

Series: "Finishing What was Started"

C.R. 1-7-24

"Necessary Evidence"

Text: Acts 19:1-7

Intro: I will be honest with you this morning. I have wrestled with this passage of scripture for several days. It is one of those texts that I have begged God to help me not miss the mark with. I know I have probably driven the other Pastors crazy with this, but it is so vitally important that we get this right.

Many want to make this passage about something that it is not about. Many want to debate this passage. But this week I have asked God to use this passage to bring clarity not confusion. I have found so many times in studying scripture that the enemy want us to look at the wrong thing so that we miss the right things.

Let's Pray together as we get ready to journey into some of the most important thoughts and questions that can be asked.

1) A Serious Situation

- a. Paul makes his way into Ephesus and found some men that the scriptures here say were disciples. (This could mean many things, but it seems from the rest of the text that they were disciples of John and his teaching)
- b. We also learn from v.7 that there were about 12 of them in all.
- c. For some reason, (spirit guidance) Paul asks them a very serious question. "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed"?
- d. Their answer is what makes this situation so serious. "We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit".
- e. **Illustrate:** *During the latter part of the 18th century many colonists left Virginia and started through the mountains to settle the valleys that lay far to the west. For over 20 years these settlers saw no white men at all, until a group of travelers came into where they*

lived. The travelers asked the mountaineers what they thought of the new republic and the policies of the Continental Congress or a Republic. They thought of themselves as loyal subjects of the British King and had not even heard of George Washington or the Revolutionary War.

- f. These men had heard of John, they had heard of the coming Christ, but they didn't have the rest of the story.
- g. They didn't know much about all Jesus did for us, especially in His promise to send the Holy Spirit when He ascended to heaven.
- h. Then Paul asked them about their Baptism. In the book of Acts a person's baptismal experience is an indication of his or hers spiritual experience.
- i. They very quickly answer "into John's baptism".
- j. Paul points out that John's baptism was one of repentance, not necessarily faith unto salvation. John's message pointed to Jesus, but did not take men there itself.
- k. **Question:** What are you baptized into? What is or has been your spiritual experience?
- l. Tough way to ask but, "What makes you so sure that you're going to heaven?"
- m. **Read v.4 again.** Paul made sure that they heard the truth.

2) A Supernatural Transformation (v.5-7)

- a. They heard about Jesus and the rest of the story and they all immediately put their trust in Him and Him alone.
- b. These Ephesian disciples sensed their need to get right with God, and knew the answer was in God's Messiah – but they had gone no further than that. They need to go all the way, to trust in everything Jesus is and everything He had done, and to be filled with the power of the Holy Spirit.
- c. It is a supernatural thing that happens when we come to Christ. Christ in Us.
- d. There was then proof as Paul laid hands on them and they began to speak in foreign tongues and prophesy.
- e. Belief releases the ever-fresh power of the Holy Spirit within us.
- f. *If someone doesn't seem to know if they have the power and presence of the Holy Spirit in their life, it's fair to assume that they don't have it. If you have it, you should know it. "Give a man an*

electric shock, and I warrant you he will know it; but if he has the Holy Ghost, he will know it much more.” (Spurgeon) This isn’t something to hope about; we can know – one can know they are filled with the Holy Spirit.

- g. As Si Roberson put it, I have God’s DNA in me. That is powerful stuff. The fruits of the Spirit, the guidance of the Spirit, the conviction of the Spirit, the comfort of the Spirit.
- h. The point of this passage is not speaking in tongues. The point of this passage is making sure you are truly saved.
- i. *“Have ye then received the Spirit since you believed? Beloved, are you now receiving the Spirit? Are you living under his divine influence? Are you filled with his power? Put the question personally. I am afraid some professors will have to admit that they hardly know whether there be any Holy Ghost; and others will have to confess that though they have enjoyed a little of his saving work, yet they do not know much of his ennobling and sanctifying influence.” (Spurgeon)*
- j. God always wants us to go deeper. We tend to sip where we could drink deeply; we drink deeply where we could wade in, and we wade in where we could plunge in and swim. Most of us need to be encouraged to go deeper and further into the things of the Holy Spirit.

Conclusion:

First, repentance is not enough without trust in Christ. Repentance is a necessary beginning, but repentance does not, by itself, save an individual from the eternal consequences of sin. One must believe in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ and accept God’s forgiveness as a free gift apart from good deeds.

Second, the presence of the Holy Spirit indicates genuine belief, or what might be called “saving faith.” Christians receive the Holy Spirit as a gift at the moment of salvation; those who do not have the Spirit are not saved.

Third, the Holy Spirit may or may not reveal Himself through miraculous abilities. He will speak in other languages or prophesy through believers at

His discretion to meet the needs of the time. Believers have no say in the matter. Miraculous ability is neither learned nor acquired, but solely a work of God.

Fourth, while miraculous ability validates the presence of the Holy Spirit, we cannot interpret the absence of miracles as the absence of the Spirit. In the Old and New Testaments, the effects of the Spirit's work in the lives of God's people take a variety of forms. For example, the Spirit's presence results in wisdom, understanding, strength, and fear of God (see Isa. 11:2). And His sanctifying work in the believer yields fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal. 5:22-23).