

Series: "Finishing What was Started"

C.R. 1-14-24

"A Spiritual Awakening"

**Text:** Acts 19: 8-20

**Intro:** The Apostle Paul is in Ephesus. An epicenter for demonic working. In his letter to the church in Ephesus, he would write in his letter to the Ephesians "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places".

As we continue chapter 19 we will watch God work through Paul and the forces of evil come face to face with the God of heaven. Today we will see a Spiritual Awakening in Ephesus and it happens in a radical way.

**1) Scriptural Education (v. 8-10)**

- a. As was Paul's custom he went to the synagogues and there he would teach and reason and persuade the people.
- b. Like many other cities that Paul had been in there would be a group who would come against him and his teaching.
- c. Paul made a business decision that he would rent a room from the school teacher Tyrannus (from the word tyrant) while everyone was at break during the day. Generally from 11-4 p.m
- d. So Paul would work in the morning, teach in the afternoon, and work at night.
- e. Paul did this daily, meaning every day. Considering his extended time in Ephesus, this meant many hundreds of hours of teaching. It is no wonder that the work in Ephesus was so broad and effective.
- f. And this continue for two years.
- g. By himself, there was no way that Paul could reach this region. But he could equip Christians to do the work of the ministry, just as he described in Ephesians 4:11-12.

## 2) Miraculous Revelation (v. 11-12)

- a. Luke describes these miracles as unusual. No remember this is a man that had seen same amazing miracles.
- b. It was unusual for God to use handkerchiefs or aprons in such a way. "The pieces of material were presumably those which Paul used in his tentmaking or leather-working – the sweat-rags for tying around his head and the aprons for tying around his waist." (Bruce)
- c. **Wiersbe:** When our Lord performed miracles he usually had at least three purposes in mind. 1) to show his compassion and meet human needs, 2) to teach a spiritual truth and 3) to present his credentials as Messiah.
- d. The Apostles followed this same pattern. As a matter of fact to do miracles was one of the proofs of apostolic authority.
- e. God seems to like doing things in new and different ways. Therefore we receive whatever is **proven** to be from the hand of God, but we **pursue** only that which we have a Biblical pattern for.
- f. Significantly, it does not say that Paul did these unusual miracles, but that God worked them by the hands of Paul.

## 3) Satanic Imitation (v.13-16)

- a. God enabled Paul to perform special miracles because Ephesus was a center for the occult.
- b. **Wiersbe:** Paul was demonstrating God's power right in Satan's territory. But keep in mind that wherever God's people minister the truth, Satan sends a counterfeit to oppose the work.
- c. Some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists: At that time, there were Jewish exorcists who practiced their trade with a lot of superstition and ceremony. Here, a group of itinerant Jewish exorcists tried to imitate what they thought was Paul's formula for success.

- d. What an incredible scene unfolds here. A demon has a conversation with 7 sons of a priest. And then wrestles them all and send them out the door, beat up and naked.
- e. Guzik: We could say that the sons of Sceva did not have the right to use the name of Jesus, because they had no real personal connection to Him. In the same pattern, there are many people – many churchgoers – who will perish in hell because they have no personal relationship with Jesus Christ. They only know “the Jesus the pastor preaches” or “the Jesus my spouse believes in” instead of the Jesus of their own salvation.

#### 4) Radical Transformation (v. 17-20)

- a. Satan’s plan backfired. When the people heard of this fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.
- b. As one preacher put it “Darkness was in retreat”.
- c. People came forward confessing and telling their deeds.
- d. This is true radical revival.
- e. This was not an agreement that they had sinned, this was a change of life.
- f. These books and scrolls full of magic charms, amulets and incantations were well known in Ephesus, and they were valuable. The value of fifty thousand pieces of silver today has been estimated at anywhere between \$1 million and \$5 million.
- g. **John R. Stott.** “That these young believers instead of realizing the monetary value of their magic spells by selling them, were willing to throw the on a bonfire, was signal evidence of the genuineness of their conversion. Their example led to more conversion.
- h. Revival cleanses. Like a spring cleaning of the heart.
- i. **Kent Hughes:** The connection is undeniable: when the church seriously cleanses itself, some on the outside find it irresistible. “What would be burned today if the Spirit’s conviction swept the church?”