such as the strategic prayer we read about in Acts 4.

Part 1: Praying at a strategic time

- Is there a holier hour than some other in which to pray? Should you only pray in the morning, or only at night? Should you only pray on certain days of the week or only on the days when the

moon is in a set place? I am so glad to remind you that our awesome God is a chain breaker. Our incredible God is a remover of barriers. Our God wants you to come to Him every day, all day in prayer. Our God wants your life to be prayer to Him - all parts of your life. Our God is pleased to hear your voice. Our God wants to walk with you. Our God wants to talk with you. Our God wants to get close to you. All day. Every day.

- And while all that is true, God also loves undivided time. When I get to spend time with my wife, she does not want to compete with phones and televisions, and my own wandering mind. Linda really appreciates when I turn off the world so she can talk to me about what is important. All the more so, does our God.
- Can we make a commitment, here today, now, that we will schedule time for strategically coming to God in prayer? Time is like money: you only have so much to use, and when your time is gone, that is it. If you fill your day with everything else and do not carve out some time to stop and pray, strategic time for just you and the Lord, you will have a full but meaningless day. If you

determine that you will take the time to stop and pray, you will find your life to be all the richer.

- Susanna Wesley was the mother of 19 children, and when she stopped to pray, everyone knew it. She would sit in her rocking chair, and pull her apron over her head for a few moments. It was strategic as she came to her Lord. And Lord help the child who interrupted this special time!
- Pick a time. Pick a place. Just stop and regularly, strategically, pray.

#### Part 2: Praying when under temptation

- Genesis 4:7 says: *“If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it.”*

Strategic prayer, says Genesis 4, is to choose to do what is right and then you will be accepted. If not, sin is couching at your door, ready to pounce on you. Therefore if we stay walking in prayer, we will keep temptation and sin at bay. If we stop walking close to the God of life and peace and hope, that crouching sin pounces and

starts to destroy us.

- Do you want to know how to stop temptation from getting the better of you? The answer is to plan now, when your life is quiet and temptation is not trying to overtake you, to be strategically ready with a prayer to God. When you want to fall into an old habit, be strategically ready to send Satan away with a prayer of power to restore your soul. When you just about to get overwhelmed by the world, or a friend is going to lead you astray, or you are going to walk into a place that will lead to sorrow and despair, have a plan strategically ready today to pray: “Lord, I am tempted and about to fall away. Take this burning desire from me, and replace it with your peace. Teach me to walk aright, more by faith, and less by sight as I turn my back on satan and his lies, and turn back You and the warmth of Your lovingkindness.” Have a strategic prayer ready for temptation.

Part 3: Praying for your community, home, your governments, your life: 7 Days of prayer

- Day 1 – Pray for the Church of Jesus Christ, for the staff and

leaders, for the buildings and the people. Most of you do this, but can I challenge you all to pray for all the pastors and Church leaders in Smiths Falls and area? Would you please pray for the deacons, the elders, the chairs of our committees and the people who sit on our boards and lead our groups. Pray that all will be holy, passionate, and evangelistic. Pray for their health. Pray for Satan to leave them alone in the name of Jesus.

- Day 2 – Pray for The Church’s teachers and small group leaders. Our children’s groups leaders, our mid-week teachers, our leaders who serve at the mission, or visit or send gifts to the needy. Ask God to give these Church leaders, here, and around the world, a caring heart, a teaching ability, and a prayerful spirit. Pray they will willingly reproduce themselves and multiply their groups. Pray that the Lord will continue to raise up Christian leaders and teachers to strengthen the kingdom of God, and grow faith in His beloved children.
- Day 3 – Pray for the children in our Churches and communities. Pray that The Church will give our children a grounding in the

gospel so that they will always think about Christian faithfulness when confronted with the world's options. Ask God to raise up a next generation of Bible-believing, faith-walking, gospel-talking, missionaries from our children. Pray for this area's teachers, the bus operators, the administration staff, the custodial staff at the schools. Pray too that the Christian students and teachers will not be muzzled or shamed into submission.

- Day 4 – Pray for this community. Pray for leaders in local government, for the provincial leaders, for the federal leaders. Pray for their safety and for their hearts and minds and souls to be governed by the Lord, Jesus Christ, and by Him alone.
- Day 5 – Pray for the couples in our Church, and the churches of Smiths Falls and area. Lift them up by name, and pray for their marriages. Pray that each husband will love his wife as Christ loves the Church (Eph. 5:25). Intercede especially for those couples you know are struggling.
- Day 6 – Pray that The Church, here and the churches of the world, will proclaim the message of the Good News of Jesus Christ. Ask

God to give to His Church and to His leaders boldness in sharing the Gospel. Pray for the Church service next week. Pray that we will preach the message of life to this community with clarity. Pray that Christ's Church will be able to be ready to hear and respond to the needs of people in this community, especially in bringing the truth of Christ Jesus our Lord to needy souls, here and in the world. Pray for yourself to have a thirst for sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ that will spark an awakening.

- Day 7 – Pray for new believers in Christ's Church. Pray for new Christians to flood into churches in Canada and around the world. Ask the Lord to raise up disciples for them. Pray a hedge of protection around those who are new to the faith, that Satan will not try to snatch them, or discourage them, but that they will be strong and grounded in their faith, ready to serve the Living God.
- These 7 days of strategic pray will make a big difference to you and to this Church, but most importantly to the kingdom of God

Conclusion:

- Reread the strategic prayer of Acts 4, and remember that Satan is

out to get us, but like the strategy of football, let's be ready.