

# Cornerstone Presbyterian Church

*A Congregation of the Covenant Presbyterian Church*

*February 4, 2024: Acts 19:8-10 "Walking in the Spirit in Ephesus and Asia"*

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1 And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples 2 he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" So they said to him, "We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit." 3 And he said to them, "Into what then were you baptized?" So they said, "Into John's baptism." 4 Then Paul said, "John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus." 5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. 7 Now the men were about twelve in all.

8 And he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God. 9 But when some were hardened and did not believe, but spoke evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them and withdrew the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. 10 And this continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

11 Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul, 12 so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them. 13 Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists took it upon themselves to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "We exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches." 14 Also there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so. 15 And the evil spirit answered and said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?" 16 Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. 17 This became known both to all Jews and Greeks dwelling in Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. 18 And many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds. 19 Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and it totaled fifty thousand pieces of silver. 20 So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.

## I. Introduction

- a. Today's text's events occur sometime after AD51 in the early 50s AD. Writing to this church some years later, Paul reminds them of some critical truths, and lets them know how he is praying for them, (cAD 58) Ephesians 1:15-23:
  - i. "Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, 16 do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, 18 the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to

the working of His mighty power 20 which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. 22 And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.”

- ii. Even though the Ephesian saints had already received and been sealed with the Holy Spirit at their conversion (Eph 1:13), Paul prays to God the Father to keep on giving them the Holy Spirit, more and more, in ever-increasing abundance, unto wisdom, revelation of God, renewed minds, hope, spiritual wealth, and Holy Spirit resurrection power, with flaming souls firmly fixed upon Jesus Christ, resurrected, ascended, reigning over all, with all things under His feet, for the good of His Church.

1. “The same power that supports the world supports the church; and we are sure he loves his church, for it *is his body* (v. 23), his mystical body, and he will care for it. It is *the fulness of him that filleth all in all*. Jesus Christ filleth all in all; he supplies all defects in all his members, filling them with his Spirit, and even with *the fulness of God*”<sup>1</sup>

- b. Today’s sermon: Acts 19:8-10 “Walking in the Spirit in Ephesus and Asia”

- i. Paul’s persistent boldness v8a
- ii. Paul’s persistent focus: the Kingdom of God v8b
- iii. Paul’s persistent method: reasoning and persuading v8b
- iv. Some Jews reject Christ v9a
- v. Paul departs with the disciples v9b
- vi. Paul’s intensive discipleship v9b,10a
- vii. All in Asia hear the Word of the Lord v10b

- II. Paul’s persistent boldness v8a

- a. 8 And he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months,
- b. After another reminder of the “Power from on High”, the Holy Spirit’s Presence and Power, with the twelve disciples of John of v 1-7, Luke moves us into the work of God in Ephesus and beyond. Paul continues to walk in the Spirit’s Presence and Power.
- c. Boldness: answered prayer and evidence of God’s Spirit at work
  - i. Acts 4:29 “Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, 30 by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus.”
  - ii. Boldness from the Holy Spirit drives out fear and grants us courage to do God’s will no matter what threats or assaults we experience.

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew Henry, [\*Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume\*](#) (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 2309.

- d. Boldness to go into the synagogue (Boldness to start)
    - i. Think about all the pain and suffering Paul has experienced at the hands of the Jews. Yet, obeying the Lord's command, Paul goes to the Jews first, seeking God's elect from amongst the Jews first. Only after the Gospel work within the synagogue has been completed does Paul go to the Gentiles. The very high likelihood of Jewish threats and attacks is not able to deter Paul. He is bold in the Holy Spirit. Walking in the Spirit, Paul does not run away from his duty.
  - e. Boldness to speak in the synagogue (Boldness daily)
    - i. Paul does not just quietly tip-toe into the Jewish world of Ephesus. He boldly speaks to them, opening His mouth to preach to them from Scripture, showing that Jesus of Nazareth is the foretold Messiah, and calling them to repent and believe in Jesus Christ and be transferred out of the kingdom of satan into the Kingdom of Christ.
  - f. Boldness to speak in the synagogue for three months (Boldness to the end)
    - i. Paul is bold to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom of God as long as he can, bringing in as many new believers as possible before Jewish unbelief and hatred flare up. He knows it's coming, but he courageously preaches as long as God allows.
    - ii. Note, God determines the set time needed to gather in His elect from amongst the lost in any given area.
- III. Paul's persistent focus: the Kingdom of God v8b
- a. "reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God."
  - b. The things of the Kingdom of God
    - i. Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, the crucified, risen and reigning King of kings
    - ii. All people everywhere are commanded to repent and follow Him
    - iii. Repentance means renouncing self, sin and the devil and turning to Christ for forgiveness and power
    - iv. Loving the King's Law
    - v. Serving as His ambassadors announcing His terms of peace everywhere we go
    - vi. Lk 4:43 Jesus said, "I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent."
    - vii. Luke-Acts "Kingdom of God" = βασιλείαν θεοῦ = 39 times
    - viii. *"The things concerning the kingdom of God among men, the great things which concerned God's dominion over all men and favor to them, and men's subjection to God and happiness in God. He showed them their obligations to God and interest in him, as the Creator, by which the kingdom of God was set up,—the violation of those obligations, and the forfeiture of that interest, by sin, by which the kingdom of God was pulled down,—and the renewing of those obligations and the restoration of man to that interest again, by the Redeemer, whereby the kingdom of God was again set up. Or, more particularly, the things concerning the*

