

Acts 19-20:16 **A GROWING MOVEMENT**

Revivals & Riots

Life Group Leaders should read through this material and choose a few questions to talk over in your group. Your group will not have time to cover all the material. The guide is for personal study and for choosing a few questions that you and your life group would like to discuss.

Read Aloud Acts 19:1-20

Before we break down this section of Scripture, describe what is happening in your own WORDS. (Being able to summarize Scripture is a great way to see if we are comprehending what we have just read.)

Acts 19:1-7

Remember Paul was at Ephesus in chapter 18 with his missionary team. Priscilla and Aquila stayed behind as Paul journeyed on. As they lingered, they ran into a powerful teacher named Apollos. Initially, Apollos was preaching the baptism of John and was not enlightened yet to the Gospel. Apollos was simply preaching the need to turn from sin and that the Messiah, who would save the world of its bondage was near. In his preaching, there were many who were convicted and took the step to be baptized as a symbol of their repentance, but they had not yet been born again. Being born again only happens as we trust in Jesus Christ as the Messiah, and He sends the Holy Spirit to regenerate our heart. This had not yet happened to these men whom Paul encounters.

We have seen speaking and tongues and prophecy as a sign that the Holy Spirit had been given. This is not THE sign, but it is a sign. When we receive the Holy Spirit, we are given a gift(s) of the Spirit to empower us in our ministry as well as the power of the Spirit to produce the fruits of the Spirit. Either way, there should be a sign that we have received the Spirit of God. This may be through supernatural gifts, through an obviously changed heart to love what God loves and hate what God hates, or the power to overcome sin.



Question: Do you remember a sign, or evidence, when you received the Holy Spirit upon believing in the Gospel?

Acts 19:8-10

1

After his first evangelism effort, Paul went back to his usual process, evangelizing at the Synagogue. Notice that as Paul shared the Gospel with the Jews, he specifically reasoned concerning the "Kingdom of God." The Jews were not waiting for a Messiah who would give them fire insurance or a free ticket to heaven. The Jews were waiting for a Messiah who would establish God's Kingdom on earth. In this they were right! Jesus does not promise us to live in the skies someday but rather to rule and reign with Him in a new heaven and a new earth.



Question: How would you explain the Kingdom of God to someone? This phrase as well as the kingdom of heaven is used over 110 times in the Bible! If you have a hard time answering this question, do a word study on Logos or Blue Letter Bible to better understand the Kingdom of God. You can take it a step further and look up the Old Testament cross-references and prophecies of the Kingdom of God.





Nothing was different in Ephesus. The Jews rejected the Gospel, and the Gentiles were hungry. God provided a place to preach the Gospel in the hall of Tyrannus. Not much is known about Tyrannus. His name means “prince” in Greek, and most scholars believe that he was a teacher or philosopher.

Paul was hard at work in Ephesus, teaching, preaching, and discipling daily. God opened a door for Paul to stay in Ephesus for three years, his longest stay at any church during his missionary journeys. This church would develop into a major hub of Christianity. It would have one of the most prominent leaders of the time, as Paul would send Timothy to help oversee Ephesus and the surrounding churches.

Acts 19:11-20

Notice how the miracles were being done. They were not done through the power of Paul, or even by his great faith. Rather the ESV version reads, “God was doing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul.” Paul had a gift and great faith, but it was God who empowered the ministry. It is important that we do not view our gifts as super powers that we wield, but rather empty vessels that God can fill as He sees fit.

The sons of Sceva saw and heard of the ministry of Paul, and they sought to wield power on their own. They know about God and about ministry. They had even experienced it, but they themselves were not walking with Christ. They were possibly able to fool others and maybe themselves, but they could not fool the demons and the forces of evil. Beware! You can fool people, but the spiritual realm cannot be fooled, and our charades will catch up with us eventually.



God used the forces of Satan against him. As people saw the difference between Paul and the Jewish people, they were converted. They saw that the demons had power over the sons of Sceva yet did not have power over the Apostle of Jesus Christ.



Question: Knowing the right things to say is not what gives us power over sin and the devil. It is faith in Christ and walking in an intimate relationship with Him that gives us power over the enemy. Do you ever find yourself looking for power in the “things and rhetoric of God” rather than God Himself? Explain.

Read Aloud Acts 19:21-20:16

Describe what is happening in your own words.

Acts 19:21-22

Here is another great picture of the teamwork of the early Church. The Apostles disciplined apostolic leaders who could travel to the various churches and expand the ministry without them. The early church did not revolve around superstar leaders, but rather was fueled by the reproductive work of evangelism and discipleship.


Acts 19:23-34

The ministry had been extremely successful in Ephesus, but eventually the resistance grew stronger. Notice that the resistance was based on a couple main points:



First, their business and trade was declining. In other words the city turning from sin to righteousness was hurting their wallets. This has been a recurring theme throughout history. Perhaps William Booth and the start of the Salvation Army is one of the best examples in more recent history. The bars and prostitute dens began going out of business as their customers were born again.

What a blessing it would be to see the businesses that profit from sin begin to go out of business in western Nebraska due to the spread of the Gospel!

 Second, their idols were challenged. People may not worship statues as often in today's society, however we have the idols of money, popularity, pleasure, entertainment, and the list goes on. When idols are challenged, the gloves go on and the world fights back.

The true Gospel confronts idolatry and makes the idols of this life look like nothing in comparison with the One True Living God. Be ready for a spiritual battle as you confront the idolatry of the world with the Gospel.



Question: What idols did you have to take down as you placed your faith in Christ?

Acts 19:35-20:6

1

The crowd and riot was stopped not by Christians but rather by a Pagan government. God uses governments, godly or not, to reinstate order. Romans 13 discusses this point. This is not the first time or the last that worldly government protected Paul and his missionary team. Now we know it did not always work that way, but this is a good passage to acknowledge the purpose of the government in bringing order.

It is interesting to note that the town clerk's reasoning is not good or true. Yet God used his ignorance to accomplish His purpose and protect His people.

2

Even after moving on from Ephesus, Paul continued to experience persecution and resistance. Yet this never stopped him. Paul was a man on mission, seeking to bear fruit in season and out of season.



Question: Read Psalm 1, how can we ensure that we can bear fruit in both good and difficult seasons of life?

Acts 20:7-16

What a strange story! A few things we can note from Eutychus's death and resurrection.

A

First, bad things can happen while we are serving God! Perhaps this is a warning not to preach too long... or even more so, not to burn people out! Although these points are not explicitly clear, it is worth considering. When we are on fire to serve God, that does not mean we are invincible or beyond tragedy. We must continue to live in wisdom and humility.

B

Second, in the midst of tragedy, God can bring life. God demonstrates His power and love towards the church in bringing this young man back to life. We must be vigilant in prayer and hopeful for God's miraculous power. Although God does not promise healing every time, we can still have faith according to His steadfast love and promises.

The church was greatly encouraged by God's miraculous provision, and Paul continued on with his mission. The church did not tie God's faithfulness and mission to Paul. They were able to continue the mission without him, so that Paul could continue to walk in his own calling.



Question: Do you find yourself remaining hopeful for God's miraculous intervention in the midst of tragedy?

Weekly Challenge

During our study today we read Psalm 1. This is more than a weekly challenge, but consider memorizing this section of Scripture over the next twelve weeks. That is one verse every two weeks. You can do it! Scripture memorization is powerful, and this Scripture is a great reminder of how we can remain steadfast during the ups and downs of life.

Memory Verse

Acts 14:21-23 ESV

²¹ When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, ²² strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God. ²³ And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.