

Acts 19

Good evening and thank you for joining us. Would you please turn in your Bibles to Acts 19?

Rental car story....

Just like a car cannot successfully run without the key, the life of a Christian will not be successful without the empowerment of the HS in their life.

The title of tonight's message is which OUR GREAT NEED

LETS PRAY

1 And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples The first time Paul was in Ephesus, it was merely a pitstop as Paul was on his journey to Jerusalem. Acts 18: 19 And he came to Ephesus, and left them there; but he himself entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. 20 When they asked him to stay a longer time with them, he did not consent, 21 but took leave of them, saying, "I must by all means keep this coming feast in Jerusalem;[fn] but I will return again to you, God willing." And he sailed from Ephesus.

So Paul has now returned to spread the gospel and plant some roots

2 he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" apparently, something about these believers prompted Paul to ask this question. Something about these disciples was, "off"-something not quite right

So they said to him, "We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit." Remembered who'd just ministered in Ephesus? It was Apollos. And recall Apollos' deficiency? Acts 18: 24 Now a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an

eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. 25 This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John. 26 So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately. Apollos needed to learn that not only does the Holy Spirit want to indwell us, but He also wants to empower us.

3 And he said to them, “Into what then were you baptized?”

So they said, “Into John’s baptism.” Evidently, they had not heard of the events of Pentecost in Acts 2, the outpouring of the HS. Now remember, Acts was written over a 30 year period, and Acts 2 occurred about 20 years prior to these events of chapter 19.

But more importantly, the missing ingredient in Apollos’ teaching was being repeated here in Ephesus!

4 Then Paul said, “John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.” Now remember that repentance isn’t just being sorry for your sin. Often people will sob and cry and say they are sorry, but really, they are sorry for the consequences they are facing from their sinful actions. That’s not repentance.

Repentance is the conviction of our guilt before almighty God. Repentance is the awareness that I’m stained, and need cleansing.

But praise the Lord that Godly repentance doesn’t lead to a life of guilt and shame and regret. Godly repentance catapults us towards the great love of God and the grace of His salvation through Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 1:18 Come now, and let us reason together,”

Says the LORD,

“Though your sins are like scarlet,

They shall be as white as snow;

Though they are red like crimson,

They shall be as wool. This is what Jesus does! Even though I am a guilty, filthy, wretched, wicked sinner, because of the blood of Christ I am spotless before God. And so are you when you surrender your life to Him!

Apollos and these disciples knew how to repent, they knew how to turn away from sin through the baptism of repentance, but they were ignorant of the HS.

They tried to fulfill the great commission through the great omission. Trying to do Gods work apart from the HS.

Adoniram Judson Gordon is a name you probably don't know, but he was a mighty preacher in Boston 150 years ago. And when speaking of the HS, he said this:

“It costs much to obtain the power of the HS. It costs self-surrender and humiliation and the yielding up of our most precious things to God. It costs the perseverance of long waiting and the faith of strong trust. But when we are really in that power, we shall find this difference-that whereas before it was hard for us to do the easiest things, now it is easy for us to do the hardest.”

Dr Gordon added “As we become deeply instructed in this matter, we shall learn to pray less about the details of duty and more about the fullness of power. The manufacturer is chiefly anxious to secure an ample head of water for his mills, and this being found, he knows that his 10,000 spindles will keep in motion

without particular attention to each one. It is in like manner the sources of our power for which we should be most (concerned) and not the results.”

5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. When Paul laid hands on the Ephesians the Holy Spirit came upon them and suddenly they're speaking in tongues and words of prophecy.

An often-debated question is, “Were these 12 Ephesian disciples actually Christians before this remarkable filling of the Holy Spirit”

It's a valid question. On the one hand, they were called *disciples* – and appeared to be part of the group of Christians in Ephesus, things that would not usually be said of them if they were not actually Christians.

Yet, on the other hand, they knew so little about Jesus; and they were baptized in water again, this time in the name of Jesus.