*kingdom of the Messiah*, which the Jews were in expectation of, and promised themselves great matters from; he opened the scriptures which spoke concerning this, gave them a right notion of this kingdom, and showeth them their mistakes about it.”<sup>2</sup>

- IV. Paul’s persistent method: reasoning and persuading v8b
- a. “reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God.”
  - b. Reasoning = διαλέγομαι = to converse, discourse with one, argue, discuss
    - i. Paul, walking in the Spirit in Ephesus, is not only bold, but he’s also humble. Reasoning requires listening, learning and understanding the thoughts and beliefs of the other person, and for this to take place, Paul needed to express love and respect so that others would be willing to talk with him. Reasoning requires, first, humility toward and love toward other human beings. Next, Paul, walking in the Spirit, was granted for his eyes to be more and more enlightened in God’s Word so that he could more and more effectively bring the truth of Christ and His Kingdom to his hearers.
    - ii. “He preached argumentatively: he disputed; gave reasons, scripture-reasons, for what he preached, and answered objections, for the convincing of men’s judgments and consciences, that they might not only believe, but might see cause to believe. He preached *dialeghomenos*—*dialogue-wise*; he put questions to them and received their answers, gave them leave to put questions to him and answered them.”<sup>3</sup>
  - c. Persuading = πείθω
    - i. to persuade, i.e. to induce one by words to believe
    - ii. to persuade unto i.e. move or induce one to persuasion to do something
    - iii. Humility plus boldness persists. This is a dance of wisdom guided by God’s Spirit as Paul interacted with his hearers. In each relationship, a time comes when the rational arguments against following Christ have been swept away. Questions humbly discovered and clearly answered from Scripture will lead the elect eventually to repent and trust in Christ. So, Paul walking in the Spirit, knows when to transition from reasoning into persuasion, from answering questions to the call for repentance, to trust in Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah, be baptized, and follow Him as their rightful King.
    - iv. “he persuaded; he used not only logical arguments, to enforce what he said upon their understandings, but rhetorical motives, to impress what he said upon their affections, showing them that the things he preached concerning the kingdom of God were things concerning themselves, which they were nearly concerned in, and therefore ought to concern

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<sup>2</sup> Matthew Henry, [\*Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume\*](#) (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 2150.

<sup>3</sup> Matthew Henry, [\*Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume\*](#) (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 2150.

themselves about, 2 Co. 5:11, *We persuade men*. Paul was a moving preacher, and was a master of the art of persuasion.”<sup>4</sup>

- V. Some Jews reject Christ v9a
- a. 9 But when some were hardened and did not believe, but spoke evil of the Way before the multitude,
  - b. After three months, Jews have come to faith, becoming “disciples”, but some instead refused to be persuaded. As usual, the time has come in this town where the unbelieving Jews reveal themselves.
  - c. “some were hardened” = σκληρύνω (scleroderma as example)
    - i. to become obstinate or stubborn
    - ii. Stiff, hardened, unmoving, immovable, stiff-necked
    - iii. “They had an invincible aversion to the gospel of Christ themselves: they were *hardened, and believed not*; they were resolved they would not believe, though the truth shone in their faces with ever such a convincing light and evidence. Therefore they believed not, because they were hardened.”<sup>5</sup>
  - iv. Christians can harden their hearts against God also.
    1. Heb 3:7-19 “7 Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: 'Today, if you will hear His voice, 8 Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, In the day of trial in the wilderness, 9 Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, And saw My works forty years. 10 Therefore I was angry with that generation, And said, 'They always go astray in their heart, And they have not known My ways.' 11 So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest.' " 12 Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; 13 but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. 14 For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, 15 while it is said: "Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion." 16 For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? 17 Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? 19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.”

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<sup>4</sup> Matthew Henry, [\*Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume\*](#) (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 2150.

<sup>5</sup> Matthew Henry, [\*Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume\*](#) (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 2150.

- v. Note, dear saints, believers are warned against this same hardening. Have you hardened your heart against the Holy Spirit in any way? Doctrinal stubbornness? Practical obstinance? Willful disobedience?
- d. The fruit of their hardening: refusal to believe
  - i. A hard heart leads to a dark mind. An immovable heart leads to an insane mind. Unwillingness to release unbiblical personal presuppositions is hardness of heart and will quench the Spirit in your life.
- e. Fruit of hardening: speaking evil of the Way to the world
  - i. The internal hardening process always leads to scorning God and His people. The Psalm 1:1 process.
    - 1. “Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful”
      - a. “They did their utmost to raise and keep up in others an aversion to the gospel; they not only entered not into the kingdom of God themselves, but neither did they suffer those that were entering to go in; for *they spoke evil of that way before the multitude*, to prejudice them against it. Though they could not show any manner of evil in it, yet they said all manner of evil concerning it. These sinners, like the angels that sinned, became Satans, adversaries and devils, false accusers.”<sup>6</sup>

