

February 1st, 2026

Sermon: Acts: A Church Is Born | The Praying Church

Main text: Acts 4:23-31

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION REFLECTIONS & QUESTIONS...

Key Reflections:

- Re-center your allegiance: Reflect on whether your thinking is shaped more by culture/algorithms or by Scripture and prayer.
- Practice communal prayer: Commit to praying together as a group when challenges arise rather than reacting individually.

Barmen Declaration:

The only source of revelation is the word of God-Jesus Christ alone is God's Word: The Church must listen to and obey Jesus Christ, as revealed in Scripture, and not earthly powers or authorities.

Jesus Christ is Lord of all aspects of life- there is no other sources of ultimate authority: The Church must not accept political leaders, ideologies, or cultural trends as equal to or above God's Word.

Church and State have different roles:

The state should not fulfill the task of the church. The state is responsible for justice and peace in the world, but it must not control or dominate the Church. The Church must not become an arm of the state. The Church must not serve political goals or promote propaganda; its loyalty is to Christ, not government.

Rejection of false teaching.

The Declaration explicitly rejects (1) the idea that the Church can be shaped or ruled by Nazi ideology or any state system. (2) The subordination of the word and the Spirit to the church.

Key Quotes from the Message:

The Holy Spirit Empowers the Church's Mission

When the Spirit filled the church, the result was not hype or spectacle, but:

- Boldness instead of fear
- Clarity about Jesus instead of confusion
- Love and generosity instead of self-interest
- Power to witness instead of power to control
- Community transformation, not just personal experience

The church exists to proclaim Jesus not to advance political agendas or align with earthly power. Jesus alone is the authority and centerpiece of the church.

Key Questions to Discuss:

1). How do you typically respond when your faith feels pressured or challenged?

2). What stands out to you about how the early church responded?

3). Why do you think the church asked for boldness rather than protection?

What does that reveal about their priorities?

4). In what ways are we being shaped more by culture or algorithms than by Scripture and prayer?

How can we intentionally re-center our formation around Jesus?

5). Where do you personally need a fresh filling of the Holy Spirit right now?

What would boldness, clarity, or redemption look like in your current season?