

PRC Community Groups

Providence Road Church



Sermon Series: To the Ends of the Earth

Message: The Gospel Changes Everything

Passage: Acts 19:8-20

Date Preached: May 5th, 2013

Going Deeper

1. Discuss Paul's demeanor in verse 8 as he preached the gospel at the synagogue. [*Discuss the words: boldly, reasoning and persuading. See sermon notes*] Why would Luke, the author of Acts, mention that Paul entered the synagogue for "three months"?
2. Why would many of the Jews listening to Paul's message eventually become "stubborn" and continue in "unbelief" to the point of "speaking evil of the Way?" [*Stubborn means hardened of heart.*]
3. Why would Paul withdraw from them? Was he led by the Spirit in doing so? Is it possible that because of continued unbelief and hostility against the Gospel, God would no longer provide for them opportunity for repentance? Why or why not?
4. What were the extraordinary miracles done by the hands of Paul? What were their purpose?
5. In verse 15, the evil spirit told the sons of Sceva, "Jesus I know, and Paul I recognize, but who are you?" Was the evil spirit referring to its knowledge of them or was it referring to their authority? Explain.
6. How would the evil spirit "master" the son of Sceva? Why would fear come upon many? And, why was that a good thing?
7. Why would Luke find it important to mention the value of the magic books being publicly burned?

Application

1. What does "the gospel demands your death" mean to you personally? How does that apply to your salvation (justification)? And, how does that apply to your continual walk with Christ (sanctification)?
2. Do you live under the authority of Christ? If so, give some examples of what that looks like?
3. When is it appropriate to confess your sins not only before God but also before men? Share your experience?

4. Are there areas of your life that are not fully devoted to the Lord? Why are they difficult to give up? How can your community group be of help?
5. Pray for one another

The light of truth dawned in their hearts **when they heard** Paul's teaching, and **they were baptized** in water **in the name of the Lord Jesus**, signifying their spiritual union with Him by faith. Immediately, in a gesture of apostolic affirmation, **Paul laid his hands upon them**. Some of the apostles had been present at each new phase of the church (Acts 2, 8, 10) so that they would be authoritative witnesses to the reality that all who believed in Jesus Christ were one in Him. I. Howard Marshall notes that

laying on of hands should be understood as a special act of fellowship, incorporating the people concerned into the fellowship of the church. This was necessary in the case of the Samaritan converts in chapter 8 to make it quite clear that they were accepted fully into the Jewish church centred on Jerusalem; and it was necessary in the present instance to make it clear to these members of a semi-Christian group that they were now becoming part of the universal church. (*The Acts of the Apostles* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992], 308)

As Paul made this gesture, **the Holy Spirit came upon them** and, as had others before them (cf. 2:1–4; 8:14–17), **they began speaking with tongues and prophesying**. That was a further indication that they were now a part of the one true church (cf. 11:15, 17). And since they had not even heard that the Spirit had come, they needed tangible proof that He had indeed come into their lives.

These **twelve men**, like Paul and Apollos before them, illustrate the transitional nature of Acts. The church, which had embraced Jews, Gentiles, and Samaritans, now gathered in the last group: Old Testament saints. And the same miraculous gifts were present, so that all would know what was said of the Gentiles in Acts 11:17–18:

If God therefore gave to them the same gift as He gave to us also after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way? And when they heard this, they quieted down, and glorified God, saying, "Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life."

So all the groups were gathered in. And in each case apostles were present to verify that all received the same Holy Spirit in the same way. That having been completed, Paul could write to the Ephesians, "There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Eph. 4:4–5). From then on, the Holy Spirit would come to every heart at salvation, as the epistles teach.

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¹ MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1994). *Acts*. MacArthur New Testament Commentary (326). Chicago: Moody Press.