

Exorcism: True or False? Part 1

Acts 19:8-10

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We're going to be looking at the total unit of Acts 19 verse 8 to 20. Acts 19, verses 8 through 20. And the title of the message is exorcism, true or false? There's only one use of the word exorcist in the New Testament and that's in this passage. It's amazing how the Lord times things, isn't it? Because we're just going through the book of Acts and we ran right into it here. Jesus came into the world the Bible says "to destroy the works of the devil."

Now we see particularly His power over Satan at the cross where he bruises the serpent's head. We see it prophetically in the book of Revelation where we see Satan in prophecy bound. For 1000 years, then released then thrown forever into the bottomless pit. We see the power of Jesus Christ over Satan displayed in His temptation as His ministry began, Satan endeavored to tempt Him and was unsuccessful on three occasions.

But I think also we see the tremendous power that Jesus Christ had over the works of the devil in His power exhibited over demons. Just to give you an example of this, I want you to turn in your Bible to the 17th chapter of Matthew and just glance with me at a portion of Scripture that will sort of give you those thoughts regarding His power over demons. And we'll look at several of them just as a little bit of an introduction.

In Matthew 17:14 it says, and I'll begin reading, you can pick it up with me when you get there, "and when they were come to the multitude, there came to Him a certain man kneeling down to Him and saying, 'Lord have mercy on my son, for he is epileptic,'" that is he is prone to seizures, "and greatly vexed for often he falleth into the fire and often into the water. And I brought him to Thy disciples and they could not cure him." Then Jesus answered and said, "Oh faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, how long shall I bear with you, bring him here to Me. And Jesus rebuked the demon and he departed out of him and the child was cured from that very moment."

And here we see the authority of Christ over spirits. "Then came the disciples to Jesus privately and said, 'why could not we cast him out?' And Jesus said under them, 'because of your unbelief. For rarely I say unto you if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain, move from here to yonder place and it shall move. And nothing shall be impossible unto you.' How be it this kind goith not except out by prayer and fasting."

Now here Jesus says that there is an Old Testament kind of pattern. There is a pattern for the expelling of demons and that is by prayer and fasting. But Jesus didn't need to do that because He had absolute authority over demons. So He just spoke and the demon left. 1 Mark, verse 34 gives us another insight into this. Verse 32 says, "When the evening came, the sun did set, they brought unto Him disease and those possessed with demons."

Verse 34 then "and He healed many that were sick of diverse diseases and cast out many demons." Now that's interesting, but listen to this. "And permitted not the demons to speak because they knew Him." Now here Jesus Christ not only is capable of expelling demons, but He's capable of controlling them. He didn't permit them to speak. Later on in the same Gospel, the 5 chapter of Mark, we meet a most interesting character; Jesus goes to the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee. And to the country of the Gerasenes or the Gadarenes, whichever. And He was come there, He came out of the boat and He met a man who was living in the tombs. And a possessed and unclean spirit.

Now all demons are evil, all demons are vile, all demons are anti-God and pro-Satan, but when it says unclean spirit, it means that the manifestation of that demon is in the vilest areas. Some demons are still demons, but they wouldn't be called unclean demons because they may operate in a rather suave sophisticated religious front. But this kind of demon is a vile beast kind of operator.

Anyway meets a man coming out of the tombs of the unclean spirit, he had his dwelling among the tombs. That's strange enough as it is. "No man could bind him nor with chains for he had often been bound with fetters and chains and the chains had implucked the sunder by him and the fetters broke in pieces. Neither could any man tame him.

And here we see another illustration of demon possession that indicates that it involves a supernatural strength at times. "Always night and day was in the mountains" verse 5 "and the tombs crying and cutting himself with stones. When he saw Jesus afar off he ran and worshipped Him and cried in a loud voice. And said, 'what have I to do with Thee Jesus Thou Son of the most high God.'" Interesting that he knew Jesus. Believe me, they know Jesus. "I implore thee by God that Thou torment me not." See how did he know Jesus? Demons have been in existence since before the world was created.

They knew Him in the first place when they were still holy angels in heaven. They worshipped Him before the fall of demons. That's one way they knew Him. The other way is I'm sure the word was out. Verse 8 "Jesus said unto him, 'come out of the man Thou unclean spirit' and He asked him, 'what is thy name?' And he answered 'Say my name is Legion for we are many.' And he besought Him much that He would not send him away out of the country, now that we're near under the mountains of the great herd of the swine feeding all the demons besought Him saying 'send us into the swine that we enter into them and forth with Jesus gave them leave.'"

Isn't that interesting? It wasn't just the case of Him casting them out. As soon as he appeared they wanted out. And he just gave them permission to go. What power to exercise over the spirit world. "Forth with Jesus gave them leave the unclean spirits went out entered into the swine and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea, they were about 2,000 and were choked in the sea."

And here again you see the power of Jesus. Now one other passage just expressing the same thing as he exercises authoritative power over demons. Luke, chapter 4, verse 33. And read a couple verses here. "And the synagogue there was a man who had a spirit of an unclean demon." And again, here's one of these demons working in the area of immorality and obvious uncleanness. "And he cried in a loud voice saying, 'let us alone, what have we to do without Jesus of Nazareth?' 'Are thou come to destroy us?'"

