

WORSHIP

SUGGESTED WORSHIP SONGS:

No Other Like Jesus, Every Praise, Only A God Like You, Lord of Lords, Jesus At the Center

WELCOME

If you will be given a chance to travel- all expenses paid for — where will you go? Who will you take with you and what would be your main reason for traveling to that place?

WORD

ACTS 19:21, 23-28

²¹ Now after these things were finished, Paul purposed in the Spirit to go to Jerusalem after he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, saying, "After I have been there, I must also see Rome."²³ About that time there occurred no small disturbance concerning the Way. ²⁴ For a man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Artemis, was bringing no little business to the craftsmen; ²⁵ these he gathered together with the workmen of similar trades, and said, "Men, you know that our prosperity depends upon this business. ²⁶ You see and hear that not only in Ephesus, but in almost all of Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away a considerable number of people, saying that gods made with hands are no gods at all. ²⁷ Not only is there danger that this trade of ours fall into disrepute, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis be regarded as worthless and that she whom all of Asia and the world worship will even be dethroned from her magnificence."²⁸ When they heard this and were filled with rage, they began crying out, saying, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"

In the course of our study on ACTS, we have seen Paul's relentless pursuit of his God-given mission. This week, we look into the other half of **ACTS 19**.

The Bible tells us that many people were repenting and were burning things related to magic (**v19-20**). This was an amazing transformation — people were giving up bad practices and they were learning to obey. Now you would think that it will now be smooth and easy moving forward, but there were still challenges to Paul's ministry in Ephesus which was the center of commerce and idolatry.

How can we continue like Paul in pursuing God's mission for us? By being empowered by the Holy Spirit! Through **Acts 19:21-41**, we see the marks of a Spirit-filled man as exemplified by Paul and his response to the challenges he met at Ephesus:

1. PRIORITIZE GOD'S WILL

A Spirit-filled man's priority is to do God's will. We see this in the way Paul planned his missionary journeys — Paul purposed in the Spirit (**v21**), to reach Rome and preach the good news to the center of world power during his time. As he submitted to the leading of the Spirit, Paul was able to spend more time in Ephesus and also send out workers to other fields (Timothy and Erastus were sent to Macedonia).

As we submit to God, our primary mission in life changes. Imagine the places that Paul and his team covered in their missionary journeys – it took effort, time, and utmost dedication to the goal of spreading the

Word of God. In our lives, we must also see how we are doing in prioritizing God's will or agenda in the things that we do, and the places we go to. Are our lives pleasing to Him and are others drawn closer to God through us? Think about your workplace, family, or campus. How is your participation in building God's Kingdom by helping others know Jesus Christ?

2. PRESENCE OF PROBLEMS

When you do GOD's will, and set priorities accordingly, a Spirit-filled man will eventually STILL encounter problems. We have to realize that coming to Christ does not exempt us from difficulties. God allows problems in our lives to develop our faith in Him and Christ-like character.

The problem that arose in Ephesus was initiated by Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Artemis (**v24**). We see that even if Paul and his disciples influenced almost all of ASIA (Turkey), and that the power of the gospel has PERSUADED and allowed people to TURN AWAY from ungodly things, there was still opposition to the truth that Paul presented to the people.

Demetrius triggered a public riot of idol-worshippers, whose profitable business crafting images of Artemis was affected by people turning to God in response to the gospel. These craftsmen used their religious devotion to Artemis as a jump-off point for anger against Paul and his team and two of Paul's companions were imprisoned as a result of this opposition (**v29**).

WORD (cont'd)

In 1 Peter 4:15-16, we are reminded by the Apostle Peter to make sure that even in our suffering, we get to glorify God. This is the same concept that Paul, as a Spirit-filled man of God and his team, enacted upon. They did what God wanted them to do. Later on, the town clerk, an unbeliever (Acts 19:35) spoke, and it seemed that he had no issues with Paul's team, saying that they were "neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of our goddess". He eventually dismissed the crowd, and this miraculous interjection showed how God was still in control over this situation. A Spirit-filled man like Paul will feel secure as he trusts in God's supernatural protection for His purpose and for His glory!

3. POWER TO PERSEVERE

The clincher to this story is at the end of chapter 19 as we see how God resolved the riot that ensued, and how

Paul was able to get away unscathed and kept safe only by God's amazing power and control.

We see that Paul didn't take a rest after the uproar; Paul sent his disciples to Macedonia while he went to continue the mission towards Greece (Acts 20:1-2). To persevere, we must make sure we are not hindered by our own idols – and modern-day idols include whatever it is that we cannot give up when God asks us to. How do you test what the idols of your heart are? Ask yourself, to what, or with whom, is your happiness dependent on? What is it that if you lose it, will make you angry? As Elizabeth Elliot once said, "The Christian life is a process of breaking your idols one at a time." As Hebrews 12:1-2 tells us, let us run the race marked out for us, and "lay aside every encumbrance" that hinder us from the pursuit of God's mission by the power of the Holy Spirit!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)

1. **Self-Check.** How are you doing in the aspect of being Spirit-filled? How did your response to problems this week show your full dependence of the Spirit, or the lack of it?
2. **Setting It Right.** What are the idols in your life now that you need to surrender to the Lord? Know that it may not always be bad things, as sometimes, the "good" things can be the enemy of the best things God has in store for us.
3. **Living It Out.** What would be some opportunities this week where you can practice being filled and empowered by the Spirit, and as a result be able to influence others (*at home, at work, in school*) towards knowing the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord?

WORKS

PRAY CARE SHARE IN ACTION

Ask God to reveal His personal mission for you. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you people that you need to share Christ to in your mission field. Ask the Lord also to empower you to be a witness in your own Jerusalem, Samaria, Judea and nations and take faith steps this week to pursue God's mission to share Christ to others as you prioritize and persevere through problems in the power of the Holy Spirit.

WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

I. Thanksgiving

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives

II. Country and the World

- Upright and moral governance of Public Servants
- A God-centered Philippines
- Repentance and Salvation

III. Church

- That CCF Members would honor and love God and make disciples
- Elders, Pastors, Leaders, and Families
- Ministries and Churches worldwide

IV. CCF Facilities

- Worship and Training Center
- Prayer Mountain

V. Personal Concerns

- Deeper intimate relationship with God
- Righteous living
- Salvation of family and friends