It's difficult to say with certainty if they were already Christians or not, but we know that Paul perceived they lacked the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

Notice in verse 6 Paul lays hands on them, and they begin speaking in tongues and prophesying.

In Acts 2 you remember the disciples were in the upper room when the HS came like a mighty rushing wind. There was no laying on of hands.

In Acts 10 the HS came upon household of Cornelius while Peter was still speaking.

Yet 3 other occasions in the book of Acts the HS was given through the laying on of hands

Now there are those who say you must lay hands on a person for them to get the gift of tongues or prophecy, yet that's not biblically accurate. It doesn't mean it won't happen, but according to the bible the laying on of hands is not a requirement

These gifts that manifested here-tongues and prophecy, are not the only evidence of a person receiving the HS. The most powerful evidence of the HS working in a person's life is not the gift of tongues or the gift of prophecy. It's love

1 Cor 13 1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become a sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. **2** And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

Tongues and prophecy are 2 of the most well-known gifts of the HS. And even today folks in churches have a tendency to over-emphasize these gifts, declaring they are the proof of one receiving the HS.

Yet the bible is clear: without love, these gifts are fruitless.

SHOW PIC 1 In 1939 a beautiful float was on display during the tournament of roses parade.

Yet the entire parade was stopped in its tracks and delayed because this float ran out of gas on the parade route! Pretty embarrassing! The float was beautifully and carefully adorned on the outside. But as it travelled it began to struggle, and sputter, and lurch until it came to screeching halt on the route.

It was quickly discovered that the organizers of that float had forgot to fill it with gas.

But here's the irony. The float was sponsored by the standard oil company. True story. A company with vast reservoirs of petrol had run out of gas. **CLOSE PIC 1**

And the same thing can happen to any Christian. We have a pipeline to God's power, His name is the HS. We should never run out of gas spiritually speaking. We can ask God to continually fill us and empower us through His HS.

Remember Paul wrote this to the Ephesians...

Eph 5: 1 Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. 2 And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.

Whenever we feel like we're sputtering on spiritual fumes, ask the Lord for a fill up the HS.

Paul wrote the letters of 1 and 2 Corinthians during his stay in the city of Ephesus at this time, and 1 Corinthians has much to say about person and work of the Holy Spirit.

7 Now the men were about twelve in all. 12 people is not a lot considering Ephesus had a population of 300k! This is barely a football team!

But these 12 men marked the beginning of God's work in Ephesus. And in a few verses, we'll see this work didn't just impact Ephesus, but also spread the gospel throughout Asia, including the 7 churches in Revelation chapters 2 and 3.

8 And he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God. 9 But when some were hardened and did not believe, but spoke evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them and withdrew the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. Now history tells us Tyrannus was a

philosopher who had a school in Ephesus. Because of the heat in that part of the world, it wasn't uncommon for business to pause for a few hours during the afternoon, for a siesta, when the breezes would blow and cool the air down.

It appears during this siesta time Paul borrows or rents this school and teaches the word of God daily. And what was the result of this daily study?

10 And this continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

Ephesus was the cultural hub, and from it the Gospel spread to the surrounding areas.

This is incredible when we remember **Acts 16 6 Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia.** Years before Paul wanted to go to Asia, and the HS said no. But now the timing is right. Paul is in Asia, he's in Ephesus, and the Lord is doing a mighty work.

May we not get discouraged when God says no. Perhaps the 'no' is really 'not right now'.

11 Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul, 12 so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them. Notice Dr Luke refers to these miracles as "unusual" even for Paul!

These handkerchiefs and aprons were Pauls work cloths. So as a tentmaker in the middle east, you can imagine they were sweaty and maybe a bit smelly!

This isn't the first time we see curious methods of healing the bible-Acts 5-they let the sick lay in streets for Peters shadow to pass by.

