

Living Out Our Faith - Pt26

Acts 19:1-20

V1-7

- Paul is on his third missionary journey, and back in **Acts 18:21** he told the believer's if it was the Lord's will he would return to them; and it was, so he has. Upon his arrival he meets 12 men who profess to be disciples, but as he talked with them he noticed that something was missing.
- Verse 2 - he asks a question; one that even today many in the church debate vigorously. If you were to read commentaries that do not believe that the sign-gifts are in existence today they'll try to explain that Paul wasn't talking with believers but men who were on the brink of salvation however not quite there because of a lack of instruction. To understand this, one merely should go back a chapter to Apollos (**Acts 18**), who also lacked something spiritually but did know the Lord. Luke, the writer of Acts, knows his audience – believers. So when he says these men believed then we need to take his word for it.
- Those who believe that all the gifts are still in existence today would have no problem with this verse especially when you link it up to others, like **Acts 2:4** when the spirit of God fell on the believers in Jerusalem, and then in **Acts 4:31** when a refilling occurs, which is in line with **Ephesians 5:18**. "Be filled" in this verse is translated in the Greek to mean "be continuously filled." So this question should be asked of all believers.
- Notice they're response - "We have not even heard whether there be a Holy Spirit." Verse 3 - again, like Apollos, all they knew was John's message, which was incomplete concerning who the Messiah was and what He would accomplish. Just as Aquila and Priscilla set Apollos straight, Paul will do the same with these 12 men. Pay attention because before Paul lays hands on them and before they're filled with the Spirit, he gives them more revelation about the Savior. It's not until after that they experience a deeper, richer manifestation of the Spirit.
- Many question this whether or not it's necessary. They argue we already have the Spirit, and the Word of God, what else is there? The problem with this thinking is what's written in scripture. We're told to be continuously filled; we're told to have hands laid on us, and desire to prophesy. We see this here, as Paul, after giving them the fullness of the truth, all 12 men are baptized with the Spirit, and then hands laid on them followed by speaking in tongues and prophesying.
- Whatever you personally believe you cannot deny that something changed concerning these men. Whatever was lacking in their lives to lead Paul to ask had they received the Holy Spirit since they believed, is now over as these men are now lacking nothing, ready to be used mightily.

V8-12

- Three months in a synagogue teaching without a riot was a record for Paul. Normally he would have been kicked out by now. Previously when he was there the believer's longed for him to stay and continue to teach them, but instead he kept moving forward. This time Paul will be in Ephesus for about three years, and they'll hear and grow under his tutelage.
- Disputing or persuading is all part of evangelizing and apologetics (**2 Timothy 2:23-26**). Verse 11-12 - Paul worked making tents from about 7-11 a.m., and then he would teach from 11-4 p.m. in the synagogue. Afterward he'd resort to the task of making tents.

- While he was gone people would sneak in and take his aprons and handkerchiefs with his sweat still on it and give them out to people who were sick and needy. The amazing thing about this is God was using it to heal people. Now does it mean those today who are asking people to give money and then they'll send their prayer cloths or special ornaments that will bless them are doing right? Absolutely not. We don't read Paul was profiting from any of this, while those doing it today use it as a money-making scheme. A big difference.

V13-20

- When true ministry going on there will always be a counterfeit. Some brothers hear about the power God is flowing through the apostle Paul and they want in on it. Let's examine the seven brothers. First, notice they grew up in a religious home; their father being a priest. Not just any priest, a chief priest meaning they saw daddy rise up the ranks of religion. Also they're attracted to power, as observed in their occupation - find demon possessed people and try to usurp authority over them. Lastly, they're a bold group, as it didn't matter to them that they didn't know Jesus or Paul. All that mattered was the demons obeying them.
- Even if these men had good intentions, when you enter a spiritual battle with the demonic and Jesus is not on your side you're defeated before the fight. Demons speak and are aware of who you know and more importantly who knows you. This recognized by their statement, "Jesus we know, and Paul we know, but who are you!"
- Verse 16 is an example again of how Satan just doesn't want to defeat you, but he desires to humiliate you so severely, physically and emotionally, that you'll never want to cross his path again except to make an alliance with him. Take note of this folks.
- Verse 17 - this became known to everyone living around Ephesus, and it caused fear (Gr. Phobos) or terror. God will often use something terrifying to remind us that being a Christian is serious business.
- Verse 18-19 - this fear caused people to examine what was going on in their lives. It also led to them burning it in a huge bonfire to avoid it ever coming back. I love how scripture includes the cost of their sacrifice. Folks if it doesn't cost you anything then why do you think it's worth much to the Lord (**2 Samuel 24:24**).