

Missio Dei Fellowship exists to glorify God by delighting in Him and making Him known through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Gospel Confronts Satan, Pt 2

Acts 19:11-20

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PowerPoint Presentation included: none

SermonAudio Blurb: Paul is now in the beginning stages of his third missionary journey and finds himself in the city of Ephesus. Here we see him come face-to-face with the forces of Satan as the gospel is preached, people believe and there is a demonic push back. In all of this, we see the attempts to mimic the power of Christ in the gospel by those who are not believers. We see the material cost to repenting from false practices and we see how the gospel creates tension and hatred from those who refuse to bow in faith to Jesus Christ.

I. Introduction.

- A. Read 19:11-20.
- B. Review:
 - 1. First sermon we saw that Paul was now in his third missionary journey.
 - a. Primarily he is visiting churches that he had started in earlier journeys, seeking to help them become strong and healthy.
 - b. But sandwiched between all of those churches, he stops in the city of Ephesus (put map up) for three years.
 - c. This is a new city and a critical one for reaching the surrounding area for the gospel. We learned the background of this city two weeks ago and I recommend you listen to it if you have not done so already.
 - 2. The next thing we considered together was the reality of demonic activity.
 - a. I described it as the other half of reality that is often overlooked by Christians.
 - b. To ignore this fact is to then descend into a mechanistic, purposeless and powerless form of Christianity.
 - 3. From there, we were reminded how every part of life of Jesus involved confronting, overcoming, and reversing the effects of Satan and sin in the life of those who love and follow Jesus.
 - a. Jesus, through the incarnation, entered into this fallen, sinful world. But without sin.

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- b. At the outset of His public ministry Satan himself sought to bring Jesus down through sinning.
 - c. We have the three enemies we cannot defeat, sin, Satan and death. Throughout His ministry He calmly and easily overturned those powers.
 - d. We saw Him on the cross where He took the place of all who were His. He bore our sin and took upon Himself the sentence of death that belonged to us.
 - e. And then, three days later, He break forth from the tomb, shedding death like one would shed a dirty cloak. And in doing so He secured the eternal life of all who love and place their trust in Him alone.
- 4. Satan did not rejoice when Jesus died, for in that death, His judgment was made certain.
 - a. What we see from the point of the ascension of Jesus to sit at the right hand of His Father to now is the Church pushing back against the kingdom of Satan.
 - b. Romans 16:18, we find Paul declaring to the Roman believers that, “*The God of peace will soon crush Satan your feet.*” And we still confidently wait for that day.
- C. And here in Ephesus we are privileged to see a wonderful and rather eye-opening series of events that show this battle between the kingdom of Satan and the Kingdom of God.

II. The Gospel confronts Satan.

- A. God pushing back the effects of sin and Satan (11-12)
 - 1. First, the term “miracle” is something that can create some poor thinking on our part. Often we think of it in the sense of something that is supernatural or outside what is natural.
 - a. Our power, or, to say it slightly differently, our abilities are limited.
 - b. For some, the capabilities are greater than others.
 - c. But none of these measure up to the omnipotence of God.
 - (1) In the Old Testament we see the power of God expressed in various ways.

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- (2) Deuteronomy 9:26, *“And [Moses] prayed to Yahweh and said, ‘O Lord Yahweh, do not destroy Your people, even Your inheritance, whom You have redeemed through Your greatness, whom You have brought out of Egypt with a strong hand.’”*
 - (3) All of those plagues were expressions of the mighty hand of God. So YHWH spoke to Pharaoh in Exodus 9:16, *“But, indeed, for this reason I have caused you to stand, in order to show you My power and in order to recount My name through all the earth.”*
- d. And that is what we have here in Acts 19. We use the word “miracle” but it is simply small expression of God’s power, God’s ability.
- 2. But even in the world of acts of power by God, these acts were unique.
 - a. “Extraordinary” is a good way to describe what was happening in Ephesus.
 - (1) There are ways God’s power and sovereign will are seen in the day-to-day events of life.
 - (2) But then you have moments in the course of history where momentous activities take place that goes beyond even a more normal miracle.
 - (a) Days of Moses.
 - (b) Days of Elijah and Elisha.
 - (c) The ministry of Christ (900 years after Elijah).
 - (d) And finally, the days of the Apostles.
 - b. We tend to use the word “supernatural” to describe that unseen part of creation, the spirit world, but that really is not as useful as one might think.
 - (1) These two realms are flowing together in the time line established by God. Furthermore, not only do they flow alongside one another, they actually intermix.
 - (2) What happens in one realm affects the other.
 - (a) 2 Kings 6

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- (b) 8-14, the city of Dothan is surrounded by the army of Aram.
- (c) 15-20 the perceived reality and what was really going on.
- (3) Daniel 10:1-20.

- c. So we have considered the idea of miracles as simply moments we see God's power demonstrated. And we have seen that what is happening here is one of those moments in human history where even the miraculous becomes even more miraculous.
- 3. Finally, we see in vs 11 that these extraordinary acts were taking place through Paul.
 - a. The emphasis is placed upon the God who did these miracles. And in the background we have Paul as the instrument.
 - b. So read it that way and keep that in your mind. And then consider the folly of what we see in events and conferences and churches in America.

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- c. Notice vs 12, for here we see how unique these miracles actually were.
 - (1) These cloths and aprons were likely things like the head bands tied around the head and the cloth tied around the waste to wipe your hands.
 - (2) And just like Paul was the instrument God worked through, so too these bits of cloth became the instrument through which the power of God was transferred.
 - (3) Note also the distinction between disease and demons in vs 12. Though some sicknesses can be the result of demonic work, not all are. Most are simply the harsh reality of living in a world under the dominion of sin.
 - (4) One of the things I point out in meeting with people about Jesus is how casual his acts of heal and casting out of demons are.
 - (5) And yet it is done in the simplest way possible. Paul is not there for the purpose of doing miracle services.
 - (6) I will talk more on this next time we gather, but right now I simply want you to see what is happening.
 - (a) We see the spiritual warfare as something out of the Lord of the Rings or some other fantasy, epic story.
 - (b) When in reality, some person takes a piece of cloth discarded by Paul, brings it to the person afflicted, and the oppression and affliction leave quietly.

III. Conclusion.

- A. We tend to want some big experience. When we talk about the power of God being manifested on earth, it tends to be rather epic in our minds.
- B. But the norm is the simple, quiet work of God through His chosen instruments.
 - 1. 1 Corinthians 1:11-17.
 - a. Then vs 18, “power of God.”
 - b. Then look at vss 19-22, this defines us more than we wish.
 - c. But what is our weapon of power? Vss 23-25.
 - d. Remember what you are, vss 26-28, this is Paul writing.

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- e. And most of all, remember why weakness is preferred over strength, vss 29-32.

Benediction

May the Father who chose you, the Son who bought you, and the Spirit who dwells in you, go before you in your darkness, stand beside you in your fears and hold you up in your sorrows until Jesus comes. Amen.