You know even the demons know what the ultimate end is. They were saying, is this the time we get it? I know Thee who Thou art. The Holy One of God. Jesus rebuked him saying, "Hold thy peace. Come out of him. When the demon had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him and heard him not. They were all amazed and spoke among themselves saying, 'what a word is this?' For with authority and power He commanded the unclean spirits and they come out."

Verse 41 of the same chapter says, "And demons also came out of many crying out and saying, 'Thou art Christ the Son of God.' And he rebuking them did not allow them to speak, for they knew He was Christ." The Lord never did want any publicity from demons. Now here you have several illustrations of Christ's tremendous power and control over demons. Now notice this friends, whenever Jesus dealt with demons, it was never a case of exorcism, it was always a case of authority. Okay?

Very important. Watch this. "There was never a struggle involved. There was only absolute authority." Now Jesus committed this very same power over demons to some of His followers. In the end of Mark, chapter 16 and verse 17 it says, "In My name shall they cast out demons." And when it says in My name, it doesn't mean using the name of Jesus like a magical formula. It means on the basis of His power and His person demons should be cast out. And you'll remember in Luke 10:17, you don't need to look it up, I'll just read it to you. I'll look it up myself so I read it properly.

But Luke 10:17 says, "And the 70 returned again with joy saying" remember He sent out the 70 two by two. "They came and they said, 'Lord, even the demons are subject unto us through that name.'" So they had His power. Christ granted to them the power over demons. And that was a special granting incidentally in the Gospel accounts. Especially for those times did Christ give them that power. In the Book of Acts, after the Holy Spirit had come, the Apostles had this power. And they used it always in the Book of Acts in the case of unbelievers. In the case of unbelievers. They would go up to unbelievers and just cast out demons.

Acts 5:16, "the multitude of people came, sick folks, vexed with unclean spirits and they were healed everyone." And this was the Apostles back in verse 12. It says "by the hands of the Apostles signs and wonders were done." So Jesus passed onto His Apostles an authoritative power over demons. Now hang onto that thought. Chapter 8, verse 7. Chapter 8, verse 7. "Unclean spirits crying with a loud voice came out of many that were possessed with them" and goes on to talk about healings. This was the case of Philip. Now here's another one who is not an Apostle but a follower of Christ, an Evangelist. And God uses him also to cast out demons.

In Acts, chapter 16, verse 18, Paul did it, that girl kept coming along and she was demon possessed. People were making a lot of money off of her _____ but in verse 18, Paul turned around and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her and he came out the same moment." Now notice this. This is going to try to put together a little chronological insight.

Jesus cast out demons by authority. Jesus passed that same authority onto His Apostles. The Apostles could cast out demons authoritatively with a word. And they were gone. Now I believe that that is one of the apostolic gifts. I do not believe that such a gift exists today. I believe they had this gift for the purpose of confirming the Word. And I'm making mention of that here because we're not going to get to it until the second part of our message. And I don't want you to be left dangling on that.

I don't believe that that apostolic gift exists today. Where an individual could just walk up to an unbeliever in the name of Jesus Christ cast demons out. I think that's an apostolic, I think that's indicated in Hebrews, chapter 2, verses 3 and 4 where he says certain signs and wonders and gifts of the Holy Spirit were given to the Apostles. And 2 Corinthians 12 and also in the end of Mark, I think it's chapter 16 verse 20, "they went everywhere, yes, and they were confirming the Word with signs, apostolic signs. And some of those signs" back to verse 17 "were casting out demons."

So the Apostles had a unique power. Now listen. Prior to the time of Christ, all during the Old Testament, right up to the cross, demons still existed. And demons still would end well people. You say, well how did they get rid of them then? I think that's the answer that Jesus gave in our passage which we read in Matthew 17. He said, "These come out but not by" what? "Prayer and fasting."

Under the Old Testament pattern, demons came out in an answer to prayer just like any other prayers. Praying and fasting was on behalf of people's illness too, wasn't it? People prayed and fasted over certain spiritual issues. And that was the same thing with demons. They could pray and fast and God would hear and answer their prayer. But when Jesus came, it was a whole new thing. He came in absolute authority over demons. And He passed on that authority to His apostles and they did the same thing. You say why did God give them the authority? And not us? God gave them the authority very clearly for the confirmation of the Word which they preached.

They preached the Word, why would you believe it? Because they also did supernatural wonders to attest to its truth. Now today we don't need any miracles to confirm the Word. God still does miracles, but not confirming miracles because the Word is already put here in our hands. You can judge any man's speech, any man's message, whether it's squares with this book. In those days, you could only judge a man's message on the basis of the supernatural works of God that accompanied him.

Alright, so then just that is important. But in the Old Testament, it was a question of prayer when Christ came it was authority and in the Apostle's case it was authority. You say what about us? Well there are some people today who are still trying to do it in an apostolic fashion. There's a pre-occupation today with getting rid of demons. And I want to just speak to this for just a minute. Let me say at the beginning, this simple statement. The power of Jesus Christ alone can overrule Satan. Did you get that?

