



"REASONS TO REJOICE"

"Your Words were found and I ate them, and Your Word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." Jeremiah 15:16

"RIDING THROUGH" THE BOOK OF ACTS- LESSON 19

In our last lesson, Paul was just beginning his third missionary journey, traveling all over the region of Galatia and Phrygia (18:23). Meanwhile in Ephesus, Aquila and Priscilla were instructing Apollos more accurately in the ways of the Lord. Exciting things were happening!

In this week's lesson, we travel again with Paul back to Ephesus. Ephesus was on the west coast of Asia and was a very metropolitan city. Upon his arrival, Paul finds about 12 men whose Christianity seemed to be lacking something. Sounds a little like the doctrine of Apollos, don't you think? What was missing? Let's find out.

First Day

1. Read Acts 19. Read it through again, writing down any questions that come to your mind. (definition of words, theology, etc.)
2. Name the main characters in this chapter, both new and old. Describe them using one or two words.

Paul traveled the "**upper regions**," meaning that he traveled the higher and more direct route to Ephesus, rather than the regular trade route through Lycus and the Maeander valleys.

3. Reread Acts 19:1-7. Where was Apollos at this time?
4. Whom did Paul meet in Ephesus?

In Acts, the term "disciple" usually refers to Christian believers, although Luke, in his Gospel, also uses the word "disciples" when referring to followers of John the Baptist (Luke 5:33, 7:18, 19). The word "disciple" simply means a learner or follower. It is probable that the men at least regarded themselves as followers of John the Baptist. They were probably regarded as believers under the "old dispensation," where the saints believed in faith and the coming of the Messiah.

5. What question did Paul ask them? Why do you think he asked them that?

6. What was their response?

7. How did Paul explain baptism to them in verse 4?

Paul must have noticed that something was lacking in the lives of these disciples. Could he tell by how they lived? They may certainly have been early converts of Apollos, before Aquila and Priscilla had gotten ahold of him! Paul does not, as usual, beat around the bush. He comes right out and asks them if they have ever received the Holy Spirit. Paul knew that the baptism of the Holy Spirit was essential to the life of a Christian, and apparently did not see the power, or the fruit of the Spirit, in the lives of these men. We don't really know enough about these disciples to know exactly what verse two means. If they had been followers of the teachings of John the Baptist, they certainly would have at least heard of the Holy Spirit. John claimed to be the one who was to herald the coming of the Messiah, who would baptize them with the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11, Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16-17). They may have meant that they simply didn't know about Pentecost, or that the age that John had spoken of had come.

John's baptism was one of repentance. His urgent cry was, "Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand!" (Matthew 3:2) The baptism of John looked **forward** to the coming Messiah. The baptism of the Christian looks **back** to the finished work on the cross and His resurrection.

**Jon Courson said,
 "John's baptism was in preparation for the Messiah.
 Jesus' baptism was in celebration of the Messiah.
 John's baptism was a sign of repentance.
 Jesus' baptism was a sign of regeneration."**

This is the only mention in the New Testament of a second baptism. Why does Luke bring it out? **William Neal** suggests that "maybe Luke is giving us one of his pen-picture illustrations of yet another problem that faced Paul and the early missionaries -- namely, the existence of groups of so-called Christians who had been inadequately taught and had to be fully enlightened." (Sound familiar?) John's ministry may have impacted these men, but perhaps after John died, they left Palestine and knew nothing about Jesus' death, resurrection, and the promise of the Holy Spirit.

8. This was news! Did they receive it? (Acts 19:5) What did they do to confirm that belief?
9. What happened when the Holy Spirit came "upon" them? (Acts 19:6)

We studied the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer in Lesson 1, page 7 and 8. (You can read that lesson to refresh your memory.) We need to remember back in Acts 1:8, Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would come upon them, and they would receive power. The word used for power was "**dunamis**" from which we get our word dynamite. What a great word to describe the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives!

