

## Acts 19:8-41

“The Word Of The Lord Prevails”

Ch 19 brings us Paul’s entrance into Ephesus and by the time we catch up to him here in vs 8 he’s in the midst of his ministry there. You recall that he came to Ephesus shortly after Apollos had left, and when he got there he found about a dozen guys who were believers, but all they knew of was the ministry and message of J.B. They didn’t know that Jesus had died on the cross, that He’d risen from the dead 3 days later and that He’d ascended to the right hand of God having sent the Holy Spirit to empower the church to be His witnesses. and It kind of confused Paul to run into these guys who were believers but that never heard that the Holy Spirit had been given. and So he asked them, “What then were you baptized into?” They said, “John’s baptism.” Then it all began to come clear to him and he told them how John truly baptized with a baptism of repentance, but that it was a baptism of preparation, or expectation, it looked forward by faith to the work of the Messiah on our behalf. He explained to them that they were to place their faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Lamb of God that John pointed to. John would say that Jesus was here to *take* away the sin of the world, but Paul informed them that He’d *taken* away the sin of the world through the shedding of His blood, that He was delivered up for our transgression and raised for our justification. and When they heard that, when they heard the rest of the account of what had taken place we read that they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Which is to say that they now were baptized not to demonstrate repentance and anticipation of what Messiah *would do*, but rather they were baptized to demonstrate and illustrate their regeneration, and identification with what the Messiah *had done* in finishing the work that He came here to accomplish.

They committed to Christ in a post resurrection sense saying in their baptism that they believed and received all that Christ had accomplished for them by laying down His life for their sin and *being* raised from the dead for their justification before God. After that Paul laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, they spoke in tongues, prophesied, it was just a grand and glorious occasion, vs 8 carries on.

Vs8-10

You may recall back in ch 18 when Paul was on his way to Jerusalem from Corinth when he stopped by Ephesus for just a radically short stay that they sought to get him to stay at that point. But he’d purposed to follow through on a vow that he’d made so he took off, but he said that he would return there to the synagogue God willing.

Here we find that he did just that he returned to Ephesus and when he got there he made his way specifically to the synagogue as he said he would and he reasoned with them there for 3 months. Paul was a man of his word, if he told you he’d do something, he did it. The bible teaches us that *we’re* to be individuals of our word as well, to be a people of integrity, if you tell someone you’ll do something, do it.

Unfortunately we live in a society today that just tells people what they want to hear in order to get people off their backs. But God expects that we let our “yes” be yes, and our “no” be no. Whenever we have to try to back up our word by some other means it basically testifies of the fact that under *ordinary* circumstances we might not follow through, but since I’ve bound myself with an oath or something along those lines “Cross my heart and hope to die” well now you can trust me. But the fact of the matter is that the bible teaches us that we should be people of such high caliber when it comes to integrity, honesty, and responsibility that when we tell somebody something, that’s all they need to hear because they know that, they can trust our word. Aren’t you glad that you can trust *God’s Word*, man I am!

Where would we be if God’s Word to us were like our word often is to other people? I’ve come to learn in this church build that when a contractor says they’ll be there, they might be, or they might not be depending on any # of other things that they offer as excuses for why they couldn’t keep their word. In Ps 15 it’s speaking there about who it is that may abide in the tabernacle of the Lord and dwell in the hill of the Lord, who it is that the Lord likes to keep company with. and One of the things it mentions is, “*He who swears to his own hurt and does not change;*” Ps 15:4 Or to understand that another way, a person who keeps their word, even if it’s to their own personal detriment. and I don’t want to blow my own horn here because my word has failed many times, but I’ve followed through on commitments to travel to other nations because of that vs. I opened my mouth in a moment and said, “Yeah, that sounds great lets set it up.” and Then later thought, “You know, I’m not sure if that’s what I want to do after all.” and The Lord brings this vs to my heart, “Did you give them your word?” “Yeah” “Than you need to do it, even if it’s costs you in your own heart and mind some things that had you thought it through you probably wouldn’t do.” But this is something desperately missing in our culture today, honesty, integrity, accountability, people who follow through on their word. We’re all about the convenience factor, what seems right in the moment with out considering the outcome. Paul told them he’d return God willing, and he did, stayed with them, reasoned with them for 3 months in the synagogue.

What did he reason about? Things pertaining to the kingdom of God, these were Jews he was speaking to. So no doubt he began to speak to them of the proper place of the law, how Christ fulfilled the law; that the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy *in the Holy Spirit*. In other words it’s not about legal righteousness, but rather a loving relationship, that in Christ there’s neither Jew nor Greek, male nor female, barbarian Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ *is* all and *in* all.

