



The Church: Being Known in the City

April 30, 2023

Text: Acts 19:11-20 (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. ¹³ Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists undertook to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul proclaims." ¹⁴ Seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Sceva were doing this. ¹⁵ But the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and Paul I recognize, but who are you?" ¹⁶ And the man in whom was the evil spirit leaped on them, mastered all^[d] of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. ¹⁷ And this became known to all the residents of Ephesus, both Jews and Greeks. And fear fell upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was extolled. ¹⁸ Also many of those who were now believers came, confessing and divulging their practices. ¹⁹ And a number of those who had practiced magic arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted the value of them and found it came to fifty thousand pieces of silver. ²⁰ So the Word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily.

A Quick Look at Acts:

- I. The Book of Acts is a crucial book of the New Testament. It provides a condensed history of the early Church, an eyewitness account of miracles, and the spread of the Gospel from Jerusalem to Rome.
- II. It shows the transition from Christ's message of a coming kingdom to the Apostle's message of one new body of Jews and Gentiles in Jesus Christ, called the Church!
- III. It shows the beginning of the Church, the spreading of the Church, and the Church progressing.
 - i. Paul's First Missionary Trip (Acts 13-14))

- ii. Paul's Second Missionary Trip (Acts 15-18)
 - iii. Paul's Third Missionary Trip (Acts 19-21)
- IV. It contains the continued works by way of the Holy Spirit, mainly through Paul and Peter but includes several other Christian leaders.
- V. This good news first appeared in Jerusalem, then spread quickly from person to person, city to city. It faced opposition everywhere it went, and the early Christians were not equipped to fight the opposition. This is partially why the Apostle Paul returned to the cities he had visited in the past.
- VI. The Roman world believed Christianity was a political movement, but it was not. The early saints only believed and worshiped the one true King and Lord while rejecting all others. Although they rejected the Emperor from a worshipping standpoint, they did submit to political authority.

Thoughts from the text:

The Power of Miracles

1. God confirmed Paul's apostolic authority by performing miracles through him in a place where all sorts of magic and spells were being performed. These signs and wonders proved Paul's apostleship and validated the message of the Gospel (Good News) he was preaching.
2. The people were able to see direct miracles by Paul laying hands on them and indirectly by his anointed apron and handkerchief, which was sent out to the sick.
3. Our question today is, "Are miracles still being performed?" I believe they are because the Holy Spirit is sovereign, and He can do as He pleases.
4. I also believe we do not have apostles today like those of Paul's day; therefore, miracles at that level are not being done.

Lessons from the Seven Sons of Sceva

1. Some of the Jewish priests thought they could perform an incarnation that would cast out these evil spirits by just saying, "In the name of Jesus." The seven sons of Sceva attempted to do this and will forever be remembered as failures!
2. Obviously, they did NOT have a relationship with Jesus and were going on what they heard. Yes, there is power in the name of Jesus, but this does involve faith and a personal relationship with Him.
3. This would not have happened if they had known that you should never take the Lord's name in vain.
4. Too many times, we are caught up in the name-calling than the name we are calling.

5. Just because you know the right jargon, theatrical presentation, and religious culture does not mean you are known by the unsaved and sometimes Christians.

Becoming Known in the City

1. The news of the defeat of the seven sons of Sceva traveled, resulting in the magnification of the name and power of Jesus through Paul.
2. The news was so powerful that those who practiced magic denounced it and turned to Jesus Christ. Burning their books in the public, not afraid to let others know Jesus is Lord.

Help for the Church in the City

From the birth and growth of the early Church to modern-day Christianity, it is important that we are known in the city. Our distinction as believers requires this! The Ephesians were not equipped with how to deal with persecution. And yes, we still can be persecuted to the point of death. However, I believe we are better equipped to progress the Church if we make ourselves known in the city. Below are just a few suggestions to become known in the city as the Church.