10. Again we ask you, have you allowed the Holy Spirit to come upon you, to empower you? Are you like these men, who were experiencing no power or boldness? Have you totally emptied yourself that you might be filled by Him?

When the Holy Spirit came upon them, they received the gift of tongues and prophecy. These are called "spiritual gifts." Spiritual gifts are defined as a special ability given by the Holy Spirit, to each member of the body of Christ. The term comes from the Greek word "Charisma," which means "gift of grace." We do not

deserve any gifts, but because of His amazing grace, He blesses us with them. We, in turn, are to use them for His glory.

A list of the gifts are found in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28-31, Romans 12:3-8, and Ephesians 4:11. Read all of 1 Corinthians 12-14 to understand how the gifts are to be used within the believer's life, as well as within the church service.

There are those who argue that use of the "sign" gifts (tongues, prophesy, healings, miracles) have ceased at this time and were only for the use of the early church and the apostles. We at Calvary believe that all the gifts are still operating within the church today, worldwide. We believe that the use of even these "sign" gifts will not cease until we meet Jesus face to face (1 Corinthians 13:8-13). We also believe that we are to adhere to the principles laid out in 1 Corinthians 14:26-33 and 40, which determine the proper way the gifts are to be used.

Whatever you believe to be true (according to the Scriptures), don't let the controversial aspects of the gifts cause division in the church. The gifts are given by God to edify, not to pull apart. Search the Scriptures as the Bereans did to find out what you believe. Don't take anyone's word for it ... find out for yourself!

11. These men (Acts 19:6) manifested two of the gifts. Are tongues and prophesy the sign of a Spirit-filled believer? Read 1 Corinthians 12:27-31. If not, what is? Read 1 Corinthians 12:13, 1 John 4:8, and John 13:35-36.

12. Is there evidence of the Spirit in your life? Is your life characterized by love? Can others see love working in you and through you?

We will end here for today. I rejoice that Paul had the spiritual gift of discernment and could see exactly what was lacking in the lives of these men. He used all the gifts that were given to him for God's glory. What's your gift? Are you using it?

Memory Verse of the Week: "And about that time there arose a great commotion about the Way." Acts 19:23

Second Day

Review your memory verse. Isn't it neat to see that the Gospel caused things to happen wherever it was preached?

Paul does his usual -- goes first to the synagogue to preach. Remember that in Acts 18:19, Paul had already visited the synagogue in Ephesus once before and was well received. This time he continued to reason in the synagogue for three months.

1. Read Acts 19:8-10. Why does Paul leave the synagogue?
2. By what name were the Christians referred to in Acts 19:9? (See Acts 9:2)
3. After Paul leaves the synagogue, where does he go? Why was this such a good move? (Acts 19:10)

Paul used the School of Tyrannus to minister in. This was actually a lecture hall belonging to a man named Tyrannus. The Codex Beza (a Greek manuscript) says that Paul used the hall from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., the period when most persons would be resting, and the lecture hall was not in use. In the Ionian cities, all work stopped at 11 a.m. until the late afternoon, because of the heat. This was their "afternoon siesta."

John Stott, in his book, Spirit, Church and World, tells us, "But Paul did not sleep in the daytime. Until 11 a.m. he would work at his tentmaking and Tyrannus would give his lectures. At 11 a.m., however, Tyrannus would go to rest... and Paul would exchange leather-work for lecture-work, continuing for five hours, and stopping only at 4 p.m. when work was resumed in the city. Assuming that the apostle kept one day in seven for worship and rest, he would have given a daily five-hour lecture six days a week for two years, which makes 3,120 hours of Gospel argument."

Wow! Talk about energy! The Holy Spirit gave Paul incredible strength to accomplish all He called him to do.

4. What about you? Has God called you to do something -- maybe a lot of things, but you just don't think you have the energy to do it? How does the example of Paul encourage you to call upon the Lord for His strength?
5. Was there fruit from his labor? Acts 19:10
6. Read Acts 19:11-12. How did God give credibility and validity to Paul's ministry? Was magic involved?

