

Sermon No. 410

CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH

The book of Acts

CHAPTER 19

Scripture Reading: 1 John 5:1-13

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LAST WEEK IN ACTS 18

- Paul at Corinth
- Teaching the Word of GOD . . . 1 ½ years
- He met opposition . . . he was encouraged by GOD

18:9 “Don’t be afraid! Speak out! Don’t be silent! 10 For I am with you, and no one will attack and harm you, for many people in this city belong to me.”

- Eventually the second missionary journey ends

FOCUS: On those who joined Paul

- Aquila and Priscilla . . . Apollos
- GOD gives us the same opportunities to serve Him
- We think we are working for Him
- But in fact we are working alongside Him!
- We cannot accomplish anything without Him
- Imagine JESUS wanting us to partner with Him!
- Spurgeon called this ‘wonderful condescension’

Acts 19 . . . the third missionary journey

(1-7) Paul finds some disciples who had not yet received the Holy Spirit!

NKJV ¹ And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples ² he said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” So they said to him, “We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.” ³ And he said to them, “Into what then were you baptized?” So they said, “Into John’s baptism.”

- **I don’t think this is Paul’s habit!**
 - Something prompted him to ask the question!
 - ³ “Then what baptism did you experience?”
- **If they only knew the baptism of John**
 - They wouldn’t know about Christ’s promise to send the Holy Spirit
 - They wouldn’t know that baptism is a sign of new Life in Christ
- **That doesn’t mean they weren’t saved**
 - Even though ignorant of the full truth . . . without the Holy Spirit
 - They were disciples . . . knowing enough to be saved!
- **Paul had a wonderful opportunity to share with them**
- **Look at how supportive and encouraging he**

⁴ Then Paul said, “John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.” ⁵ When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶ And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. ⁷ Now the men were about twelve in all.

- **When Paul laid hands on them they received the Holy Spirit**
- **That resulted in outward visible signs of the Holy Spirits presence**
- **This is a misunderstood passage**
 - Some dismissed these events
 - Some try to duplicate them

- But just as it was at Pentecost . . . these sign gifts were temporary
- They were given for the benefit of other believers . . . to verify unity in CHRIST
- Remember this issue is not the central theme of the book of Acts

(8-10) Paul ministers Christ in the city of Ephesus

⁸ And he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of GOD. ⁹ But when some were hardened and did not believe, but spoke evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them and withdrew the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. ¹⁰ And this continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

- The Word of GOD was going out from Ephesus . . . not by internet or social media

¹¹ Now GOD worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul, ¹² so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them.

- Note it says 'unusual' miracles . . . not the 'normal' miracles GOD worked
 - GOD is full of surprises
 - HE healed with the shadow of Peter (Acts 5:15)
 - HE healed with the hem of Jesus' garment (Matthew 14:36)
- Don't be afraid of the 'unusual' . . . if it can be proven to be from GOD
 - Just don't build your lives on seeking the 'unusual'
 - We build our lives around that which we have a Biblical pattern for

(13-20) Some itinerant Jewish exorcists try to imitate what they thought was Paul's formula for success

¹³ Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists took it upon themselves to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "We exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches." ¹⁴ Also there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so.

- They were obviously impressed by the power Paul had

¹⁵ And the evil spirit answered and said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?"

- These men failed because . . .
 - a. No one can duplicate the power of GOD
 - b. It is futile to call on the name of Jesus without a personal relationship with Him
- So many claim to believe in GOD but have no personal relationship with Jesus Christ
- It isn't good enough to know "the Jesus someone else has a relationship with"

¹⁶ Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. ¹⁷ This became known both to all Jews and Greeks dwelling in Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. ¹⁸ And many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds. ¹⁹ Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned *them* in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and *it* totaled fifty thousand *pieces* of silver. ²⁰ So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.

- Took everything that was evil and burned it!
- A pattern for us . . . that we remove books, images, computer files, statues, charms, games, or whatever else might have connection with demonic spirits

Spurgeon

"You will have enough temptation in your own mind without going after these things. Is there any habit, any practice, that you have got that defiles your soul? If Christ loves you, and you come and trust in him, you will make short work of it. Have done with it, and have done with it forever"

- As a result, the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified
- Many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds

Critical lessons for us

- Key message GOD has for us is in 19:20

“So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed”

- But when does this happen?
 1. When we **confirm our faith** (1-10)
 2. When we **confess our sins** (11-20)
 3. When we **confront the enemy** (21-41)

1. The Word of GOD will grow and prevail when . . . we confirm our faith

- When we believed in Jesus Christ, we received the gift of the Holy Spirit

Acts 10:43-48; Romans 8:9

- We are not like the men Paul confronted . . . we have the Holy Spirit

But the lesson for us here is this

- Paul perceived the men lacked something in their walk with CHRIST
- The most noticeable thing . . . was the absence of the Holy Spirit!

