

"The Third Missionary Journey"

Part 5

Acts 18:23-21:26

Introduction: Tonight, as we come back to Acts, we are again going to follow Paul as he ministers to the people of Ephesus. Last week in our study we watched as God did special miracles. God worked with the handkerchiefs and the aprons which Paul wore while he was working and as these items came in touch with people they were healed of diseases and demons came out of them.

Notice Acts 19:11-12

These miracles then got the attention of a group of Jews who were exorcists. Luke tells us that they made the choice to use the name of Jesus. Luke then focuses upon seven sons of Sceva who made the choice to call upon the name of Jesus to cast out demons, but it did not work.

Notice Acts 19:13-16

These men were fortunate to escape with their lives. One lesson in this is that the power of the demonic world is far greater than people can imagine.

Mark 5:1-4

And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes.

² *And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit,*

³ *Who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains:*

⁴ *Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him.*

Matthew 8:28

²⁸ *And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way.*

➤ **The Revival at Ephesus**

Notice Acts 19:17

Through the miracles of Paul and through the testimony of the church the name of Jesus Christ was magnified. This is the key to what is about to happen. This was the result of the church living for the Lord as they were surrendered over to the Spirit. This then allowed the Holy Spirit to manifest the power of God in the lives of the believers. Let us notice the results.

Notice Acts 19:18-20

As the name of Jesus was magnified this then brought about repentance and salvation in the lives of many. In verse 19 we see just how serious these people were. Some believe the cost of the books would have been comparable to 5 million dollars. Back then books were very expensive because there were no printing presses. Everything was handwritten and it was very costly. There are two important points to see in these verses.

1. This is what true repentance looks like.

2 Peter 3:8-10

⁸ But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

⁹ The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

When someone comes under the conviction of the Holy Spirit and they come to Jesus Christ for salvation they will want to walk away from the old life because they realize it was sinful and offensive to God. That is what is happening here. It is rare today that you hear much about repentance. In many churches today it is taught that the way of salvation is by reciting a prayer. They tell people to just pray and ask Jesus to come into your heart. They will often use Revelation 3:20.

Revelation 3:14-16, 19-20

¹⁴ And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;

¹⁵ I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.

¹⁶ So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

¹⁹ As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

²⁰ Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

Verse 20 here is often used for salvation, but the Truth is, this verse has nothing to do with salvation. This is an invitation to those who are already believers to let Jesus back into the church for He had been pushed out because of their love for the world. This is about fellowship, not salvation.

Acts 2:37-38

³⁷ Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?

³⁸ Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

The command to be baptized here is calling on them to prove that their repentance and faith is sincere. Getting back to Ephesus, these people who came and burned their books were serious about salvation. They were finished with their magic and witchcraft. They wanted what Jesus had to offer.

2. These people saw the power of God in the church.

The church at Ephesus was living in the power of the Spirit and this then allowed the power of God to show in their lives. As the unsaved watched they realized that the church had something that all their magic and paranormal practices could not provide. This is what God used to grasp the attention of these people who came and burned their books.

Application:

This is what is lacking in the church today. Instead of the church living in the power of the Spirit so that the power of God can be seen by the world, the church is living with a foot in the world and is powerless. So, what they do in an attempt to reach the world is that they change their worship style to appeal to the world. They change music, and Bible versions, they set up coffee and donut bars, they resort to different gimmicks to pull the world in and this is all wrong. Do you see what is supposed to happen in our text here in Acts 19? The church is to walk in the Spirit so that the world can see the power of God which can give them what this world can never offer.

Romans 8:13-14

¹³ *For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die(have no power): but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live(show forth the power of God).*

¹⁴ *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*

The world does not need donuts, they do not need a contemporary style of music, they do not need the church to be more like the world. The world needs to see the power of God in our lives to show them that Jesus can do for them what the world's system can never do. Churches turn to many gimmicks and attempt to justify what they do by pointing to the people who come in. But let us never forget what we learned from Saul and that is the end does not justify the means.

1 Samuel 15:

¹⁵ *And Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites: for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed.*

²⁰ *And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and have gone the way which the LORD sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites.*

²¹ *But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God in Gilgal.*

²² *And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.*

²³ For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king.

Let me show you another situation.

2 Samuel 6:2-6

² And David arose, and went with all the people that were with him from Baale of Judah, to bring up from thence the ark of God, whose name is called by the name of the LORD of hosts that dwelleth between the cherubims.

³ And they set the ark of God upon a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab that was in Gibeah: and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drave the new cart.

⁴ And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab which was at Gibeah, accompanying the ark of God: and Ahio went before the ark.

⁵ And David and all the house of Israel played before the LORD on all manner of instruments made of fir wood, even on harps, and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals.

⁶ And when they came to Nachon's threshingfloor, Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook it.

To bring the ark to Jerusalem was the right thing to do but David and the men did not follow God's directions for moving the ark and Uzzah died. The end did not justify the means.

How is the church supposed to reach the world? By living in the power of the Spirit so that the power of God will be manifest in our lives.

Notice Acts 19:21

Luke now tells us about Paul's plans. Paul's plans are to eventually get to Rome. Why do we need to know this? Luke is preparing us for what will take place in his letter after Acts 19:41 for then he will pick back up with Paul's travels and eventually follow Paul to Rome. Paul desired to go to Rome as a preacher but went as a prisoner. This would bring fulfillment to God's Words concerning Paul.

Acts 9:15

*¹⁵ But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, **and kings**, and the children of Israel:*

Paul will not complain about going to Rome as a prisoner.

Philippians 1:12-18

¹² But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel;

¹³ So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places:

¹⁴ And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

¹⁵ Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will:

¹⁶ The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds:

¹⁷ But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel.

¹⁸ What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.

Conclusion:

Sometimes God changes our plans and when He does it is for us to accept them and watch for opportunities to glorify Him.