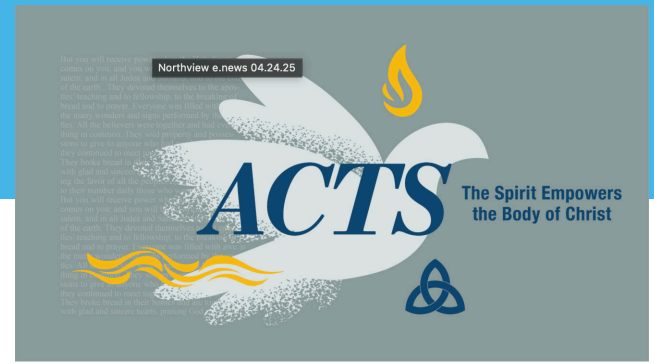


Discussion Questions

April 27, 2023

Acts: The Power of the Word and Spirit



1. Read Acts 19:8-12. Paul taught daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus for two years, 4-5 hours a day, 6 days a week, equipping believers to spread the gospel across Asia.
 - o What was the impact of Paul's teaching ministry in this time?
 - o What does this level of commitment to teaching and learning God's Word reveal about the priorities of the early church?
2. Ephesus was a spiritually dark city, filled with idolatry, witchcraft, and demonic activity. How does this compare to the spiritual climate of our culture today? What "idols" (e.g., comfort, materialism, control) do we face here?
3. The sermon emphasizes that Paul's teaching focused on the Kingdom of God, not just individual salvation. How does viewing our faith through the lens of "God's Kingdom coming to earth" change how we approach our faith & daily life, compared to primarily focusing on individual salvation after death?
4. The sermon challenges us to audit our time, money, and energy to see if they reflect "seeking first the Kingdom" (Matthew 6:33).
 - o Discuss what makes honestly evaluating our priorities difficult?
 - o Without needing to share specific details, what does the pattern of our time, energy, and resource allocation say about what we truly value? Is there one specific area you feel challenged to better "seek first His kingdom"?
5. Read Acts 19:11-12 & 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22, God does extraordinary miracles through Paul in Ephesus and later Paul is urging the Thessalonians to not quench the Spirit or treat prophecies with contempt but to test everything.
 - o Have you ever been tempted to dismiss something as "not of God" because it felt uncomfortable or unfamiliar?
 - o Discuss how we can pray "Come Holy Spirit" or discern the work of the Spirit and not demand it looks a certain way or fits within our box.
6. The sermon stressed the importance of being both Word-centered and Spirit-empowered, like Paul. Discuss what are the potential weaknesses of focusing primarily on deep theological study without expecting or seeking the Spirit's active power or conversely, focusing primarily on spiritual experiences without being deeply rooted in Scripture?
7. The sermon used the analogy of stepping into the river of what the Spirit is doing, rather than staying safe on the bank.
 - o What hesitations or comforts might keep us "on the bank"?
 - o What does "stepping into the river" look like practically in our lives today? (Think about prayer, faith, service, sharing Jesus).
 - o Where do you sense God might be inviting you to "dip your feet in" or "jump in"?

Acts 19:8–12 (NLT)

8 Then Paul went to the synagogue and preached boldly for the next three months, arguing persuasively about the Kingdom of God. 9 But some became stubborn, rejecting his message and publicly speaking against the Way. So Paul left the synagogue and took the believers with him. Then he held daily discussions at the lecture hall of Tyrannus. 10 This went on for the next two years, so that people throughout the province of Asia—both Jews and Greeks—heard the word of the Lord. 11 God gave Paul the power to perform unusual miracles. 12 When handkerchiefs or aprons that had merely touched his skin were placed on sick people, they were healed of their diseases, and evil spirits were expelled.

Ephesus was the waterhole for every kind of magician, witch, clairvoyant, and criminal. Con-artists, murderers, and perverts all found the climate of Ephesus unusually agreeable. That city was the Dark Castle of Asia Minor.

Dr. Ajith Fernando - NIV Application Commentary

Acts 19:8 (NLT)

8 Then Paul went to the synagogue and preached boldly for the next three months, arguing persuasively about the Kingdom of God.

The message of Jesus himself and of the early disciples was not just one of the forgiveness of sins, but rather was one of newness of life—which of course involved forgiveness as well as his death for our sins. And yet that newness of life also involved much more beside. To be “saved” was to be “delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the Kingdom of his dear Son,” as Colossians 1:13 says. We who are saved are to have a different order of life from that of the unsaved. We are to live in a different “world.”

Dallas Willard - Spirit of the Disciplines

Acts 19:9-10 (NLT)

9 But some became stubborn, rejecting his message and publicly speaking against the Way. So Paul left the synagogue and took the believers with him. Then he held daily discussions [Reasoning] at the lecture hall of Tyrannus. 10 This went on for the next two years, so that people throughout the province of Asia—both Jews and Greeks—heard the word of the Lord.

Acts 19:11–12 (ESV)

11 And God was doing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, 12 so that even handkerchiefs or aprons that had touched his skin were carried away to the sick, and their diseases left them and the evil spirits came out of them.

1 Thessalonians 5:19–22 (NIV)

19 Do not quench the Spirit. 20 Do not treat prophecies with contempt 21 but test them all; hold on to what is good, 22 reject every kind of evil.

Practical Application Steps

1. Conduct a Family Kingdom Audit:
2. Deepen Your Roots in the Word:
3. Step into the River of the Spirit:
 - o Pray Boldly: Pray specifically for someone who needs healing, deliverance, or salvation this week. Ask God for an opportunity to pray with them, not just for them.
 - o Seek Prayer: Don't remain on the sidelines. If you need healing, freedom, hope, or a breakthrough, come forward for prayer when offered, or schedule a time to meet with someone to be prayed for. Be specific about what you are asking God for.
 - o Ask for More: Spend time specifically asking the Holy Spirit to fill you afresh, to empower you for His Kingdom, and to reveal any ways you might be unintentionally quenching His work in your life. Ask Him to break your boxes