Woman with 12 year issue of blood touched the hem of Jesus' garment,

Man by pool of Bethsaida when Jesus said pick up your bed and walk.

How bout when Jesus spit in the blind mans eyes at Siloam in John 9?

So how do we explain these miracles? We don't. if you can explain the miracle, then it's not of God.

13 Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists took it upon themselves to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "We^[fn] exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches." Ephesus was a dark city filled with magic, cult worship, and demonic practices.

So in a dark environment like this, we see the arrival of these itinerant Jewish exorcists. This simply means these guys traveled from town to town.

Notice 'they took it upon themselves'-a very dangerous place to be. Not called by God and empowered by the HS, no they were religious entrepreneurs! They thought they could mimic a miracle!

14 Also there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so.

In addition to these travelling exorcists were the 7 sons of a Jewish priest named Sceva.

When these guys saw Paul casting out demons in the name of Jesus they assumed Paul's wording would work for them. So,

they gave it a try, "We exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches."

15 And the evil spirit answered and said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?" a 2nd hand relationship with Jesus Christ NEVER works. Every person must have their own relationship with God through Jesus.

16 Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, overpowered[fn] them, and prevailed against them,[fn] so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. In the Bible we see demonic power manifest, or reveal itself in many different ways. We see several instances of demonic influence affecting a persons physical infirmity. Matthew 9-man was mute due to demonic possession

Luke 14-woman had spirit of infirmity for 18 years and could in no ways raise herself up

Other times in scripture we see demons show supernatural powers-witch at Endor in 1 Samuel 28. Acts 16-girl could prophesy.

But the display of power here in verse 16 is very similar to demoniac in Mark 5 who kept breaking chains.

These guys try to cast out the demon on their own power, and they are soundly defeated and humiliated. Utterly powerless

We do not need to fear demons. Never once are we told to fear the devil or demons.

It does tell us all the time to fear God-have a reverence of, not the demonic realm.

17-20

17 This became known both to all Jews and Greeks dwelling in Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. 18 And many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds. 19 Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and it totaled fifty thousand pieces of silver. 20 So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.

Estimated value of these books is estimated to be \$1m-\$5m. These were books that had chants and incantations. They were done with it! They made a clean break with the past and pledged to follow Jesus!

This is a revival. BTW, I encourage you to go to our website and read the Calvary Road by Roy Hession-all about revival. Short read about 35 pages, but oh so powerful.

21 When these things were accomplished, Paul purposed in the Spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, "After I have been there, I must also see Rome." Paul ultimately had his eyes set on the capitol of the empire, and the world! And he will go to Rome, just not as he had planned as we'll see in the coming weeks.

22 So he sent into Macedonia two of those who ministered to him, Timothy and Erastus, but he himself stayed in Asia for a time.

23 And about that time there arose a great commotion about the Way. 24 For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Diana,[fn] brought no small profit to the craftsmen. ." **SHOW PIC 2**

Pagans from the world-over worshipped this Greek fertility goddess. And the temple to Diana was larger than the Parthenon

in Athens - imagine, 425 feet long, by 220 feet wide, by 60 feet high. It was surrounded by 127 marble columns. **CLOSE PIC 2**

So Demetrius and the local silver-smiths made a bunch of money selling souvenirs. Idolatry was big business, and the Gospel became a financial threat.

25 He called them together with the workers of similar occupation, and said: "Men, you know that we have our prosperity by this trade. 26 Moreover you see and hear that not only at Ephesus, but throughout almost all Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away many people, saying that they are not gods which are made with hands. 27 So not only is this trade of ours in danger of falling into disrepute, but also the temple of the great goddess Diana may be despised and her magnificence destroyed,[fn] whom all Asia and the world worship To really change society, there first must be a changing of people's hearts. This is what happened in Ephesus. The Gospel spread and the profits of the pagans dropped!

