

Acts 19 – The All Powerful Word of God

This morning as we continue our time of worship here at the beach, today we arrive in Acts 19 and the title of today's sermon is "The All Powerful Word of God". As we look to the Bible this morning, I want us to consider together these two words that we use when talking about the Bible: **Sufficiency** (it's enough – we don't do Bible + our opinion, Bible + current trends, Bible + the Pastor's word, and we even don't do Bible + church tradition). The Bible is our all-sufficient standard, it really is enough. We also use the word **Authority** – the Bible is our standard of right and wrong – the Bible is our standard for truth.

Background

To bridge the gap from last week – remember last week in Acts 18 we looked at Paul planting the church at Corinth. Paul had traveled down to this transient city, coming in weakness and in fear, and resolved to know nothing among them but Christ and His crucified. And as Paul preached, many of the Corinthians heard the Word of God, and believed in the Gospel and were saved. It says Paul stayed there a year and a half.

Paul would travel back through to the church at Antioch, to give a report of the work he was doing and strengthen the church at Antioch. Leaving Antioch, he kept on traveling and long the way, Priscilla and Aquila (Paul's friends that gave him a job and a home in Corinth) met this guy named Apollos – an eloquent man.

Paul would make his way back to Ephesus, teaching people about Jesus and it says in 19:8 that for 3 months he taught in the synagogue – ARGUING AND PERSUADING → just like last week in 18 he was reasoning and persuading. ABOUT THE KINGDOM OF GOD → About salvation. Pointing them to Jesus. Rooted in truth of the Scriptures, and the truth of his own experience. The goal here is to point people to Jesus, NOT win an argument.

Says that some people refused to believe – spoke negatively about the Way – forced Paul to "conduct discussions every day in the lecture hall of Tyrannus."

I. Paul (and us) used the Word of God to accomplish the Work of God

And hear the effectiveness of Paul's ministry at Ephesus:

READ 19:10

This went on for two years (meaning the daily lecturing), so that all the residents of Asia, both Jews and Greeks, heard the word of the Lord.

You see, Paul used the WORD of God to accomplish the WORK of God. Like don't miss the incredible spreading of the Gospel here in 19:10. It's almost easy to gloss over this and miss the magnitude of what Luke's telling us.

Paul taught for 2 years in the lecture hall, during the midday break (11AM – 4PM). And as a result of the work he was doing, all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord.

The first thing for us to see – is that Paul used the WORD of God to accomplish the WORK of God. Paul taught daily – never left Ephesus. So the people Paul was teaching, took the Word of God with them and continued to share it with others.

Paul used the WORD, the all sufficient, authoritative Word of God to accomplish the Work of God – namely the evangelization of Asia. And that’s the call to you and me today. That we must use the WORD to do God’s Work. The purpose of our preaching, the purpose of our small groups, the purpose of our other Bible studies – none of it is to fill us up with a bunch of information. The purpose is to more fully root us in the Gospel, captivate our hearts and minds with the greatness of Jesus – so that we will take it to others in our every day walks of life.

Your Bible study should never stop with you. Don’t be a culdesac – be an interstate. We study the Bible, so that we have a better understanding of the character of God, the person work and ways of Jesus → to take it to others!

We have to use the Word of God to accomplish the Work of God.

Acts 19 continues

¹¹God was performing extraordinary miracles by Paul’s hands, ¹²so that even facecloths or aprons^[b] that had touched his skin were brought to the sick, and the diseases left them, and the evil spirits came out of them.

Couple of things we need to see here:

- God was doing the miracles, not Paul
 - Extraordinary – in time and place – to accompany his apostolic message, and as a part of his apostolic credentials
 - They weren’t typical
 - NOT what you see on some hack faith healer selling prayer cloths on YouTube or some late night cable tv show. Those guys are evil and wicked and need to repent.
- Miracles can and do happen – but the overwhelming majority of the Christian life is submitting to the Word of God as the all sufficient authority for life and faith. As God’s revealed will to us.
 - Worshiping Jesus through the normal rhythms of life.
 - Pursuing practical holiness

So they saw God do EXTRAORDINARY miracles by Paul’s hands – some people thought, “hey, maybe I can do it too.”