That sounds very primer, but that's true. The power of Jesus Christ alone can get rid of demons. There is no other way. And listen to the second statement. "No demon can overpower Jesus Christ." Okay? Listen then. There's no human power, there's no human agency, there is no religious rite. There is no religious ceremony. There is no gimmick, there is no formula and there is no exorcism that works.

Did you get that? They don't work. You say but what about all of these so-called exorcisms that are going on, being done by mediums and clairvoyants and, they don't work. You say why? I'll give you a couple reasons. Reason one is this. If something is not of Christ, of whom is it? Satan. Does Satan cast out Satan? No. Would Satan like you to believe he cast out demons? Sure. Satan would like to have a clairvoyant or a medium believe that he can actually do this. Satan deceives. And what he does is phony exorcisms.

And that way he extends his power. And we'll talk more about that. There are people today who even use the name of Jesus as a gimmick, as a little formula. I read an article and this is a quote from one of the incidents. It said, "We ordered the spirit to leave in the name of Jesus and it screamed back, there is no Jesus, there is no Jesus." And it wouldn't leave. You see you can't use the name of Jesus as a gimmick. There's no magical power in the name of Jesus. And it bothers me that I hear even Christians going around just using the name of Jesus like a formula, or using the little formula of I plead the blood which becomes nothing but a formula.

And there's nothing wrong with the blood of Jesus Christ, believe me. But don't reduce it to a formula that's supposed to work some magic hocus pocus on demons. You say well John, how do you get rid of demons? Well in the first place, when you're dealing with an unbeliever, there's only one way a unbeliever is ever going to get rid of demons. And that's by receiving Jesus Christ. Right? He's the only one that can cleanse. You can't exorcise the demon out of the heart that belongs to Satan. You may think you can, but Satan will just stay in there and occupy it again.

You say, well what about a Christian? What about a Christian who has a problem with a demon or a multiple of demons? How does he get rid of those demons? Well I don't think he has to have a long drawn out sweat session for eight or 10 hours while people exorcise him even using Christian verses. Singing songs and doing things like that. You say, wait a minute, how do you get rid of him? Listen to this. Who is the only one who can control demons? Jesus Christ.

In Matthew 12:28, Christ said this, "I by the Spirit of God cast out demons." Alright, it is the power of Christ, the power of the Holy Spirit that cast out demons. Now you answer me this question. Where does the Spirit of Christ live? Where does He live? In me. Right? Then whom do I need to cast out demons. I don't need any other humans. For a Christian to get rid of the problem of demons is as simple as the area of confession and holiness, just that simple.

And I think Satan has built the whole lot of Christian people into thinking that the Christian life reduces down to a demon hunt. And you know what that does? That removes you from the real problem. You know who your biggest problem is? Not your wife. You know who your biggest problem is? You. You. Listen, if I have Jesus Christ in me, do I have all of His power? "In Him dwelleth the fullness of the God head bodily and ye are complete in Him." Do I lack anything? Do I have all things that pertain to life and godliness? I don't lack anything. If Jesus Christ dwells with me, if the Holy Spirit dwells within me, I can deal with Satan in the power of Christ that is mine and mine alone.

Now maybe do I need some believers to point out sin to me. To pray along with me, but that's a problem that Christ can handle in my own life as I confess and repent of sin. Now I'm saying that because I know that Christ can cast out demons and I don't have part of them. I don't need your part with my part to do it. He can do that in my life. You say, well what about all these exorcists? I mean it seems to work. Well of course it seems to work. Because Satan wants people to believe that things are happening. And incidentally they often in Christian circles, when Christians get preoccupied with this they really are removed from the real issues of the Christian life.

Listen to Matthew 12:22, I'll read it to you. "Then was brought to Him a man possessed with demon. Blind and dumb, He healed him so much that the blind and dumb both spoke and saw it." It's interesting that demon possession can have physical results. Well and the Pharisees heard it, verse 24, they said, "This man or this fellow cast out demons by Beelzebub the prince of demons." In otherwords He's doing it by Satan.

So Jesus says, every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, every city or house divided it against itself cannot stand. If Satan cast out Satan, he's divided against himself. Believe me folks; Satan isn't going to cast out Satan. The only way demons will ever be cast out is in the power of the Lord Jesus Christ. That power is resident in every believer. You are sufficient to take care of the responsibility of your spiritual life.

Listen, I'll give you an illustration that will help to show you how simple this is. It is just as simple for you to get rid of a legion of demons in you as for you to get victory over a little white lie. Did you hear that? It is just as simple for you to get rid of a legion of demons as it is to get over the hump in confessing a little white lie. Why? Because it's all sin and Christ has absolute power over sin in whatever form. Do you believe that?

I have nothing to fear. It doesn't even matter. You'll say, oh, was it a demon or wasn't it a demon? Was it me or was it him? See, who cares? See. Who cares? It isn't the point. Don't try to stick your nose into the supernatural. As the preacher said, you can't unscrew the unscrewable. You can't see into that dimension. That's an area where you are not able to understand. But you don't need to understand what's going on in Satan's kingdom. All you need to understand is that if I lean on the power of the Spirit of God, He delivers me from whatever it is.

