

SERMON NOTES: Week 7, May 15, 2016

FROM THIS DAY FORWARD . . .

“Power”

QUESTION: How are we to accomplish great things for God in this world?

ACTS 19:1,¹ While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at **Ephesus**.

Ephesus: a great city at the hub of the trade routes of the world, full of culture and money and temples and politics and soldiers and merchants and slaves. And power. Everything we know about Ephesus indicates that it was a place where not only social and civic power, but also religious and spiritual power, were concentrated.¹

1 Corinthians 2:4–5,⁴ My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power,⁵ so that your faith might not rest on men’s wisdom, but on God’s power.

ACTS 19:1–7, . . . There he found some disciples² and asked them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” They answered, “No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.”³ So Paul asked, “Then what baptism did you receive?” “John’s baptism,” they replied.⁴ Paul said, “John’s baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus.”⁵ On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus.⁶ When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.⁷ There were about twelve men in all.

The Spirit’s power, contained in the Gospel, **transforms lives**

¹ Wright, T. (2008). *Acts for Everyone, Part 2: Chapters 13-28* (p. 113). London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

John's baptism: repentance

Jesus' baptism: Identity with the Triune God

Acts 19:13–16,¹³ Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, “In the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out.”¹⁴ Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this.¹⁵ One day the evil spirit answered them, “Jesus I know, and I know about Paul, but who are you?”¹⁶ Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding.

The Spirit's power, contained in the Gospel, exposes all counterfeits

Acts 19:35–37,³⁵ The city clerk quieted the crowd and said: “Men of Ephesus, doesn't all the world know that the city of Ephesus is the guardian of the temple of the great Artemis and of her image, which fell from heaven?³⁶ Therefore, since these facts are undeniable, you ought to be quiet and not do anything rash.³⁷ You have brought these men here, though they have neither robbed temples nor blasphemed our goddess.

The Spirit's power, contained in the Gospel, affects culture

2 Corinthians 1:8–9,⁸ We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life.⁹ Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead.

The Spirit's power, contained in the Gospel, will sustain us

Connect Group Discussion Guide – May 15th, 2016

OPENING

What is your day-to-day relationship with the Holy Spirit like?

GOING DEEPER

1. Read Acts 19:1-7. What was the difference between the baptism of John and the baptism of Jesus (cf. Mark 3:2-12)?

Leader's Guide:

1. ***The Baptism of John*** – *“Paul’s statement in v. 4 is the critical point. John’s baptism was a baptism of repentance, preparatory to the coming of the Messiah. John’s entire role as forerunner was to prepare the people for the Messiah’s coming. The Messiah had indeed come, and he is Jesus. Thus, to be a true disciple of John was to confess Jesus, for he is the one whom John had heralded. The real deficiency of these twelve or so was not their baptism. It was much more serious. They failed to recognize Jesus as the one whom John had proclaimed, as the promised Messiah.”*²
2. ***The Baptism of Jesus*** – *We at Bethany believe that baptism is a public proclamation of one’s inward acceptance of Jesus as Savior (Messiah). In John 19, John the Baptist had prepared these disciples well and “they immediately*

²John B. Polhill, *Acts*, vol. 26, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 399.

responded to Paul's good news that Christ the Messiah had come; they were baptized in his name (v. 5).³

2. What was the purpose of these men speaking in tongues after receiving the Holy Spirit (cf. 1 Cor. 14:22)?

Leader's Guide:

- *These disciples of John the Baptist, when receiving Christ as Savior and being baptized, spoke in "tongues" or a foreign language (cf. Acts 2). Stanley Toussaint in The Bible Knowledge Commentary makes observes: "The subject of tongues in Acts confirms Paul's statement that tongues "are a sign ... for unbelievers" (cf. comments on 1 Cor. 14:22). The purpose of tongues was to overcome unbelief."⁴ These men spoke in tongues as a sign to unbelievers in the city of Ephesus of their salvation.*

Should the book of Acts be used as a doctrinal source on how one receives the Holy Spirit? Should we or should we not expect a new believer today to also speak in tongues?

³Ibid., pgs. 399–400.

⁴ Stanley D. Toussaint, "Acts," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 409.

Leader's Guide:

- *Many theologians believe that the book of Acts should not be the primary doctrinal source for one's doctrine on the Holy Spirit for a variety of reasons:*
 1. *Acts is a transitional book found within it the formation of the Church and the spread of the Gospel to the Gentiles.*
 2. *Reception of the Holy Spirit in Acts does not follow any set pattern. He came into believers before baptism (Acts 10:44), at the time of or after baptism (8:12-16; 19:6), and by the laying on of apostolic hands (8:17; 19:6). The majority of believers in Acts do not speak in tongues once they receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. This fact is interesting because Paul declared (Romans 8:9) that anyone without the Holy Spirit is not a Christian. Therefore, speaking in tongues cannot be a required sign of one's salvation for every believer because not every believe speaks in tongues.*

 - *Speaking in tongues have been a very debated topic within the Church during the 20th century. The below link I believe gives a very fair treatment of speaking in tongues in the New Testament: <https://www.qci.org/bible/tonques1>.*
3. Read Acts 19:8-12. For two years Paul discussed daily the word of God with his disciples in the school of Tyrannus (this is discipleship in action). What happened as a result? Did *all* the Jews and Gentiles who lived in the province of Asia really hear the word of the Lord as this time? What did Luke mean here by the term *all*?

Leader's Guide:

- *The meaning of “all” in Scripture is always determined by the context of which it is found, and rarely means, “all without any kind of limitation.” Luke was not literally meaning that all of the Jews in Asia, without any kind of limitation, heard the word of the Lord, for Luke would not have the evidence to make such a claim. A better explanation would be that “all” is a simple a hyperbolic use (exaggerated statement or claim not to be used literally) of a word to refer to “many of the Jews in Asia.”*

Have you ever devoted yourself to a time of Bible study, whether discipling others or being disciplined yourself? What do you believe would happen within Bethany and within our local communities if we all likewise, devoted ourselves to discipleship?

4. Why did God perform through Paul such extraordinary miracles in Ephesus? Why were such miracles not recorded in every city during Paul's missionary journeys? What was the primary purpose for these miracles?

Leader's Guide:

- *As with speaking in tongues, God used these miracles as a means of validating Paul's message.*

God does still work miracles on a daily basis today. However, very rarely do such miracles happen in such a dramatic fashion as seen with Paul in Ephesus. What do you believe would be some of the

advantages and disadvantages if God did performing miracles in a similar fashion today?

CHALLENGE

In Galatians 5 we are called by God to “live by the Spirit of God.” This week, read through Galatians 5:16-26 and list out in two separate columns the desires of our sinful nature (our flesh) and the fruit of the Spirit. Circle those sinful desires that you struggle with on a regular basis and those fruit of the Spirit that are lacking in your life. Pray over this list daily during your regular prayer time this week.

Read Acts 20 in preparation for next week.