

Acts 29 – Week 7 – Advancing the Gospel – Bible Study Helps

Title: Advancing the Gospel: From Corinth to Ephesus

Sermon Summary: This sermon explores the spread of the Gospel in the early church, focusing on Paul's ministry in Corinth and Ephesus. It emphasizes the power of common believers to spread the Gospel, the importance of correct doctrine, and the transformative impact of the Gospel on individuals and societies. The sermon also highlights the spiritual warfare faced by early Christians and the ongoing relevance of these struggles in modern times.

Key Points:

- The importance of understanding the historical context of the early church
- The role of common believers like Aquila and Priscilla in spreading the Gospel
- The significance of correct doctrine and the dangers of false teaching
- The transformative power of the Gospel in confronting pagan practices
- The spiritual warfare faced by early Christians and its relevance today
- The importance of humility and openness to learning in spiritual growth
- The danger of confusion and emotional manipulation in opposing the Gospel
- The parallels between ancient pagan practices and modern religious syncretism

Scripture Reference:

- Acts 18-19
- 1 Corinthians 2:1-5

Stories:

- The conversion of Apollos through the teaching of Aquila and Priscilla
- The burning of occult books in Ephesus
- The riot in Ephesus over the goddess Diana
- The story of the seven sons of Sceva attempting exorcisms

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Discipleship and Small Group Guide: The Gospel in Corinth and Ephesus (Acts 18-19)

Opening Question:

What stood out to you most from the sermon? Why?

Key Takeaways:

1. God uses ordinary people to spread the Gospel and make disciples.
2. The transition from Jewish to Gentile ministry required patience and understanding.
3. False teaching and opposition often arise when the Gospel is preached effectively.
4. True conversion leads to radical life changes and rejection of sinful practices.

Discussion Questions:

1. How does the story of Aquila and Priscilla teaching Apollos encourage you in your own ministry?
2. The sermon mentions that we should ask questions to determine if someone truly understands the Gospel. What are some effective questions we could ask?
3. How does Paul's approach to ministry in Ephesus (teaching daily in the school of Tyrannus) inform our approach to discipleship today?
4. Discuss the significance of the Ephesians burning their occult books. What might be modern equivalents in our lives that we need to "burn"?
5. How does the riot in Ephesus illustrate the conflict between the Gospel and worldly systems? Have you experienced similar conflicts in your own life?
6. The sermon touches on spiritual warfare. How can we be more aware of and prepared for spiritual battles in our daily lives?

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Practical Applications:

1. This week, look for an opportunity to share your faith with someone, remembering that God can use ordinary people like us.
2. Evaluate your life for any "idols" or worldly influences that might be hindering your relationship with God. Consider what steps you need to take to remove them.
3. Spend time in prayer for persecuted Christians around the world who face opposition like Paul did in Ephesus.
4. Choose a person in your life who may not fully understand the Gospel. Pray for an opportunity to have a meaningful conversation with them about Jesus.

Closing Prayer:

Lord, thank you for using ordinary people like us to spread Your Gospel. Help us to be bold in our faith, wise in our interactions, and willing to give up anything that hinders our relationship with You. Give us discernment to recognize false teaching and the courage to stand firm in the truth. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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Discipleship Questions

How does the story of Aquila and Priscilla teaching Apollos demonstrate the importance of both humility and biblical knowledge in spiritual growth?

In what ways might the 'special miracles' performed through Paul in Ephesus be misunderstood or misapplied by some modern Christians?

How does the burning of valuable books and items related to 'curious arts' challenge us to examine our own attachments and entertainment choices today?

What parallels can we draw between the opposition Paul faced in Ephesus and the challenges Christians may encounter when sharing the Gospel in today's world?

How might the concept of 'tent-making' as exemplified by Paul inform our approach to balancing ministry work with secular employment?

In what ways does the account of the seven sons of Sceva illustrate the dangers of using Jesus' name without a genuine relationship with Him?

How does the riot in Ephesus reveal the economic and social impact of the Gospel, and what implications might this have for our own society?

What can we learn from Paul's method of 'disputing daily' in the lecture hall of Tyrannus about effective discipleship and teaching?

How does the transition from synagogue to house meetings in Ephesus inform our understanding of church planting and growth strategies?

In what ways does the description of Diana worship and its parallels to later religious practices challenge us to critically examine our own faith traditions and practices?

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Here's a 5-day Bible reading plan and devotional guide

Day 1: The Power of the Gospel

Reading: Acts 18:1-11

Devotional: Paul's ministry in Corinth reminds us of the transformative power of the Gospel. Despite facing opposition, Paul persevered in preaching Christ crucified. God encouraged him, saying, "Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace. For I am with thee" (Acts 18:9-10). This promise extends to us today. As we share our faith, remember that God is with us, empowering us to speak His truth boldly. Reflect on how you can be more courageous in sharing the Gospel in your daily life.

Day 2: Common People, Extraordinary Impact

Reading: Acts 18:24-28

Devotional: The story of Aquila and Priscilla teaching Apollos shows how God uses ordinary people to make an extraordinary impact. These tentmakers played a crucial role in refining Apollos' understanding of the Gospel. God doesn't require us to have impressive credentials to serve Him effectively. He simply asks for willing hearts and obedient spirits. Consider your own gifts and experiences. How might God be calling you to use them to build up others in faith?

Day 3: The Holy Spirit's Work in Salvation

Reading: Acts 19:1-7

Devotional: Paul's encounter with the disciples in Ephesus highlights the essential role of the Holy Spirit in salvation. True faith in Christ is always accompanied by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. This passage reminds us to examine our own faith - do we merely know about Jesus, or have we truly experienced the transforming power of His Spirit? Pray for a deeper awareness of the Holy Spirit's presence in your life and for His guidance in all you do.

Day 4: Confronting False Teachings

Reading: Acts 19:8-20

Devotional: Paul's ministry in Ephesus led to a powerful confrontation between the Gospel and false spiritual practices. Many believers publicly renounced their past involvement with sorcery, burning their expensive magic books. This radical act demonstrates the complete life change that comes with true faith in Christ. Are there areas in your life that are incompatible with your faith? Ask God to reveal any compromises and give you the strength to fully commit to His ways.

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Day 5: Standing Firm Amidst Opposition

Reading: Acts 19:23-41

Devotional: The riot in Ephesus illustrates the opposition that often arises when the Gospel challenges established cultural and economic systems. Despite the uproar, Paul and his companions remained steadfast in their mission. In our own lives, we may face ridicule, rejection, or even hostility for our faith. Remember that God is sovereign even in times of chaos and confusion. Pray for strength to stand firm in your convictions and for wisdom to navigate conflicts with grace and truth.