

Crossway Life Group, Week of October 13

See sermon notes on [CMC's webpage](#) for background information

Community

Take time to share and pray for each other's concerns and joys.

Scripture: Acts 19:1-20 Sermon: "You Shall Receive Power"

Reading & Discussing Scripture

- **Introduction:** Sometimes missing what is essential can make something good meaningless, negative or even devastating. For example, sky diving without a parachute, or apologizing without sincerity. What are other examples of this in life? How might it be true in our spiritual lives?
- **Background:** In Acts 19 Paul continues his missionary journey to Ephesus where he encounters believers with an inadequate understanding of the Christian faith. They had accepted the teachings of John the Baptist which required a repentance from sins, but they had not received Christian baptism which includes the gift of the Holy Spirit. Paul's interactions with them shows the power of genuine life in Christ by his Spirit, and the folly, loss, and danger of living without the Holy Spirit's power.
- **Read Acts 19:1-7.** The purpose of an arrow is to call attention to something important (not the arrow itself). If you focus on the arrow, you miss the reason for the arrow. How does this analogy help explain the situation Paul encountered with believers in Ephesus? In what ways are the Old Testament and John the Baptist like an arrow pointing to Jesus? (read Jeremiah 31:31-34, Isaiah 40:3-5, John 1:19:27) What was Paul's solution and the believers' response? What is significant about them speaking in tongues? (see Acts 2:4-11)
- **Read Acts 19:8-10.** What is the focus of Paul's extended teaching in Ephesus? What is significant about this commitment to learning, even amid opposition, and its impact?
- **Read Acts 19:11-16.** How does this story show contrast between God's power (through Paul), demonic power, and people's power? What is significant about the details of the passage (such as handkerchiefs and aprons, Sceva as a Jewish chief priest, men running away naked and bleeding)?
- **Read Acts 19:17-20.** Syncretism is the combination or mixing of different forms of belief or practice. What does the outcome of this story teach about Jesus' power? What is significant about the Ephesians' public and sacrificial demonstration? How is that meaningful for Christians today?
- Do you have any other questions about the Bible passage or the sermon?

The Big Idea

**Genuine Christianity can only be lived
by the all-surpassing power of the Holy Spirit
at work in us**

Application & Reflection Questions

- Are you aware of, and convinced of, the folly and loss of living life without God and his power? How so?
- Christians are tempted to rely on other powers even after knowing God (see Galatians 3:3 and 4:9). What other things do you tend to depend upon in life instead of depending upon the Holy Spirit?
- Christians are called to be filled with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18-21). What does it look like for you to obey the command to be filled with the Holy Spirit?

Growing in Cultural Understanding

The Bible teaches that the spiritual world is real and a realm where evil forces oppose God's good and ultimately complete reign (see Acts 19, Ephesians 6:12). People's knowledge and experience with the spiritual world differs greatly across cultures. In some cultures, spiritual powers, miracles, or experiences with angels and demons are common experiences, where in other cultures such spiritual realities seem impossible, trivial, inconsequential or attributed to other explanations.

- How does the culture you grew up in consider the spiritual realm? Can you give some examples?
- How has this impacted the way you understand and experience God's Spirit?
- What lessons from Acts 19 or other scripture are especially important for your ongoing growth as a Christian given your cultural background?

Serving beyond ourselves

What are ways that your group can be for the benefit of people beyond yourselves?

Acts 19:1-20 - New International Version (NIV)

While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples ² and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" They answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." ³ So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?" "John's baptism," they replied. ⁴ Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." ⁵ On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶ When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. ⁷ There were about twelve men in all.

⁸ Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God. ⁹ But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. ¹⁰ This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.

¹¹ God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, ¹² so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them.

¹³ Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, "In the name of the Jesus whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out." ¹⁴ Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. ¹⁵ One day the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know about, but who are you?" ¹⁶ Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding.

¹⁷ When this became known to the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus, they were all seized with fear, and the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honor. ¹⁸ Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed what they had done. ¹⁹ A number who had practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly. When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to fifty thousand drachmas. ²⁰ In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.