Q. What if someone were to look at us . . . would there be a conspicuous absence of the Person and Power of the Holy Spirit?

Spurgeon

“Have ye then received the Spirit since you believed? Beloved, are you now receiving the Spirit? Are you living under his divine influence? Are you filled with his power? Put the question personally. I am afraid some professors will have to admit that they hardly know whether there be any Holy Ghost; and others will have to confess that though they have enjoyed a little of His saving work, yet they do not know much of His ennobling and sanctifying influence.”

GOD always wants us to go deeper . . . but there is a problem!

- We sip where we could drink deeply
 - We drink deeply where we could wade in
 - We wade in where we could plunge in and swim
- This isn't something to *hope* about; we can *know* it; and we can *embrace* it

Spurgeon

"If you have the Holy Spirit, you should know it. Give a man an electric shock, and I warrant you he will know it; but if he has the Holy Ghost, he will know it much more."

Bottom line

- Paul couldn't build a church on people with a spiritual deficiency
- Seek to share our faith in the power of the Holy Spirit (1:8)
- If we will do that . . . the Word of GOD increases

2. The Word of GOD will grow and prevail when . . . we confess our sins (11-20)

- GOD used the exorcist incident for good
- The believers became convicted about sin
- They became convicted about the need to repent
- They even confessed secret or hidden sins . . . Ephesus was a center for black magic

Bottom line

- And they didn't just confess their sins

¹⁷ . . . A solemn fear descended on the city, and the name of the Lord Jesus was greatly honored. ¹⁸ Many who became believers confessed their sinful practices. ¹⁹ A number of them who had been practicing sorcery brought their incantation books and burned them at a public bonfire

- That is MATURITY . . . they could have made a lot of money
- Not wanting others getting caught up in the same things
- With that the Word of GOD grew mightily . . . it prevailed

3. The Word of GOD will grow and prevail when . . . we confront the enemy (21-41)

- There was a major riot in Ephesus while Paul was there
- The craftsmen who produced idols losing business because of Paul

- He was turning them away from idolatry
- One day the craftsmen's anger boiled over
- The other believers feared what the crowd might do to Paul
- It was finally settled down . . . no harm done

Bottom line

- Paul didn't openly attack their idolatry
- Paul didn't picket the shrine of Artemis
- Paul didn't organize rallies or stage sit ins
- Paul simply shared the Word of GOD
- And as the believers began to live out their faith . . . the Word of GOD prevailed
- Ironically the riot called attention to the GOSPEL

Again it comes back to us!

- How willing are we to **allow the Holy Spirit to work** to work through us?
- Jesus made it very clear that the Kingdom of GOD would be established and directed by the Holy Spirit
- Paul didn't try to orchestrate anything . . . he simply surrendered his life to the Holy Spirit and allowed Him to do the Lord's work through him
- That is the challenge for us
- Are we willing to enter fully into the baptism of the Jesus Christ?
- That is more than just having our bodies immersed
- That is willing to be filled by the Holy Spirit . . . which means we are more willing to . . .

- Sacrifice our time, energies, talents . . . for His purpose
- Would we be willing to lay aside our own agenda's . . . goals . . . to go where the Holy Spirit leads us to go . . . to say what He directs us to say . . . to do what He compels us to do?
- If you have the Holy Spirit, you should be on fire for the Lord!

Philippians 2:13

¹³ For GOD is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases Him

A *Application for Today*

"Watcha doin', Grandpa?" the little boy asked.

"Cleaning up this old lamp," Grandpa said as he polished the antique vessel in his hands.

"What for?" the boy asked.

"So I can fill it with this pure oil," Grandpa replied as he looked at the lamp closely, and then reached for a jug of oil nearby.

"What for?" the boy continued to ask.

"So I can put this wick in it and light it," said Grandpa, inserting a wick and then lighting it.

"What for?" the boy asked.

Grandpa carried the lighted lamp to a table nearby and then leaned over to look directly into the eyes of his young grandson and said: "You'll know the reason when it gets dark."

You are God's vessel in this world (2 Corinthians 4:7).

The oil of the Holy Spirit indwells you (Psalm 23:5; John 14:16–17).

Your purpose is to be Christ's light in a darkened world (Matthew 5:14–16).

Being a good, cleaned-up lamp isn't enough. Having oil in your lamp isn't enough. It takes being a lamp filled with oil and set afire with purpose, passion, and a proclamation of the gospel to change the world for Christ!

To what extent are you allowing your heavenly Father to prepare you for His service?