The next few verses tell of seven sons of this guy named Sceva, Jewish itinerate exorcists trying to cast out a demon by invoking Jesus’s name. They were trying to capitalize on Paul’s ministry by using Jesus’s name. Well, that didn’t work out so well for them.

READ 19:16

¹⁶ Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them, overpowered them all, and prevailed against them, so that they ran out of that house naked and wounded.

Now, as a side note, I've been in my share of fights. Some I won, some I lost. BUT, I've never lost one so bad I had to run out naked. The sons of Sceva got throttled, trying to claim Jesus's authority falsely – they ran out bleeding and naked.

II. The Work of God always glorifies God, not people

Hear me – the goal is always to glorify God and not people. If you leave our worship time thinking how great the music leader is, or how witty and funny the preacher is – we've missed it! Our desire is for you to leave our worship time, captivated by the greatness of King Jesus, with a refreshed commitment to follow him – because we really believe that the Work of God always glorifies God, not people.

READ 19:17

¹⁷ When this became known to everyone who lived in Ephesus, both Jews and Greeks, they became afraid, and the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high esteem.

The name of Jesus was held in high esteem. They had seen what God had done through Paul, they had seen the power of God in display through these extraordinary miracles that God was doing, and then they see these dudes get throttled → the result is the name of Jesus was held in high esteem. The WORD of God accomplished the WORK of God. And the Work of God ALWAYS glorifies God, not people. BUT...people will always be changed.

Next I want us to see that...

III. The Word of God, Doing the Work of God, Will change People

READ 19:18-19

¹⁸ And many who had become believers came confessing and disclosing their practices, ¹⁹ while many of those who had practiced magic collected their books and burned them in front of everyone. So they calculated their value and found it to be fifty thousand pieces of silver.

When people are changed by the power of the Word of God doing the Work of God, there always is some kind of evidence. Now, to be clear those that believed the Gospel, they weren't burning their books to earn a position before God → they were burning their books because they had been radically changed by the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Don't really know the value of the books – some estimate it north of \$5,000,000 in today's dollars. The point isn't in trying to calculate the value in today's dollars though; the point is that these believers were changed down to their core of who they are – they had been saved by the

grace of God in Christ, and they refused to continue in their sinful practices. They had new desires, new affections, a new devotion.

The Word of God, doing the Work of God, Changed them.

IV. God's Word Always Wins

The final verse for today is 19:20

²⁰In this way the word of the Lord spread and prevailed.

The way the Word of the Lord changed the people in Ephesus was clear for all to see. God changed their desires and affections – they glorified God – and the word spread. God's Word always wins.

CLOSING:

See, the first step in seeing the word of God work like this, is allowing it to change you 1st and foremost at conversion – as you trust in Jesus, turn from your sin and trust in Jesus. And then as you meet God in His word throughout the week – you allow the all powerful Word of God to change you, to change your desires and affections away from things that dishonor God and toward things that glorify God.

For others – you know that you have trusted in Jesus and are a believer but you're not seeing the Word of God at work in your life – let me lean into you there.

I'm convinced there are some of us that the only bits of the word we get is this time on Sunday. If that's you, if all you get of the Word of God is found right here on Sundays – can I encourage you to take one step further this week. Start by reading and re-reading Acts 19. Set a goal for yourself to read Acts 19 every day this week. And to write down a few things that you believe God may be revealing to you. And then next week, read Acts 20. And then the following week Acts 21. Get into one of our small groups where you can discuss with other believers what you are reading and learning. Because if all you are getting of the Word is what you get on Sundays, you are starving yourself spiritually.

Take 1 step forward in trusting the word of God this week. Will you do that.

PRAY.