God used **"sweatbands and aprons"** as a point of contact for the faith of these Ephesians to be released. There was no power in the items themselves, the power was in God Himself.

7. Read Acts 19:13-20. With success comes attack. Describe what happened in these verses.
8. What do you think was the motive of the exorcists?
9. Could the demons tell the difference between a fake and the real thing?
10. What did the demons do to the exorcists?

Instead of stealing the show, the exorcists were actually used to demonstrate God's power. This story serves as a great contrast between the success of Paul's ministry, and the failure of the enemy's. The Word of God will always prevail!

11. Have you ever seen God take a situation that was meant for evil, and turn it around for good? What was the evil intended? How did God use it for good?

12. List the different reactions of the people from the following verses:
- The people were _____ (vs 17).
 - The people _____ the name of Jesus (vs 17).
 - Many _____ and _____ (vs 18).
 - Some of the people _____ their books (vs 19).
13. Why did they burn their books? How much were they worth?

One piece of silver was a "drachmas." One drachmas represented about a day's wage. Multiply that by 5,000. That was an expensive bonfire! The Ephesians desired to be rid of the remains of their old life -- they wanted to be blameless before Him.

14. Look at your own life. Is there something that needs to be thrown in the fire? Are there any remains of your old life? How much will it cost you? Are you willing to pay the price?

My "**Reason to Rejoice**" is found in verse 20, "So the Word of God grew mightily and prevailed." There is nothing that is stronger than God and His Word. No matter who or what is trying to take us down, God's Word still prevails! Oh, what a Savior!

Third Day

Review your memory verse. Is your walk causing "great commotion"?

Paul was making plans for the future. Things were going great in Ephesus, and he was ready to move on. Paul believed that the Lord was leading him to Rome, but he had something he had to do first. Jerusalem was having some problems. The mother church was having financial struggles and was very poor. He wanted to help them out before he continued his journey.

Why did Paul want to go to Rome? **Charles Swindoll** offers his opinion: "Rome was the Oval Office of the world, the place of ultimate clout. The emperor lived there. Saints lived in Caesar's palace. Paul knew that if he could reach Rome, he could reach some of the most influential Christians of the known world. Also, quite possibly, he could gain an audience with the emperor himself."

1. Read Acts 19:21-22. Read 1 Corinthians 16:1-7, Romans 15:25-33 and Acts 24:17. How do these Scriptures shed light on what Paul was doing?
2. Why did Paul think it was so important for the Gentile churches to help out the church in Jerusalem?
3. Whom did Paul send ahead to finish collecting the "love offerings"?

How long did Paul stay in Asia? We know that Paul ministered in Ephesus for three years (20:31). For three months of that time, Paul taught in the synagogue (19:8), and for another two years, he spoke in the school of Tyrannus (19:10). That leaves nine months that he stayed in Asia while Rome was tugging at his heart.

4. Read Acts 19:23-41. Before Paul got a chance to leave Ephesus, what happened? Describe the problem in your own words.

God was moving mightily in Ephesus. Many people were becoming believers. So often when we are experiencing victory in our lives and our ministry, the enemy decides to cause an uproar. It's crucial that we are armed and ready for these kinds of attacks. We don't ever want to be caught off guard!

5. Have you ever been attacked right after some type of victory in your life? Maybe like coming home from a retreat where you've been spiritually renewed and blessed, to discover some type of disaster? What did you do?

6. Why is this one of satan's favorite strategies? Why are we so vulnerable after a victory?

7. What should we do at all times? Read 1 Peter 5:8-9. What four things are we told to do? Define vigilant and sober.

8. Read the following Scriptures. What do they encourage us to do in our daily walk? 1 Corinthians 16:13, 1 Thessalonians 5:6, and 2 Timothy 2:3