Jesus cast out demons by the power of the Spirit of God all of that power resides in you so that you're able to do it exceedingly, abundantly above all you can ask for think. Now the word exorcism then doesn't belong in the Christian's vocabulary. It's absolutely unnecessary. There may be times when a prolonged session of council in admonishing and prayer needs to take place, but that's the problem of a person's willingness to confess sin. Not a problem of getting rid of the demon. The demon is gone when the Spirit of God's in control.

For greater is He that He's in you than what? He that is in the world if you're filled with Christ, you can't be filled with Christ and something else. If you're filled with the Spirit of God, controlled and yielded to Him, there's no place. So we say the word exorcism then does not belong in a Christian vocabulary. In fact it only appears once in the New Testament in verse 13 "and these are vagabond Jewish exorcists who try to use the name of Jesus to pull off an exorcism and it didn't work." And man before it was over they were sorry they tried.

We'll get into that in a few weeks. Now exorcism, we say, well what is exorcism John? Well exorcism is this. Exorcism is the process of expelling evil demons. That would be a dictionary definition. Want to know my definition? Exorcism is the process of thinking you've dispelled demons. Because exorcism doesn't happen. Exorcism doesn't work. But Satan just loves to get people preoccupied with it. You know among the ancient people, the whole key was supposedly the magical words and so we have found many archeological discoveries of ___ that had all kinds of magical incantations and all kinds of little formulas that involved the names of gods and all kinds of things that are used to expel demons.

And the recital of those things was very important. They be recited correctly and all the right formulas and so forth. These have been found in areas around Babylonia, Syria, Egypt, and some of the ancient writings. Missionaries have found exorcism to be a part of everything from South Africa to Oriental cultures, from South American to Europe; it's all over the place. And one of the most

common ways and I was interested to read this. That they use in these incantations is pain.

They think that if they can inflict pain they can drive the demon out by discomfort. So it is common to beat up the person or to prick them with needles or to pinch them or to burn them. Hoping the discomfort will drive away the demons. There's a celebrate shrine in Ghandus ___ India. Very famous and people go there for having demons exorcised. And the exorcists have their own methods. Violence and pain the most common. This article said when the cure fails, the demon is said to be vicious and obstinent. If severe beating of the victim proves fruitless, then cotton wicks soaked in oil are lighted and stuff up the nostrils.

And you know there are cures. You know that? That's why people keep going back. That's how Satan hooks people into his system. You say, well he wouldn't do that to Christians? Sure if a Christian is misdirected from the real issue of his life which is his own sin and his own honest confession and his own dealing with his own sin nature and his own dealing in the Word of God, if he can get in misdirected to blame everything on demons, he'll likely keep him there.

And then the Christian life turns into a demon hunt. Methods of exorcism have been used for centuries and used by witch doctors and by sophisticated people today. I read about that thing in the paper you may have read it where some landlord in some apartment paid people \$3500.00 to get rid of some demons. It's always been big business. But when Jesus came along it was different. There wasn't anything phony about it. He spoke and they were gone. In fact when He arrived, they wanted out.

And by simple faith in Him beloved who dwells in you. You have nothing to fear. Now if there's sin in your life, willing, willful, protracted, unconfessed, unrepented of sin, you have given place to Satan. Illustration and ___ fire. And the price was high. But to reduce the authoritative truth of the power of Christ in my life, the ritualistic rigmarole even with Christian terms as it is in White Magic so often is just to give Satan another tool to deceive him.

Historically for example the Roman Catholic Church has been involved in rites of exorcism and they've got all the secret formulas for it. Don't you see that isn't biblical. A superstitious, it's paganism tied into Christianity again which sucks the blood out of Christianity. Christianity mixed with anything is less than Christianity. Monsignor Luigi Novarese according to Newsweek magazine, February 11, this month. "The official exorcist for the Pope and for the Pope's diocese of Rome, estimates that he has performed the ancient ritual rity romanum 60 times."

And this is ____. Let me give you another interesting thing. I was interested to read also in the same article in Newsweek that it has become a new interest in the Pentecostal movement. Now already which is geared so often to an emotional response. And Newsweek, February 11, 74 said this and I quote. "Among Pentecostal Christians, both Roman Catholic and Protestant, exorcism has become as common as speaking in tongues." This is the new thing. I don't know if you're aware of it. If you've been coming to Grace Church, you're not.

But you are now. Because we're not involved in chasing demons around. But this is the new thing. Now there's a book that's been written by a man named Don Besham and the title of the book is Can a Christian Have a Demon? I think that's the title. But anyway in the book, he says that he runs an independent charismatic deliverance ministry out of Pompano Beach, Florida.

And in this ministry he is involved in helping Christians get rid of demons. A person will come and say he has a demon of this, a demon of that, a demon of the other, a demon. He'll have these long sessions and extract all these demons. Well he gives one testimony in chapter 5 that is most interesting and I think will serve to illustrate the foolishness of this thing and it's right out of the book. It was given as a positive. I'm simply going to read it and you'll see what it comes across as.