It was going well for awhile, but then the standard reaction began to occur, some of the Jews began to harden themselves and reject the message rather than receive the message. and They began to speak evil of the Way, or curse them, and speak ill of them.

What is “The Way?” It was simply the name that got tagged on to early Christianity because they weren’t the, “1<sup>st</sup> Christian church of Ephesus,” or, “The United Ephesus Church,” they didn’t have denominations as such, they were just followers of Christ. and You remember that Jesus said, *“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”* John 14:6 So since Jesus said of Himself that He was “The Way” those who followed Jesus were tagged as people of “The Way.” So what’s happening here is that some of the Jews began to bad mouth the Lord, and everything that Paul and the disciples were about, and when company *divided*, Paul simply *departed*.

Paul was never one to force his agenda, because he didn’t have an agenda, he just preached Jesus Christ and Him crucified, and if you received it “Praise the Lord,” and if you rejected it, “There’s no need to get hostile, I’ll just move on.” But one thing to note or at least see here that’s a commonly woven thread throughout the NT is that Christ inevitably creates division. Because you are either *for Him* or you are *against Him*. Jesus made that real clear, He doesn’t honor, nor does He allow indecision, apathy, or a lethargic/procrastinating position concerning one’s commitment to Him, if you’re not *for Him*, than you’re *against Him*, period. When the situation turned volatile, Paul just took the disciples and with drew so as to preach and teach in the school of this Gentile by the name of Tyrannus. and The general consensus is that he did this between the hours of 11 a.m. and 4p.m. because in that day everyone pulled a split shift. They’d work from about 7-11am and then when the heat of the day was on, they’d find a shady spot for a nap.

Then from about 4-8 or 9pm they’d continue their workday, and when everyone took a break (including Paul because he worked to support himself in Ephesus) he would bear the heat of the day in the school of Tyrannus (when Tyrannus was taking a break) to share the word of God with people. and He kept it up for 2 years and notice the result; “...all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.” Now that’s quite an effective outreach isn’t it? A few yrs earlier Paul wanted to come to Ephesus but the Holy Spirit said “Not right now.” But now, when the timing is right, God is doing an incredible work, and we’ve spoke before of Paul’s desire to make disciples. That he wasn’t into the “get em saved, now I gotta go” mentality, and this is the fruit of his approach here in Ephesus, the word of God permeated, infiltrated, and saturated all of Asia from the school of Tyrannus. There’s no way that Paul could’ve single handedly reached the entire region of Asia, but by equipping the saint for the work of the ministry, they could take the message from *that* place, everyplace they went. This no doubt what Paul meant when he said to the Corinthians that a great and effective door had opened to him there in Asia, but he said that along with that there were many adversaries. You remember that great opportunities come along with great opposition, and we’ll see some of that in a moment, but for now Paul is teaching the word of God, people are getting saved, they’re being strengthened and they’re taking the message of the Lord Jesus with them everywhere they go. and It was during this time that the churches in Colosse, Laodicea, and Hierapolis were planted. They were the results of God moving through Paul there in Ephesus.

## Vs11-12

Ephesus seemed to be a satanic stronghold, there were all kinds of people who were into practicing magic and occultism, there was sorcery and all kinds of things like that taking place. and It seems that one of the ways that God was authenticating Paul's message to these people was through the miraculous.

Spoiling the counterfeit by means of the genuine article, now we should notice in vs 11 that it was "God" who was working the miracles, not Paul. The bible teaches that, "...it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure." Phil 2:13 So there was nothing special about Paul, he was a human being just like you and just like me, but God was moving through him in some amazing ways, and this is just the record of one of those ways.

We want to note a couple of things about it, #1 Take note of the word "Unusual" what does that mean? It means that usually, or normally these kinds of things weren't taking place. and That if the miraculous could be considered "normal" that even in that sphere this particular occurrence of the miraculous was outside of the parameters of what might "normally" take place. But what I love about that is that God refuses to be boxed in or hedged in to moving in a certain way in a given situation. He's all the time moving in different ways in different situations. Jesus rarely to never performed a miracle the same way twice. Why? Because if He did we'd think that there was a magic formula, and that if we wanted the same results all we'd have to do is follow the same protocol and "Voila!" So the Lord was always moving uniquely in a given situation, and we find the same type thing here, this wasn't the standard norm with regards to the miraculous. Which really means that we shouldn't be seeking to emulate this as a common church practice, it was unusual even for Paul.

But we read that even the handkerchiefs and aprons that he wore when he was working (really what they were, were his sweat bands) they would be taken to people who were sick or demon possessed, and they'd be delivered from the demonic, and healed of the disease.

