

Acts: The Gospel Gone Viral
Lesson 39 “The Power of the Holy Spirit”

I. We have been studying through *Acts* and how the gospel went viral through various revivals in the first century. This is what caused the gospel to spread so rapidly in the first century.

A. Most recently we have been looking at Paul’s second missionary journey and how everywhere he went he saw both a revival and a riot. ex: Philippi, Thessalonica, Athens, Corinth. We’ve seen a mixture of great victories and great hardship.

B. Today we are going to begin examine the seeds of the greatest revival in the New Testament. This is the revival in Ephesus. Ephesus was a city of 300,000 people and over 100,000 of them were saved in this move of God. Ephesus was the most important city in Western Asia Minor (modern Turkey) in New Testament times. It was called ‘the mother city’ of Asia. Its wealth and importance came from its location. It was situated on an inland harbour linked by a canal to the River Cayster which flowed into the Aegean Sea; and it was at the crossroads of major trade routes. So it was an extremely important commercial centre-in fact, the largest trading centre in Asia Minor, attracting people from all over the world. Very pagan city. It had a large statue in city to Diana (false god).

II. The Power of the Holy Spirit

A. **Acts 18:18-23 Paul’s Return to Antioch**

1. Paul ministered in Corinth for 18 months and then left to return to his home church in Syria called Antioch. Paul’s new ministry partners, Aquila and Priscilla traveled with Paul. They will be key players in this move of God in Ephesus. There is a power in teamwork. Everyone should get involved.
2. Interestingly Paul came to Ephesus, which is in Asia Minor, where he tried to come two years before in *Acts 16*. God forbid him to come to Asia at that time. Perhaps it was because the timing wasn’t right.
3. For the first time in Paul’s ministry, we see the Jews receptive to Paul’s ministry in the synagogue. Apparently Ephesus was a hungry place for the gospel at this time. **1 Corinthians 16:8-9**. Interestingly enough Paul decided not to stay because of his desire to go back to Jerusalem where the Jews were (he couldn’t stay in his lane.) **He left a potential revival to Jerusalem - this is crazy.**
4. After spending time in Antioch, he begins his 3rd missionary journey and returned to Galatia and Phrygia and strengthened the disciples.

B. **Acts 18:24-28 Apollos Ministers at Ephesus**

1. Apollos was far different than Paul. He was a great speaker while Paul had great revelation, but was more rough around the edges in his presentation.

2. Apollos taught John's baptism and ministered from the Old Testament about how Jesus was the Christ. John's baptism was repentance from sin and preaching the Messiah who was to come, however it left a part out - the power of the Holy Spirit. **Matthew 3:11 illustrates the contrast. John baptized in water for repentance. Jesus baptized in fire - this speaks of power. The crazy thing is Jesus baptizes in the fulness of the Godhead and we are not consumed.**
3. Interestingly, Aquila and Priscilla pulled Apollos aside and shared the way of truth more accurately and Apollos received it. This demonstrates real humility.
4. Apollos then receives a letter of recommendation to go to Corinth and refutes the Jews from the scriptures there. Church history tells us Apollos was so humble, when strife started at Corinth about who was the better minister (him or Paul), Apollos left and went to Crete until the issue was resolved.

C. Acts 19:1-6 Paul Returns to Ephesus

1. Paul asks the disciples if they had received the Holy Spirit when they believed. The scripture implies they were Christians because it calls them disciples.
2. Why did Paul ask this? Doesn't *1 Corinthians 12:3* declare *no one can call Christ Jesus the Lord unless the Holy Spirit draws Him*? Doesn't the Holy Spirit move inside of us when we get born again? Yes. So why did Paul ask the question? Because there is a difference between the spirit within us and the spirit upon us? **He comes within us for our sake and upon us for the sake of others.**
3. Paul then baptized them into the name of Jesus (Father, Son, and Spirit) and laid hands on them and they were filled with the Spirit and spoke in tongues.
4. Point of clarity. God doesn't fill us with His spirit so we can speak in tongues. According to Jesus in **Acts 1:8**, God fills us with the spirit so we can have power to be a witness. That can include speaking in tongues, but also can include signs and wonders, and also include having joy in the midst of negativity. Many reduce it to just one manifestation (tongues) and this limits God.

D. Acts 19:7-12 The Miracles Begin in Ephesus

1. Paul begins to minister in the synagogue and was kicked out after three months. He then ministers daily in the school Tyrannus for two years.
2. Paul sowed two years of the word into those in Ephesus and the Bible says all those in Asia Minor heard the word of the Lord Jesus. That's remarkable!
3. The Bible doesn't say what all Paul taught in Ephesus, but he most likely ministered about the power of God and gifts of the spirit because the people began to take handkerchiefs and aprons from Paul's body into the countryside and laid them on people and notable miracles occurred.
4. This follow Jesus's pattern. Often, not always will find he would teach in the villages for a period of time and put faith in people and then healings would occur. There is a correlation between teaching and miracles.

III. Conclusion - Great revivals don't come from human ingenuity or striving. They come when we learn to yield to the Holy Spirit.

A. Call Up Prayer Team

B. Pray Closing Prayer and Invite the Holy Spirit to minister to people.