

WARM-UP

- Who do you look up to as a father figure? What qualities do you appreciate about this person?
- Have you tried using someone's name to get something you want? How did it turn out?
- How do you introduce yourself to someone you've just met? What would you want the other person to know about you?

WORD *"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*

ACTS 1:8

¹¹And God was doing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, ¹²so that even handkerchiefs or aprons that had touched his skin were carried away to the sick, and their diseases left them and the evil spirits came out of them.

ACTS 19:11-12

(Read also **ACTS 19:8-10, 13-20.**)

Paul was called to be an apostle to the Gentiles, not just Jews. In one of his journeys, he visited Ephesus and laid hands on some disciples so that they would be baptized in the Holy Spirit, something they had never experienced before. As a spiritual father to the Ephesian church, Paul preached to different kinds of people while also performing miracles. Today, let's look at how God caused a remarkable spiritual awakening in Ephesus through Paul as the church grew rapidly.

1 | Extraordinary miracles were performed through Paul.

¹¹And God was doing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, ¹²so that even handkerchiefs or aprons that had touched his skin were carried away to the sick, and their diseases left them and the evil spirits came out of them. ACTS 19:11-12

Miracles support the preaching of God's word. Paul's stay in Ephesus was no different. He spent three months preaching in the synagogues before moving to the lecture hall of Tyrannus, a strategic place where people could learn. Paul and the Ephesian disciples continued to do this for two years while also performing extraordinary miracles to both Jews and Gentiles. What do you think those extraordinary miracles were?

2 | People feared God and the name of the Lord Jesus was extolled.

And this became known to all the residents of Ephesus, both Jews and Greeks. And fear fell upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was extolled. ACTS 19:17

While many people came to believe in Jesus, others doubted and even used the name of Jesus for the wrong reasons. There was a group of exorcists known as the sons of Sceva who attempted to cast out evil spirits in a man without them being followers of Jesus. Because of this, they failed and were wounded. The people in Ephesus heard about this and understood the holiness of Jesus' name. God used this event to cause people to fear God and praise Jesus. How does this affirm the importance of having a genuine relationship with God?

3 | People turned away from evil practices.

Also many of those who were now believers came, confessing and divulging their practices. **ACTS 19:18**

When people come to accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior, their lives are changed from the inside out. This is exactly what happened to the new believers in Ephesus. As they feared God and His holiness, they turned away from their evil practices and worldliness. Those who had books in magic arts burned them in public as a declaration of their faith. They sought something far more valuable than what they had—a life with God. Share about what you turned away from when you turned to Christ.

4 | The word of God prevailed mightily.

So the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily. **ACTS 19:20**

God's word is trustworthy and is demonstrated through preaching and the miraculous acts of the Holy Spirit. The lives of people in the book of Acts were changed because they believed in the preaching of the gospel and encountered miracles. God's word continues to increase to this day. The growth of the Ephesian church reminds us to expect miracles not just for the sake of experiencing it, but so that the gospel may be proclaimed. What does it mean for God's word to prevail mightily? What do you think that would look like today?

APPLICATION

- How do you think you can have a lifestyle of making Jesus known and being a conduit of His miracles?
- Apart from God's guidance and grace, we may end up pleasing others rather than honoring Him. Ask God for a deeper understanding of who He is so that you may point people to Him.
- Who in your community needs healing or deliverance? How can you minister to this person? Ask God for a miracle and for boldness to minister.

PRAYER

- Praise God for using His people as channels of His miracles and the preaching of His word. Thank God that people's lives are changed as His name is made known.
- Ask God for forgiveness for trusting in your own abilities even with good intentions. Pray that you would always be in step with God instead of trying to do things alone.
- Pray for someone who desperately needs God's healing. Pray that God would use you to demonstrate His love to that person in the coming days.