Now as I was saying the Ephesian people were radically superstitious, overrun with occultic practice. and I would imagine that the 1<sup>st</sup> time this happened, someone who'd seen the power of God working through Paul saw one of his sweatbands laying there and just grabbed and took it to someone who was sick and that person got healed when they grabbed hold of it. and I kind of wonder if that didn't become a frustrating epidemic for Paul, every time he'd lay his apron down, or take his sweatbands off someone was always ripping them off and taking them to someone who was sick or demon possessed? You know, "Where'd my apron go? Would you guys quit stealing them? I'm going to go broke if I have to keep buying new ones!"

But the question comes up, was there really power in the dirty old sweatbands, and blacksmith looking apron that he wore? I would say, “No” but God loves us so much that He’ll meet us right where we’re at, He knows that we’re but dust and that we need all the help we can get to muster up the faith to trust Him for a particular work. Consider Acts 5:15; was there actually power in Peter’s shadow that healed people when it passed over them? Or how about Matt 14:36? All of those people begging Jesus that they might only touch the hem of His garment, and as many as touched it were made perfectly well. Was He wearing a magic robe? No, but there’s something about a tangible point of contact that we as human beings so often need in order to “trigger” (if you will) a release of faith in us that we might trust God to do the work at that time and in that moment. The bible says, *“Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.”* James 5:14 Do we carry around magic oil? No, but it represents the work of the Spirit, and it makes for a point of contact so that we might be encouraged, and built up in our faith, trusting God to do the work according to His will for His glory. Paul’s reputation preceded him; everyone knew the way God was using his life. So some people were like, “If I could even touch that guys sweat rags, just anything that belongs to him, I know that I would be healed, or delivered.” and In that moment when they grabbed hold of that apron, or that sweatband, their faith was released and God honored that faith in that moment. But that’s the love and grace of God, He’s willing to meet us right where we’re at, but then He’s always wanting to grow us, and shape us, mold us and mature us from that point. But radical things were happening through Paul’s life here.

#### Vs13-16

This is why you never want to go looking for the enemy and you always want to keep Jesus between you and him. I’m sure that these guys had observed Paul, word got around at what was taking place and they noticed that whenever a healing, or a demonic deliverance took place through him, he used the name of Jesus. They thought, “We can do that...” But there’s a big difference in employing the name of Jesus because you know *about* Him, and using the name of Jesus because you *know* Him personally. Because when you do something in the *name* of someone else what does that mean? It means that you stand to represent that person, and it’s in their authority, and on their behalf that you’re acting. and You really can’t act on the *behalf*, and in the *authority* of someone you don’t know. Even on a general national level, if I go to Africa I don’t stand to represent Australia to them, I’m not of that nation, or that country. When I was in Russia, I wasn’t there as a citizen of Africa, nor did I carry any authority or rights of an African with me, why? Because I’m not from Africa, I hold no citizenship there. Nor do I represent the king of England, because I’m not from England, and it works that way in the realm of the spirit as well. I can’t stand and represent the King of Kings if I’m not a citizen of His kingdom, you just get yourself into a lot of trouble under the penalty of perjury if you claim to be something you’re not.

It's obvious that the sons of Sceva weren't of the kingdom, why do I say that? Because they didn't know Jesus personally, they had to employ His name in such a way as to say, "The Jesus whom Paul preaches." There was no personal relationship there of their own, so they had no right to seek to represent, or stand in the authority of Jesus because they didn't belong to His Kingdom. and It's sad the amount of "church goers" today who will perish in Hell because they don't know Jesus personally, only "The Jesus the Pastor preaches," or, "The Jesus my spouse speaks of" but they don't know Him for themselves. I pray that you're a citizen of the Kingdom and that you have the right to represent the King and use His name when time is needed to claim your rights.

Apparently the demonic is able to discern who actually belongs to Jesus and who doesn't (no doubt by the presence of the Holy Spirit in your life). and Evidently they know who their enemies are but don't waste their time getting familiar with those who pose no threat. So this demon looks at these guys through the eyes of the one whom it's possessed and says, "Jesus I'm acquainted with, Paul I recognize... but who are you?" Now those are never good words to hear when confronted with the demonic. I'd imagine these fella's hearts just about fell out of their chests. This demon possessed guy jumps *on* them, *overpowers* them, and prevails *against* them so that they fled the house naked and wounded (all 7 of them). We are no match when it comes to spiritual warfare apart from Jesus Christ posted between the enemy and us.

