



Opening Prayer & Icebreaker: Can you think of a time when things changed for the better? How did you initially feel about that change?

Read and Reflect on Acts 18:23-20:1:

²³ After spending some time in Antioch, Paul set out from there and traveled from place to place throughout the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.²⁴ Meanwhile a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. ²⁵ He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervor and taught about Jesus accurately, though he knew only the baptism of John. ²⁶ He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately.²⁷ When Apollos wanted to go to Achaia, the brothers and sisters encouraged him and wrote to the disciples there to welcome him. When he arrived, he was a great help to those who by grace had believed. ²⁸ For he vigorously refuted his Jewish opponents in public debate, proving from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Messiah.¹⁹ While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples ² and asked them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” They answered, “No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.”³ So Paul asked, “Then what baptism did you receive?” “John’s baptism,” they replied.⁴ Paul said, “John’s baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus.” ⁵ On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶ When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. ⁷ There were about twelve men in all.⁸ Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God. ⁹ But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. ¹⁰ This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.¹¹ God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, ¹² so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them.¹³ Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, “In the name of the Jesus whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out.” ¹⁴ Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. ¹⁵ One day the evil spirit answered them, “Jesus I know, and Paul I know about, but who are you?” ¹⁶ Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding.¹⁷ When this became known to the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus, they were all seized with fear, and the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honor. ¹⁸ Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed what they had done. ¹⁹ A number who had practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly. When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to fifty thousand drachmas. ²⁰ In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.²¹ After all this had happened, Paul decided to go to Jerusalem, passing through Macedonia and Achaia. “After I have been there,” he said, “I must visit Rome also.” ²² He sent two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia, while he stayed in the province of Asia a little longer.²³ About that time there arose a great disturbance about the Way. ²⁴ A silversmith named Demetrius, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought in a lot of business for the craftsmen there. ²⁵ He called them together, along with the workers in related trades, and said: “You know, my friends, that we receive a good income from this business. ²⁶ And you see and hear how this fellow Paul has convinced and led astray large numbers of people here in Ephesus and in practically the whole province of Asia. He says that gods made by human hands are no gods at all. ²⁷ There is danger not only that our trade will lose its good name, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be discredited; and the goddess herself, who is worshiped throughout the province of Asia and the world, will be robbed of her divine majesty.”²⁸ When they heard this, they were furious and began shouting: “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!” ²⁹ Soon the whole city was in an uproar. The people seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul’s traveling companions from Macedonia, and all of them rushed into the theater together. ³⁰ Paul wanted to appear before the crowd, but the disciples would not let him. ³¹ Even some of the officials of the province, friends of Paul, sent him a message begging him not to venture into the theater.³² The assembly was in confusion: Some were shouting one thing, some another. Most of the people did not even know why they were there. ³³ The Jews in the crowd pushed Alexander to the front, and they shouted instructions to him. He motioned for silence in order to make a defense before the people. ³⁴ But when they realized he was a Jew, they all shouted in unison for about two hours: “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!”³⁵ The city clerk quieted the crowd and



said: “Fellow Ephesians, doesn’t all the world know that the city of Ephesus is the guardian of the temple of the great Artemis and of her image, which fell from heaven? ³⁶ Therefore, since these facts are undeniable, you ought to calm down and not do anything rash. ³⁷ You have brought these men here, though they have neither robbed temples nor blasphemed our goddess. ³⁸ If, then, Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen have a grievance against anybody, the courts are open and there are proconsuls. They can press charges. ³⁹ If there is anything further you want to bring up, it must be settled in a legal assembly. ⁴⁰ As it is, we are in danger of being charged with rioting because of what happened today. In that case we would not be able to account for this commotion, since there is no reason for it.” ⁴¹ After he had said this, he dismissed the assembly. ²⁰ When the uproar had ended, Paul sent for the disciples and, after encouraging them, said goodbye and set out for Macedonia.

Gospel Clarification: The Gospel must be clarified wherever it goes. (Acts 18:24-19:7)

1. Read **Acts 18:24-25**. What do we learn from Apollos about the importance of having a *complete and accurate* understanding of the gospel?
2. Read **Ephesians 1:13-14**, and revisit **Acts 19:1-7**. What does the “Ephesian Pentecost” teach us about the role of the Holy Spirit in salvation and spiritual growth?
3. How can we lovingly clarify the gospel today in a world of religious confusion and spiritual half-truths?

Gospel Conversion: The Gospel brings conversion wherever it goes. (Acts 19:8-20)

1. Pastor Jon said that “*From the outside nothing about Ephesus made it seem like the gospel would be successful there.*” Where are places in our state, country or world where we might make the same assumption?
2. Read **Acts 19:17-20**. Many turned away from the occult. The magicians publicly burned their books—an expensive and risky act of repentance. What might this look like for us today?
3. What does this movement of God in Ephesus teach us about the cost of following Jesus?

Gospel Confrontation: The Gospel brings confrontation wherever it goes. (Acts 19:21-20:1)

1. Read **Acts 19:34**. The mob in Ephesus shouted “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!” for two hours. What are some modern “chants” or slogans that echo a similar devotion to false gods today?
2. Read **Acts 19:35-41**. What does the city clerk’s surprising intervention reveal about God’s sovereignty, even through unbelievers?
3. In what ways does the gospel still confront the idols of our culture—money, pleasure, comfort, success, or self?
4. How has the gospel changed your life personally? How has it cost you?

Closing Prayer:

Our prayer is for the unchanging God to use us, as He used his followers in Ephesus so long ago; that the Gospel would be unleashed here and now, in us and through us; that idols would be torn down.

Faith in Action:

- October 19, 8AM and 12PM (pick one), Community Group Leader Peer Learning
- October 19, 11:45 AM, Concerts of Prayer for New Partnership in India, F101