28 Now when they heard this, they were full of wrath and cried out, saying, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" 29 So the whole city was filled with confusion, and rushed into the theater with one accord, having seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians, Paul's travel companions. **SHOW PIC 3** Today in the ruins of Ephesus, one of its main attractions is the huge theater where the mob rallied. We're told by archeologists in the days of Paul it could seat over 25,000 people.

Here the union members erupt into a frenzy. They all start chanting, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" And while they're chanting, they grab the first believers they can find - Gaius and Aristarchus **CLOSE PIC 3**

30 And when Paul wanted to go in to the people, the disciples would not allow him. Paul sees a great preaching opportunity- 20K people in one spot-let me at em! But the disciples say no-you can't go in there!

31 Then some of the officials of Asia, who were his friends, sent to him pleading that he would not venture into the theater.

32 Some therefore cried one thing and some another, for the assembly was confused, and most of them did not know why they had come together. This often happens in riotous crowds. Nobody really knew why they were there. It was chaos and bedlam.

33 And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander motioned with his hand, and wanted to make his defense to the people. 2 Timothy 4 tells us how a man named Alexander the coppersmith caused Paul much harm. Perhaps it's the same man here?

See they didn't pull Alexander out to defend Paul, rather Alexander wants to make it clear that the Jewish community had nothing to do with Paul and his preaching efforts.

34 But when they found out that he was a Jew, all with one voice cried out for about two hours, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!"

Now this doesn't seem like something our civilized culture would do, but in reality people behave very similarly today. Crying out Great is my sports team

Great is my political party

Great is my material wealth

Great is getting drunk

The list goes on and on of what people proudly proclaim today.

But if you or I proclaim great is the Lord Jesus Christ, then we're labeled as extremists.

35-38

35 And when the city clerk had quieted the crowd, he said: "Men of Ephesus, what man is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is temple guardian of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Zeus? 36 Therefore, since these things cannot be denied, you ought to be quiet and do nothing rashly. 37 For you have brought these men here who are neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of your[fn] goddess. Notice that Paul didn't focus his efforts on speaking out against Diana. He spent his time proclaiming Jesus and the light of Jesus naturally uncovered the darkness.

Some folks spend so much of their time trying to expose the darkness that they forget to proclaim the light of Jesus Christ!

The city clerk continues...

38 Therefore, if Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen have a case against anyone, the courts are open and there are proconsuls. Let them bring charges against one another. 39 But if you have any other inquiry to make, it shall be determined in the lawful assembly. Remember Rome would not allow uprisings or insurrection, and this uprising of over 2 hours gives the earmark of a possible riot, so the city clerk shuts the gathering down.

40 For we are in danger of being called in question for today's uproar, there being no reason which we may give to account for this disorderly gathering." 41 And when he had said these things, he dismissed the assembly. An abrupt ending to an explosive situation.

Take a moment and think about chapter 19. Several descriptions are used to describe the work of God.

V 10-all who dwelt in Asia

V 11-unusual miracles

V17- the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified

V19-great repentance-lighting their sinful possessions on fire-just wanted to be rid of the sin!

v20-word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.

I want this to be said of our city, don't you!

We might expect a city with these descriptions that was so on fire for Jesus to still be running strong today, wouldn't we?

But if you travel to Ephesus today, you will see the ruins of a once great and mighty city. And as you look closer, there's little evidence of a church in this city that was once on fire for Jesus.

Less than 50 years later after Acts 19 occurs, Jesus issues a startling charge against the church of Ephesus in **Revelation 2:4 Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. 5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent.** Other priorities crept in to the church. Other urgencies took precedence in people's lives.

In a mere 40 years, a single generation, the church in Ephesus went from being on fire for the gospel, to a church that Jesus rebuked because they stopped loving Him first.

Instead of being led by the HS, they were led by their flesh.

If only the church at Ephesus had heeded Paul's words in
Ephesians 4:1 1 I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech
you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, 2
with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with
one another in love, 3 endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit
in the bond of peace.