#### Vs17-20

So the net effect was like unto that of Ananias and Sapphira when they fell down dead and Peter's feet having lied to the Holy Spirit. Fear fell on everyone, and the name of the Lord was magnified and the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed. and Vs 19 is the fruit of repentance seen born in these people's lives, people started coming clean, and even those who'd not completely cleaned house with respect to compromise in their lives, brought those books that had to do with occultism and magic and burned them in a massive bonfire. The cost of the fire? 50,000 pieces of silver, which translates to you and me as several million dollars, the average mans annual salary for about 150yrs, or 150 men's average annual salary. and The idea here is that they wanted to be right with the Lord regardless of what it might cost them. They didn't pawn their stuff off at the book barn, if it wasn't good for them; it wasn't good for anyone else. I wonder what kind of bonfire would take place today if we all took inventory of our homes and burned those things that were a hindrance to what it is that God is wanting to do in our lives, certain books, or games, or movies, cds and all the rest? As H.A. Ironside said, We want to see a great awakening, a revival, and it'll come, "When the people of God put eternal things about all else." But we're too often flirting with things that only hinder our spiritual lives, the city of Ephesus underwent radical revival, they took those things that were only a hindrance to their spiritual growth and maturity and sent them up in smoke.

## Vs21-22

Notice, “Two of those who ministered *to him*.” They didn’t serve their own agenda, they just had a heart to come alongside and assist Paul, people like that are rare gems. But the reason he sent them ahead of him was to collect an offering for the poor saints in Jerusalem. Paul never asked for money for himself, or to support his ministry, but he would take up the cause of those in Jerusalem. But he didn’t like to be identified with any of the stigmas that people attached to money in that way because that wasn’t his heart, so he sent these 2 ahead of him to deal with that and then when he got there that was finished and they could just go on their way. Now here we read of more of those adversaries that he had there in Asia.

## Vs23-27

So he rallies them around the banner of Diana, but the fact of the matter is found in vs 24 and 25, his beef is over “profit” and “prosperity.” Only 2 times in the book of Acts that Gentiles opposed Paul the apostle and both times were over money, the love of money is a snare, the bible says, “*But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition.*” 1 Tim 6:9 Demetrius is turning a deaf ear to the gospel because he’s afraid it’ll hurt his career, and he rallies all these men of the same trade around his cause.

You have to love the testimony of vs 26 where he’s forced to say that Paul has been so effective in turning people on to Jesus that it’s about to put them out of business. But it isn’t Paul’s word that has said that they aren’t gods who are made with hands; it’s God’s Word. Ps 135:15-18 “*The idols of the nations are silver and gold, The work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they do not speak; Eyes they have, but they do not see; They have ears, but they do not hear; Nor is there any breath in their mouths. Those who make them are like them; So is everyone who trusts in them.*” Mute, blind, deaf, and lifeless.

## Vs28-34

The Jews just knew that they’d be lumped in with Paul and his associates and so they threw Alexander out there to try and defend them, send out the disclaimer that they had nothing to do with Paul or his work in the city. But when they found out that he was a Jew, they just went ballistic, started shouting for 2 straight hours, “Great is Diana of the Ephesians!” Now this theater (Coliseum) held 25,000 people, so this is a huge deal. It’s a mob mentality just itching to bust loose. Someone has said that every mob in its ignorance, blindness, and bewilderment, is a league of frightened men who seeks reassurance in collective action. and That’s certainly true here, most of them don’t even know why they’re there, it’s pandemonium in the ring, they’re just following the flow, confused, and on the brink of out of control.

## Vs35-36

That’s some solid advice, especially in a circumstance of uncertainty, be quiet, and do nothing rashly.

## Vs37-39

Paul is vindicated again. He wasn't on an "Anti-Diana" campaign, picketing the temple or anything like that. He was on a "Pro-Jesus" campaign and the natural consequence of people coming to Christ is their forsaking foolishness and sin, you want an abortion clinic to close, don't get violent with them, pray for their salvation, they come to know Jesus, that clinic will close, that's what was happening here. and The main man of the city says, "You better be careful here, they've done nothing legally out of line and if you don't watch it Rome will step in and then we'll all be regretting it." Notice

## Vs40-41

So God once again protected Paul and the word of the Lord Prevailed.

Prayer Points: Lord when we're confronted with times of uncertainty, help us to trust You. and May we be effective in the work that You've called us to, that all of *this* area might hear the word of the Lord Jesus, that You might use us in incredible, even unusual ways to reach out to those who are perishing that they might be saved. That Your name might be magnified, help us to evaluate the things in our lives that You would desire to be uproot and be rid of, that there be no cost we're not willing to count to come into a place where you might use us to the full.

and If you're here and have yet to give your life to Jesus Christ you can know that He wants to use your life to the full, He wants to forgive you of all your sin, come into your heart and into your life and be magnified in your life. Jesus shed His blood upon the cross for your sin and if you'll believe upon Him, you'll be washed white as snow, and given new life.