9. Do you live your life this way? How can you be more watchful in your life?

10. Who caused the riot? What was his motive? (Acts 19:24)

11. In Acts 19:26-27, what two arguments did Demetrius use to start the commotion?

12. According to Acts 19:28, which argument aroused the people of Ephesus the most? How did they respond?

Who is this **Diana**, anyway? **John Stott** describes her in this way: "In classical mythology Artemis (whom the Romans called Diana) was a virgin huntress, but in Ephesus she had somehow become identified with an Asian fertility goddess. Ephesus guarded with immense pride both her grotesque, many-breasted image ... and the magnificent temple which housed it. This structure had more than 100 Ionic pillars, each 60 feet high, and supporting a white marble roof. Being four times the size of the Pantheon in Athens, and adorned by many beautiful paintings and sculptures, it was regarded as one of the Seven Wonders of the World."

The shrines that were being made were probably small representations of her seated in her temple. Devotees could buy these and present them at the temple as an act of worship.

The city was being threatened economically and religiously. Christianity was, and still is, a threat to many. In my life, Christianity was a threat to my personal choices and freedoms. I thought that if I accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior, I would no longer be able to enjoy the things of the world that I really liked! I wanted to control my own life.

13. Before you were saved, was Jesus a threat to you? In what way?

14. Is Jesus still a threat to you in some way? Are you afraid to fully surrender to Him for fear of what He'll ask you to do? Or fear of what you'll have to give up -- or change?

This ends our lesson for today. How sad it is to see the Ephesians crying out, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" But how awesome it is for us to know the one and true God, and be able to cry out, "The Lord is great, and greatly to be praised; He is also to be feared above all gods" (1 Chronicles 16:25)! He's my "**Reason to Rejoice**"!

Fourth Day

What's your memory verse?

There's commotion in the city -- what happens next?

1. Read Acts 19:23-41. From verse 29, what did the people in the city do? Whom did they seize? Why?

The city ran to the theater. This theater was thought to be able to hold 25,000 spectators. It was the natural place for the citizens to gather for an assembly.

Paul wanted to help his friends. He didn't cower in fear when he heard what was happening. As always, Paul was ready to face the danger head on. Could this crowd be the "**wild beasts**" he refers to in 1 Corinthians 15:32?

2. What "wild beasts" are you facing in your life? Is there something that you feel is trying to tear you apart? Should you face the danger, or run away?

3. Why did Paul's friends hold him back? (vs 30-31)

4. Read verse 32. Describe the state of the assembly.

The Jews most likely wanted someone to clear their name, making sure that the Jewish community was not being blamed for this uproar. They grab Alexander, putting him forth to speak out for them. Unfortunately for them, no one would listen (vs 34).

5. Read Acts 19:35-40. How does the city clerk manage to get the crowd to quiet down? What does he remind them of? What does he suggest they do? What was his concern?

The "city clerk" was the executive officer and chairman who kept all the public record and all business in the assembly. He was a little worried because he knew that Rome would not tolerate any civil disorder.

Ephesus was called a temple guardian (vs 35). This was a title of honor given to them by Rome because of their prestigious temple.

The image that fell down from Zeus (vs 35) was probably a meteorite that was roughly shaped like the image of Artemis.

The clerk dismissed the assembly after they had calmed down (19:41). As I study this chapter, I rejoice that in Christ, there is never a reason to fear. We can trust Him to take care of us always! Rejoice!

Fifth Day

Write out your verse by memory.

Let's review this chapter ...

1. What impressed you the most about this chapter?
2. What "new" truth did you learn?
3. How are you going to apply this truth to your life?
4. The motive of Demetrius' heart was greed. His sin caused major problems within the city. How much does our sin affect those around us? Are there any motives in your heart that are causing problems in the "city"?
5. Paul had "no fear." (He probably invented "No Fear" wear!) Are you experiencing any fear? Is fear from God? Read 2 Timothy 1:7.
6. How did God encourage your heart this week? How did the study of Acts 19 affect your life?

Even though the city clerk was trying to save his own neck, God used him to protect Paul. Doesn't it bring you comfort to know that God will protect you too, and He can use anything He wants to get His will accomplished! Let's rejoice this week in our God, whose ways are perfect!