This is the testimony of a Doctor Loughton Smith, MD. In Miami, Florida. "What happened thereafter was an amazing thing. Jerry commanded in the name of the Lord Jesus that the demon should name himself. I heard a voice speak out of my own lyrics, with an entirely different tone and inflection than my own voice and say fingernail biting." Now that is the name of the demon. I really vagers my intelligence to believe that that is anything truthful.

Listen to this, "I had bitten my nails since I was a small child and never gotten the victory over this in my Christian life. The Rutkins then prayed in tongue and commanded the demon to come out in the name of the Lord Jesus. I felt the pulling sensation in my fingers and began gagging and coughing. As soon as this stopped I felt a tremendous relief and I had the witness of the Holy Spirit that the demon had gone." Don't you see how artificial that is?

Blaming as such a habit as biting your fingernails on a demon. You see this constant removal of responsibility. So that you never really get honest with God by your own light. Listen to the rest of this. You haven't heard anything yet. "Jerry and Eileen prayed for me for two hours and the demons of allergy, sinus and post nasal drip." I told you it would be hard to believe. It's what it said. And many others came out. "Many had pre-pubertal adolescent voices and had come in when I was a small child. This was a very tiring experience. And I went home to rest."

Boy. That's a dear man and God bless him for being a Christian and loving the Lord Jesus. But God help him to see the truth of how Satan works. And when all this is being carried on by Christians who down deep in their hearts mean well, it's just a terrible thing that they don't understand the Scripture enough to know that they have the authority of Christ if there is a real demonic issue and that if this guy is a honest confessing Christian, there is not going to be a demon problem in his life and least of all would demons care whether you had post nasal drip or not?

But don't you see how subtle Satan is. Foolish, it's just triviality. Raphael Gasson and his book, The Challenging Counterfeit, shows how even the occultic mediums use exorcisms. Only they don't call it exorcisms, they call it rescue work. And they go into people situations in their particular sorceries and magical formulas and they try to alleviate the evil spirits. And you know it works? Spiritualists today defend themselves. You know they use the name of Christ. And so forth and so forth. And you know how they defend themselves? They say well we do it our way and it works.

And the people give testimony to it that the fact that it works. Sure, if Satan can hook a guy to a spiritualist, he'll do anything to convince him that spiritualist works. Now here in our text, we run into some of these exorcists who try their little formula. They even tried it in the name of Jesus. And it didn't work. It didn't work. Alright, let's start approaching the text now. That's enough introduction.

And we'll get into this in detail when we conclude the message later on. Paul in his third missionary journey started out in Antioch where he always started. Antioch of Syria which was home base where

he was the co-pastor with Barnabas and three other fellows. And he started on his third journey. Verse 23 of chapter 18. This is the beginning of his journey, he spent some time in Antioch, he departed went over the country Balaia Furgia, strengthening disciples. Finally he comes to the town of Ephesus. Now he had been to Ephesus once before, hadn't he?

Remember on the end of the second journey. He had left Corinth and on his way to Jerusalem, he had stopped at Ephesus. Yes, that's recorded for us in verse 19 of chapter 18. He came to Ephesus, he left Priscilla and Aquila there, he himself entered the synagogue, reasoned with the Jews, they desired him to stay longer, but he had to go because he wanted to get to the feast verse 21. He said, "I'll come again if God wills and left Ephesus."

So he stayed a little while. Had a little ministry in the synagogue, but then he took off for Jerusalem, finished the vow that he had made at Corinth there, then he went to Antioch. Now he's off on his third missionary tour and again returns to Ephesus. Verse 1 of 19, we saw this in our last study of this chapter. "He came to Ephesus and found certain disciples" and you remember they were disciples of John the Baptist. He led them to Christ, they were saved, the church nucleus was begun.

So here's a group already in Ephesus. Aquila and Priscilla are there, a group of believers are there that he has led to Christ. Some people perhaps that even Aquila and Priscilla had introduced to Christ as the nucleus of the church and Paul begins his ministry there. The keynote to the entire ministry of Paul in Ephesus is in verse 20 of chapter 19. "So mightily grew the Word of God and prevailed." "So powerfully grew the Word of God and overcame everything." Is what it really says. The Word of God dominated the city of Ephesus. Now that's really the heartbeat of this entire ministry in Ephesus.

Now as we told you a few weeks ago, Ephesus was a really interesting place. It was the real heart of the Roman providence of Asia Minor. And Asia Minor was a fairly important area. It had many famous cities there, famous to the Christian world. The city of Ephesus probably ranked with Corinth as a two most important cities on the road east from Rome. In the eastern division of the Roman Empire, the three main cities would be Antioch, Alexandria and Ephesus. So it was a big time place. It was a commercial center.

Four main roads criss crossed right there in Ephesus. It was a port city. It was three miles inland, but the Caster River flowed into and it was navigable even though they had a dredging problem. They dredged it periodically and they navigated and so it was a place where ships traded and where caravans traded. It was a very important place. It was a rich place. It was an immensely populous place. Ferar said it's "air was salubrious." And we live in Southern California could use some salubrious air. That means healthy or wholesome.

