

With Sister Paulette Morrison
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DISCOVERING THE POWER OF THE WORD

Reading and Listening Session

Based on Acts 19



Welcome back to our series, where we delve deep into the scriptures to uncover timeless truths and apply them to our lives. Today, we journey to Ephesus, a bustling city steeped in spiritual darkness, where the Apostle Paul ignited a radical revival. Our focus is Acts 19 (KJV):1-7, 11-16, 19-21, 23-27, 29, 34-38. Let's explore how the power of the Word transformed a city and continues to resonate today.

Encountering the Ephesians: From John's Baptism to the Holy Spirit

Paul's arrival in Ephesus marked a pivotal moment. He encountered disciples who had only been baptized into John's baptism, a baptism of repentance, but who lacked knowledge of the Holy Spirit. Paul asked them, 'Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?' (Acts 19:2). After hearing about Jesus, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then, Paul laid his hands on them, and the Holy Ghost came on them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied (Acts 19:6). **This highlights the importance of water baptism with the Holy Spirit and fire after salvation**.

Unusual Miracles and Unimpressed Spirits

God performed *special miracles* by the hands of Paul, so much so that handkerchiefs or aprons touched by him could heal the sick and cast out evil spirits (Acts 19:11-12). However, not everyone was impressed. Some Jewish exorcists attempted to invoke the name of Jesus to cast out demons, but the evil spirit retorted, 'Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?' (Acts 19:15), and overpowered them. This demonstrated that **true spiritual authority comes through genuine faith and a relationship with Jesus**.

Open Confessions and Burning Bridges

The failed exorcism had a profound impact on the city. Many who practiced magic brought their books together and burned them publicly (Acts 19:19). This act of repentance and renunciation of demonic influences showed a commitment to their newfound faith. **Genuine repentance often requires tangible actions that demonstrate a turning away from our old ways**.

Riot in Ephesus: The Word Against Worldliness

As the church grew, it threatened the livelihood of those who profited from idolatry. Demetrius, a silversmith who made silver shrines of Diana, stirred up a riot, claiming that Paul's teachings were turning people away from the goddess Diana (Acts 19:23-27). The city was filled with confusion and uproar. The town clerk eventually calmed the crowd, reminding them of the due process of law (Acts 19:35-41). This episode illustrates that **the truth will always be opposed by those who benefit from lies**.

Acts 19: Key Takeaways

- **Radical Revival:** The power of God's word can transform entire communities.
- **Spiritual Authority:** Authority comes from a genuine relationship with Jesus.
- **Repentance & Renunciation:** True repentance requires tangible actions.
- **Opposition is Inevitable:** The truth will always face opposition from those who profit from falsehoods.

Reflecting on Acts 19

- How can we actively seek to be filled with the Holy Spirit in our lives?
- Are there areas in our lives where we need to renounce demonic influences?
- How should we respond to opposition when sharing our faith?
- How can we ensure our actions are consistent with genuine repentance?

Summary

In Acts 19, we witness a dynamic collision between the power of the gospel and the spiritual darkness of Ephesus. From the initial encounter with disciples needing to receive the Holy Spirit to the dramatic renunciation of magic and the uproar incited by threatened livelihoods, the story highlights the transformative power of God's Word and the inevitable opposition it faces. The believers were filled with the Spirit, unusual miracles took place, and a radical revival broke out. The lessons from Acts 19 challenge us to examine our own faith, our commitment to repentance, and our readiness to stand firm in the face of opposition. May we be empowered to share God’s Word fearlessly and witness its transformative power in our own lives and communities.