VI. Paul departs with the disciples v9b

- a. he departed from them and withdrew the disciples,
- b. Walking in the Spirit’s power and wisdom, Paul understands the moment and leaves the Jews in their obstinance, taking with him the new Jewish converts, new disciples of Jesus Christ.
- c. Note, a time comes to end the evangelistic efforts in a particular location.
- d. Note, it is no sin to encourage followers of Jesus Christ to come out of churches that refuse to believe in Jesus Christ as revealed in God’s Word.
  - i. “When he had carried the matter as far as it would go in the synagogue of the Jews, and found that their opposition grew more obstinate, he left the synagogue, because he could not safely, or rather because he could not comfortably and successfully, continue in communion with them. Though their worship was such as he could join in, and they had not silenced him, nor forbidden him to preach among them, yet they drove him from them by their railing at those things which he spoke *concerning the kingdom of God*: they hated to be reformed, hated to be instructed, and therefore *he departed from them*. Here we are sure there was a

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<sup>6</sup> Matthew Henry, [\*Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume\*](#) (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 2150.

separation and no schism; for there was a just cause for it and a clear call to it.”<sup>7</sup>

- e. Note, Paul’s boldness continues. He has the courage to bring these new disciples out of the synagogue.
  - i. “When Paul departed from the Jews he took the disciples with him, and *separated them, to save them from that untoward generation* (according to the charge Peter gave to his new converts, ch. 2:40); lest they should be infected with the poisonous tongues of those blasphemers, he separated those who believed, to be the foundation of a Christian church”<sup>8</sup>
    - 1. Acts 2:40 “And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation”<sup>9</sup>

VII. Paul’s intensive discipleship v9b,10a

- a. reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. 10 And this continued for two years
- b. Paul continues in humility and perseverance, reasoning with the new believers for two years. Similar to the lengthy discipleship efforts in Corinth, Paul, walking in the Spirit, understands the extensive Biblical teaching and demonstration needed to raise up disciples to maturity, some also to readiness for church leadership.
- c. And, instead of only the weekly Sabbath conversations, now Paul is able to teach daily for 2 years, that’s thousands of hours of teaching in God’s Word about the Kingdom of God.
  - i. Note, seminary timeframe instruction in God’s Word and in Biblical sanctification is needed, but note this is much more than a classroom setting. These disciples go forth regularly to spread the Word of God to the entire region of Asia, and they are a worshipping community connected to the world, rather than an academic institution separated from community and Christian evangelism and service.
- d. School of Tyrannus = likely a place Paul was able to rent for usage
  - i. “others think it was a philosophy-school of the Gentiles, belonging to one Tyrannus, or a retiring place (for so the word *scholē* sometimes signifies) belonging to a principal man or governor of the city; some convenient place it was, which Paul and the disciples had the use of, either for love or money.”<sup>10</sup>
- e. Note, disciples of Jesus Christ are all called to intensive lives of Biblical learning and sanctification unto Gospel fruitfulness. Does this describe your life?

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<sup>7</sup> Matthew Henry, [Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume](#) (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 2150.

<sup>8</sup> Matthew Henry, [Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume](#) (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 2150.

<sup>9</sup> [The New King James Version](#) (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Ac 2:40.

<sup>10</sup> Matthew Henry, [Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume](#) (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 2151.

- VIII. All in Asia hear the Word of the Lord v10b
- a. so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.
  - b. “All who dwelt in Asia heard the Word”
    - i. Part of fulfilling Christ’s prophecy in Mt 24:14 “And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.”
    - ii. Population estimates of Asia Minor at that time range from 2-8 million inhabitants.
  - c. This is more demonstration of the power of the Holy Spirit in God’s people and in the hearts of men. This is geometric multiplication on display.
    - i. Have you ever disciplined someone who went on to disciple others, and so on, and so on? Disciple-makers don’t just make disciples, they make other disciple-makers.
  - d. Note the message remained accurate even through so many mouths preaching:
    - i. “the word of the Lord Jesus”
    - ii. Another evidence of the Holy Spirit’s power at work.
  - e. Both Jews and Greeks
    - i. No favoritism in distributing the Word of God. This is the Gospel of the Kingdom of God for all mankind.
  - f. Ends on a note of Gospel power and victory
    - i. The Lord God can and will open the doors for the Gospel in any country, any region, in the midst of any culture of hatred against Christ.
  - g. “This pattern continues for two years with the result that Jews and Greeks hear the word of the Lord. Paul’s ministry in Ephesus runs into its third year (Acts 20:31). Out of Ephesus came a ministry that impacted the entire Lycus valley, planting churches that received the letters later recorded in Rev. 2–3. Workers such as Epaphras were key in this expanding church work (Philem. 23; Col. 1:7; 2:1; 4:12–13; 1 Cor. 16:19).”<sup>11</sup>
- IX. Questions to know, love and obey God

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<sup>11</sup> Darrell L. Bock, [Acts](#), Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 601.