Its population was diverse and immense. Its markets glittered with the products of the art of that world. In fact John was there. In fact John was exiled from there off the coast a little ways to Patmos. And when John wrote Revelation 18, and the Lord gave him all that picture of the sophisticated system of the world and the world wealth and the world's commerce, John may well have had in his mind that which he had seen in Ephesus. This is what it says in Revelation 18:12. This could be a description of Ephesus.

The merchandise of gold, silver, precious stones, pearls, fine linen, purple silk, scarlet, fine wood, all

kinds of vessels of ivory, all kinds of vessels of most precious wood, bronze, iron, marble, cinnamon, incense, ointments, frankincense, wine, oil, fine flour, wheat, cattle, sheep, horses, chariots, slaves, and the souls of men.

That's Ephesus all bunched into two verses. Now that is not the description of Ephesus, but that may have been what was suggested in John's mind as he thought of it. Now of course the number one feature of Ephesus was the Temple of Diana. The worship of Diana or Artemus that grotesque ugly god that they worshipped. And of course it was a prostitute kind of worship, orgies which couldn't even be spoken of. It was a sanctuary for criminals, so any criminal from around the world got king's ex as soon as he jumped into the temple and that settled it and so it just became a harbor and a haven for these people.

It was the bank of the Mediterranean area, so it was just a very complex system. We're going to get more into that feature in chapter 19 because a real riot breaks out. But here comes Paul to Ephesus. And it was a place where sorcery existed and witchcraft existed and all kinds of perversions and there were magical imposters and exorcists all over the place. No wonder Paul wrote back to the Ephesians. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers against the rulers of the darkness of this world against spiritual wickedness in heavenly places or high places.

It was in Ephesus that Paul was really confronted with this tremendous power of the underworld of evil, amassed against the Gospel. Alright, Paul arrives. And you know it was his custom not to make himself a burden, right? So what did he do for a living? Made tents. He was a leather worker is what the Greek word really says. But making tents was probably part of that. He was a leather worker. So when he came to Ephesus it was no different, he did that. That is told to us in Acts 20:33. "I've coveted no man" so but he's getting ready to leave Ephesus here. He says, "I've coveted no man's silver or gold or apparel. I didn't beg money or clothing from you. Yeah, you yourselves know that these hands have ministered under my necessities into them that were with me."

In other words he made his own way and supported others by working with his own hands. Tremendous. Tremendous. But that wasn't his passion. He just did that so he wouldn't be a pain in the neck to other people. You know his passion was? The Word. The Word. When you see this in this passage, verse 20, "The Word of God prevails mightily." The very beginning of verse 8. "He spoke boldly for the space of three months." The whole saturation of the ministry there was the Word, the Word, the Word. And when he left, he said, "I commend you to the Word."

Everything. The Word. Beloved, the reason the ministry in Ephesus was so dramatic and so dynamic and so tremendous was because of the Word. Great works are always built on the Word of God. You believe that? Where the Word dominates, Satan is defeated. That's true. He can't handle it. So it was in Ephesus. "Beloved if there is a ministry that is dominated and saturated with the Word of God, there is a ministry in which Satan is being defeated."

There is every reason in the world for a ministry of the Word and no reason in the world for any other kind. This is the power. Well the Word then saturates Ephesus. The word prevails. Now I want you to look at the power of the Word in Ephesus. And we're going to take five points. The power of the Word in Ephesus, it's proclamation, it's confirmation, it's competition, it's conviction, it's domination. The power of the Word in Ephesus. And we're going to do point one this morning.

It's proclamation. The Word that was powerful in Ephesus, it prevailed in Ephesus. Listen. Because it was proclaimed. It was a simple thing but the Word can't do anything unless somebody gives it. Paul does that. Verse 8. Let's go. "He went into the Synagogue, spoke boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God."

Now Paul had already established relationships with the Jews there. In fact he had already established very good relationships. You go back to chapter 18, verse 20; it says that "they desired him to tarry a long time with them." They actually enjoyed what he was saying which is amazing. They must have been a passive bunch. For every other synagogue that they went to they blew up at him. But here they say this is good. We like you to stay. Well he did. He came back and stayed three months which is unusually long. Unusually long.

For Paul's experience. Say what did he do for three months? Look at the words, he spoke what? Boldly. That's one word in the Greek. There was a kind of speech that was bold. And as we've told you before, there is a tense in the Greek known as the imperfect tense. The imperfect tense does not mean that as we think of it in English that it's less than perfect. Perfect means complete.

So an imperfect tense would be a tense of incomplete action or uncompleted action. That is it's still going on. And I say it's an imperfect tense. It means the action is still going on, it has not completed itself. So when we say it, he spoke boldly that sounds like completed tense. It should be and he was continuing to speak boldly. This was a three month deal. Now the word is the same word that was used to describe Apollos in verse 26 of 18 which he was doing the same thing, speaking boldly.

And may I hasten to add this is a characteristic of apostolic preaching. You start out in the book of Acts and what do you find in chapter 4, verse 29. "They speak boldly." They started getting persecuted and they had a prayer meeting. They said, "Lord they're threatening us. Help us to have all boldness." And you go to the book of Acts, everybody's bold and bold and bolder. Something to be said for boldness, believe me.