1. Repent and Believe

- The first act of being known in the city is to accept Jesus Christ as your savior. Through this, the Holy Spirit is now alive in you to help you as you go about the city.
- If you cannot do this FIRST, then anything that you hear and see as it relates to the Gospel and the Church is meaningless.
 - **John 3:16** For God so loved the world,^[a] that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. (ESV)
 - **Rom 10:9-13** because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. ¹¹ For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame." ¹² For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. ¹³ For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." (ESV)

2. Be Baptized

- The significance of this act is to acknowledge that you and I no longer belong to sin and pledge our lives to Christ.
- We also acknowledge the life, death, and resurrection of Christ.
- And the Baptism is done in a public setting to show all present who you live for NOW.
 - **Acts 2:38**³⁸ And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (ESV)
 - **Acts 22:16**¹⁶ And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name. (ESV)

3. Good works

- Although we are saved by grace and faith only does not exclude us from doing good works.
- In the city, the work of the Lord is never complete. The people need to see the Church's good works not for boasting purposes but authentic to help.
 - **Matt 5:16**¹⁶ In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father. (NLT)
 - **Eph 2:8-10** For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast.¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (ESV)

4. Appropriate Language

- How many times have we heard, "It is not what you did but what you said?" There really is power in the tongue, but not the way the world has exploded it.
- This power involves the usage of words impacting someone. Some of us have been told you will never amount to anything or you are just like your dad/mom (normally not in a positive). The words are powerful and hurtful.
- We should be using this weapon, yes weapon, to encourage, teach and worship.
 - **Jam 3:5-6**⁵ In the same way, the tongue is a small thing that makes grand speeches. But a tiny spark can set a great forest on fire.⁶ And among all the parts of the body, the tongue is a flame of fire. It is a

whole world of wickedness, corrupting your entire body. It can set your whole life on fire, for it is set on fire by hell itself. (NLT)

- **Eph 4:29**²⁹ Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them. (NLT)

5. Genuine Love for Others

- Love is a four-letter word that has caused so much pain in the world.
- Many relationships have been destroyed, whether job, family, or Church.
- It has been very hard for people to trust and believe in love again because of the hurt.
- As Christians in the city will need to show them the love of the Bible. People are wanting to see and feel genuine love, and the Church should be that place.
 - **1 Jn 3:18**¹⁸ Dear children, let's not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions. (NLT)

6. Obedience to God

- Just the idea of someone else telling you what to do is frowned upon in the city and even the Church.
- By obeying, you can unlock the blessing of God for you and the Church. We show God that we trust Him (who does no best), and it will increase our faith.
- Many times, people would rather leave a good bible teaching Church because that Church is just being obedience to the scripture and that leader. This is how Church hopping gets started.
- Obedience will cost you something!
 - **Acts 5:29**²⁹ But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men. (ESV)
 - **1Sam15:22** "What is more pleasing to the LORD: your burnt offerings and sacrifices or your obedience to his voice? Listen! Obedience is better than sacrifice, and submission is better than offering the fat of rams. (NLT)

7. Being not like the world

- As Christians in the city, we should be set apart, not in an arrogant or holier-than-thou manner. But in the way of a light needed in a dark place.

- If the Church is starting to resemble the world, then we are no longer the Church.
- The old adage goes along to get along cannot be the way. Jesus has to be the what for the Church. Even when persecution, criticism, and sometimes hatred is around the corner.
- The Church was never established to be friends with the world but to bring the Word to the world.
 - **John 17:14-15** ¹⁴ I have given them your Word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁵ I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one (ESV)
 - **Rom 12:2** ² Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. (NLT)

8. Be humble

- In the city, pride is identified as power, and being humble is identified as weak.
- But for the Church, humility is needed because some of our churches have become beside themselves.
- Truth be told, this bleeds over to the members believing they have arrived, and because they have arrived, no one from the city wants to be a part of the Church.
 - **Jam 4:6-7** And he gives grace generously. As the Scriptures say, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." ¹⁷ So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (NLT)

9. Love what God loves and Hate what He hates

- In a city where everybody wants to belong or be accepted, the Church, for the most part, is not accepted.
- It is hard to say "no" in a city where everybody is running and seems to be enjoying themselves. However, if it is contradictory to what God's Word says, I would rather be a solo act than heading to hell for eternity.
- Christ never said this life would be easy, but the reward for loving what He loves and hating what He hates is heavenly!

- **Prov 6:16-19** There are six things the LORD hates— no, seven things he detests:¹⁷ haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that kill the innocent, ¹⁸ a heart that plots evil, feet that race to do wrong,¹⁹ a false witness who pours out lies, a person who sow discord in a family. (NLT)

Final Thought:

The Church has been around since the first century. Along the way, it has experienced persecution, rejection, false teaching, abuse, idolatry, hurt, and much more. Yet, through it all, God's Church is still standing. Whether it is the physical building or the person, the Church needs some repairs. There could be a few or many repairs needed, but there will be a cost. Remember it cost Jesus His life for the church. Are you willing to lay it down for the invisible and visible church?