

Acts 19

We've covered a lot of great material in the Book of Acts ... The birth of the Church. The gift of the Holy Spirit. The witness of the Apostles. The outbreak of persecution. The conversion of Paul. The inclusion of Gentiles. The expansion of the Church. More persecution. More gospel.

It will help us in our study today to review a few essentials:

The book of Acts can be summarized in four words: *Jesus Builds His Church*

The purpose of the Book of Acts is to record the ongoing mission of the Risen Lord Jesus Christ.

Gospel proclamation will often be met by Gospel opposition.

Gospel proclamation will often produce Gospel community.

The stories in Acts show that the Ancient World had never seen anything like the Church before. These Christians were composed of multi-ethnic, monotheistic Jesus communities. People who had previously disliked each other, not trusted each other, avoided each other are now calling themselves brothers and sisters in Christ. The problem with that is that they didn't fit into any cultural boxes known to the Jewish and Roman people. When the Church burst on to the scene, some people just didn't know how to respond.

Acts 19 suggested main point: *Gospel Community is an irrefutable witness of the resurrection of Jesus.*

Since Jesus is the One who is building the Church, it follows that Jesus is risen from the dead. The resurrection is necessary in order for us to have a living Lord. When the Church submits to the Lordship of Jesus and Christians are transformed by the Holy Spirit whom Jesus has sent, they are a witness to the world of the vitality and power of Jesus.

Here's another important lesson that we have learned from Acts:

God has people prepared to hear the message wherever Christians are willing to take the message.

The story of Acts 19 shows us that the gospel can be received even in the most unlikely of situations. Hardcore idolaters come to Christ and sell their scrolls and books of magic arts. This led to a gospel community which was opposed by a good number of people in the city.

Again, from our previous study in Acts: *Whenever God's people strive to do God's work in God's way, it will be opposed.* The riot of Ephesus is an example of what CAN happen when the gospel changes a city. This is the natural result of gospel proclamation. People were saved and lives were changed.

This is the threat to the people in Ephesus. Change. Change of worldview. Change of values. Change of allegiance. The issue is not Artemis or Jesus. The issue is the gospel community in Ephesus which has appeared very suddenly and has changed everything.

The book burning party was not a public protest but a public proclamation. These people are saying, We are following Jesus now. They didn't have to burn the scrolls in order to follow Jesus, but they needed to burn the scrolls to leave their old ways behind. The most fascinating piece about Acts 19 is the riot. Yet the riot doesn't happen if the gospel is not preached, believed and lived. When gospel transformation happened where it was not expected to happen, the entire community was changed. Perhaps that very same thing can happen here.

Home Group Discussion Questions:

1. Read Acts 19:21-41 and share some observations of that chapter.
2. *Gospel proclamation will often be met by Gospel opposition.*
Do we see this in the American culture?
3. *Gospel proclamation will often produce Gospel community.*
Do we see this in the Church in America today?
4. *God has people prepared to hear the message wherever Christians are willing to take the message.*
In what ways did God prepare you to hear the message?
5. *If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has gone, the new has come. 2 Cor 5:17*
In what ways have you experienced this new life?
What are some old ways that you would like to drop off?
6. *Main Point: Gospel Community is an irrefutable witness of the resurrection of Jesus.*
How does this point to Jesus?
How do our lives together point to Jesus?