Boldness creates flack and flack creates action. And that's good. In Ephesians, just a terrific insight into Paul. And Paul's always giving prayer request about himself. He didn't hesitate to ask people to pray for him. He says "pray for me" verse 19. "That utterance may be as this is Ephesians 6. "That utterance may be given unto me that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the Gospel for which I am an ambassador in bonds that in this I may speak boldly as I ought to speak.

Paul says, boy there's only one way to talk. That's bold. That doesn't mean stupid dogmatism when you have no rights to be dogmatic, and doesn't mean riding your hobby horse to the point where everybody is driven crazy with it. It means that when you have a right to speak truth, you speak it with boldness. Fearlessness. Confidence is the idea. So for three months he fired away. And I think the Spirit tells us this because it's hard to believe that he stayed three months and somebody might say, well he probably watered down a whole deal, see, or he would have never been able to hang around three months. No, no, he fired it out.

It was God's timing. God wanted three months, that's what happened. And what was he doing? What kind of speaking? Well disputing and persuading. There's those same two verbs that keep popping up in Acts. The first one means reasoning. ___ from which we could dialectic, dialogue, it's a back

and forth question answer type thing. And persuading means to convince by argument. He was trying to prove the things concerning the kingdom of God.

You say when he was preaching the kingdom, what does that mean? He was announcing the kingdom to the Jews? No, he's preaching the whole area of the kingdom of God. You say well what does that involve? What do you mean by that? Is it just _____ the kingdom is coming, the thousand year reign? Well that's part of it, but that isn't all of it, is it? I'll show you what he was preaching. At the end of the book of Acts, verses 28 and 30 it says, "Paul dwelt two years in his own hired house in Rome, received everybody that came to him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ." There it is.

To teach the kingdom is to teach the things concerning Jesus Christ. The only way a man will ever be in the kingdom of God, the only way a man ever has entrance is through Christ. So to teach the kingdom of God does not mean he's giving eschatological insights into the future messianic reign on earth. It simply means he's teaching all the features of Christ and who He is and what He does.

So Paul starts out by teaching the Word. The Word about Christ. Apologetics, defense of the faith, and presenting of Christ. Well the inevitable happens, verse 9. Has to happen. After three months. And this is interesting. "But when some were hardened, and believe not but spoke evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them and separated the disciples disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannous." How'd you like to be a teacher named Tyrannous? Tyrant. I don't know whether he was named by his mother or his pupils.

Anyway, it says in verse 9 that "when some were hardened and believe not," again beloved just a little note, the word there for hardened is in the imperfect tense. Some were continuing to be hardened. Hardening is a process. Any kind of hardening isn't it? Any kind of hardening is a process. You know what happens gradual rejection of Jesus Christ, gradual rejection of the Gospel results in hardening. Hardening, hardening, hardening. And so they gradually wouldn't believe, wouldn't believe, more resistant, more resistant, persistent opposition. Finally their hearts were like rocks.

And so they refused to believe. Well they just weren't passive in their non-belief, they were active. They spoke evil. And that word in Matthew and Mark, same word is translated, they cursed. They cursed the Way. That should be in quotes. The Way was the name that was given Christianity. Because the Christians were always saying we're the way to God, we're the way to God. Have you ever heard that argument?

Oh I can't have Christianity, you say, there's the only way to God. We do say that. Say it because it's true. And we speak the truth. No good to tell people error just to make them feel good. It is true. Christianity is the way. So Christianity from the very beginning was called the way. And they accepted that title. So these people cursed the Way before the multitude.

In other words, before the whole town. Before everybody they were going around cursing Christianity. They were Jews from the synagogue. Well Paul said, this isn't real good, we better get out of the synagogue. You can imagine trying to teach with somebody standing up cursing you. So he departed from there and separated into disciples disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus. And here's the first church and the school. And there have been a lot since.

Some of you may have been involved in churches that started in schools. Now you say well is this being unequally ___ that Tyrannus, no all it did was use building, they didn't trade philosophies. There's nothing wrong with that. The church of Jesus Christ can meet anywhere in the purity of its identity and its doctrine. So they separated the disciples disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus. You know if you were a guy who had a philosophy who started a school and had a bunch of people coming, if they wanted to, to learn your philosophy.

So here was Tyrannus and whatever he was teaching, he was teaching, people were coming. But it was available for some time during the day. Now let me add a note that's very interesting. There's an ancient Greek manuscript that adds the fact that Paul taught in this hall of Tyrannus from the 5th to the 10th hour. Now that would be from 11:00am to 4:00pm. Five hours. Notice it says he did it every day.

So, couldn't keep that up too long. No, only two years, verse 10. Two years, five hours every day, seven days a week. Now the Ionian cities like Ephesus had an interesting schedule. Everybody worked until 11 and stopped and started again at four. Say why? The oppressive heat. And the time from 11 to four was go to sleep time. In fact one Asian writer says there's more people awake in Ephesus at 1:00am than there are at 1:00pm. Why? Because they'd go from 11, they'd try to go to sleep and sleep through the heat until four, get up and finish the work the rest of the day.

So Tyrannus would teach in the morning in his school, probably resume a little in the evening and the time period that was available was when everybody else was asleep from 11 to four. So then Paul just moved in from 11 to four and gave 365 five hour sermons twice over. You say man, that says something. Yes it does. It says two things. It says something for the commitment of Paul. Well as a teacher, let me tell you, that's work. Now I'll tell you it says something for the tremendous commitment of the Christians. I mean can you imagine sacrificing sleep for five hour sermons? Praise the Lord.

What a day to be alive. Oh, what's happened to the church. That was dedication, wasn't it? You think they were hungry to hear what he had to say? I often wonder to myself how difficult it is for some people to manage to get out one hour a week. I'm not ___ for not attending, I just say it, there should be a desire there. If the desire isn't there, that's a different problem. Attendance won't solve that problem. Maybe prayer will in your own life. But they had such a hunger. Boy you say, was that all you taught? No because in the 20th chapter, this is amazing. And he's leaving there. 20th chapter, verse 31, he says, "just remember that for three years, you add the two years, the three months and a little extra time somewhere in there. "For three years I cease not to warn everyone night and day."

So he'd make tents 'til 11, teach 'til four, make tents 'til eight and teach 'til two. Or one in the morning or whatever. Night and day. Teaching, teaching, teaching. And it all totaled up for three years. No wonder when he got all done, took a deep breath, chapter 20, verse 27 he says, "I have not failed to declare unto you the whole council of God and left."

I gave it to you. Fantastic. Listen beloved. You want to know why Ephesus was what it was? It was what it was because one man saturated those people with the Word of God, that's why. That's why. You want to hear something exciting? Verse 10. This continued for the space of two years so that all they who dwelled in Asia heard the Word of the Lord Jesus called Jews and Greeks. Boy I like that. I was preaching this in the first service and they got a whole new thought about that verse. Just took off on it. Really excited me. I should have seen it because it's one of the things I like to talk about.

Do you know what's so exciting about that is that the whole of Asia got evangelized? Now listen. All seven of the churches in Revelation two and three most likely were founded during these two years. ___ the rest of them, so was the church at Hierapolis and others. The whole of Asia Minor was evangelized to the point where at least six other churches began. And everybody from one end of Asia Minor to the other heard the Word of the Lord Jesus. Now listen. You know how to evangelize? You say yeah, you got to go all over Asia Minor. No. Not evangelize. Teach the Word of God, make disciples and they'll reproduce all over Asia Minor.

You see it? Paul stayed; well he didn't just stay in the school of Tyrannus, because he couldn't get in there at night. So you know where he had his evening home Bible studies? You didn't know he had those, did you? Oh, he did, sure. Acts, 20:20. He says "and I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you but have shown you and taught you publicly and from house to house. You know you say he's a pretty famous man. You mean he'd actually come over to my house and teach me? Yep. Yep. That's the heart of a pastor, isn't it?

That's the heart of a man who cares. So he spent his time in the day teaching the school of Tyrannus, spent his time at night in the homes of the believers. He never really left the place. But in the process evangelized the whole area of Asia Minor unbelievable, no not unbelievable. That's the right way to evangelize.

To create reproducing Christians. And you know what? All those other churches were founded by other than Paul. He just took off. It's exciting. Really exciting. Well, Paul was the logical, brilliant apologist, but he was also the pastor of the flock, teaching with tears, admonishing, watching with love, discipling leaders. By the time he left you know what he said? He left, he had a whole group of elders all ready to take over his pastors. He said takeover, shepherd the flock, I got to go. I commend you to the Word.

Beloved you know it makes a difference in the church. You know what makes a difference here? Anywhere? The teaching of the Word. Saturation of the Word. That defeats the devil in every point. At the point of false doctrine, at the point of temptation. At every point. Satan is defeated. The scene is set in verses 8 to 10. The defeat comes in two weeks as we'll see what happens from verse 11 on. But the ending of it is all wrapped up in verse 20. "So mightily grew the Word of God and prevailed." Let's pray.

Father we're so grateful for victory through the Word. God we would pray for dear Christian brothers and sisters who don't understand the resources in Christ. Who have gotten caught in Christian exorcisms and have not yet really come to grips with dealing with the issue of Satan in their own lives, their own sin problems. And Father we pray that they might not be deluded by the adversary. Nor might we Father. God we thank You for the precious Word. Thank You for the wonderful truth that David learned when he said thy Word of thy hid in my heart that I might not sin against. Be helpless to know that whether the saturation of the Word there is the filling of the Spirit where there is the filling of the Spirit that there's no room for Satan.

Oh Father, help us to know that being filled with the Spirit and writing the Word of Christ dwell in the spiritual we are the same thing. May we be so saturated with Thy truth and Thy book that the Holy Spirit has total control. God help us to not be preoccupied with the adversary. But to be preoccupied

with whatever things are pure and lovely and good and the things that are of the help us to set our affections on things above. Help us even as we studied in past weeks to set the Lord always before us. Therefore know that our hearts are made glad.

God, may we never become analytical about Satan. But may we only fall deeper in love with Jesus Christ. And because we know victory, never have to worry about defeat. Thank you for what victory the word always wins. May it win today over the forces that would hold it back and give you the praise the exultation of the son in whose name we pray. Amen.

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