

# Acts 19:1-20

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[ 0 : 00 ] Our main text will be in Acts 19, but I just want to reference the verse in Romans 1. So I'm really grateful for the singing this morning and for us praising the Lord together through song.

! The song I'd rather have Jesus definitely has a special meaning for me right now. It was a song I listened to a lot when I first became a Christian in the early 2000s. And the line of saying, like, I'd rather have Jesus than houses or land means a lot to me right now.

I've been going through a house buying process. And just, yeah, some of you have done that notice how awful that can be and how sanctifying that can be.

And, you know, and we're thankful for homes, thankful for places that we can live out kingdom life in. And there definitely is an obsession and idolatry in our nation when it comes to houses and throwing so much money, so much money into things.

And I hope that your soul can say that, that I would rather have Jesus than anything that this world has to offer at all. And so, with that in mind, I'm looking at Romans 1.

[ 1 : 13 ] Really well-known verse, but I just want to use this verse as a lens to read over Acts 19. So, to be thinking about this verse as we go through Acts 19.

So, well-known, but Romans 1 verse 16, Paul says, For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

For in it, the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith. As it is written, the righteous shall live by faith. And an overarching theme this morning is I just want to emphasize to you that the gospel is not just an important message or a powerful message.

It's like the only, the most powerful message in the world. And it has the power to save dead and rebellious sinners and deliver them from their sin and from death to God, to raise the spiritually dead to life.

I was just a minute to get out of curiosity. I just looked up this word, the word power here in this text. And verse 16, it's the word dynamis.

[ 2 : 40 ] So, that sounds like dynamite. Well, that's where some of the origin comes from. But listen to this. This word power, it means an inerrant power.

A power residing in a thing by virtue of its nature, or which a person or thing exerts and puts forth. So, it means that the gospel itself possesses so much power that it doesn't need anything on the outside to help it.

And in our culture, we've relied so much on gimmicks and ingenuity and theatrics and cool things to think that, and thinking that that's going to be what saves people.

When all the same, you could have the worst speaker in the world come up here. And if he truly, genuinely knows Christ and is preaching the gospel message, God can use that.

He doesn't have to be cool. He doesn't have to dress right. He doesn't have to be the most eloquent speaker. He doesn't have to have smoke and lights. He doesn't have to have anything. The power of the gospel is enough in and of itself and doesn't need any help.

[ 3 : 49 ] And so, keeping that in mind, let's turn to Acts 19. That's where our main text is. So, we've been going through the book of Acts, if you're new here. So, we've been in Acts for quite a while, and we're getting into chapter 19 now.

Thank you for Caleb stepped in last week and preached for me because I was not feeling good and had a lot of other things going on as well. So, Paul has been in Europe, what we would call Europe now.

And now, him going into Ephesus is kind of the launching place for the gospel going into Asia. And so, it's a really awesome, awesome text.

So, the evangelism of Asia is here, and it kind of starts in the city of Ephesus. But just join me in prayer before we go through this together.

Father, Holy Father, we recognize how unworthy we are. And God, we would all be like Peter if you approached us and said, Go away from me, Lord.

[ 5 : 02 ] I'm a sinful man. Not worthy to untie your sandals. God, I just ask that you would use me to communicate your word to your people.

And if there are those here today who do not know the power of the gospel, the message of your Son, Jesus Christ, that you would work in their hearts today. It's for his name's sake we ask.

In Christ's name, amen. So, we're going to pick up in the beginning of chapter 19. All right. Verse 1. And it happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the inland country and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples. And he said to them, Do you receive the Holy Spirit when you believe?

And they said, No. We have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit. And he said, Into what then were you baptized? And they said, Into John's baptism.

[ 6 : 11 ] And Paul said, John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus.

On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and then began speaking in tongues and prophesying.

There were about 12 men in all. And then he entered the synagogue, and for three months spoke boldly, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God.

But when some became stubborn, and continued in unbelief, speaking evil of the way, before the congregation, he withdrew from them, and took the disciples with him.

Reasoning daily in the hall of Tyrannus. This continued for two years, so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.

[ 7 : 09 ] And God was doing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, so that even the handkerchiefs or aprons that he touched, his skin, were carried away the sick, and their diseases left them, and the evil spirits came out of them.

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 Jesus, whom Paul proclaims.

Seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Siva was doing this. But the evil spirit answered them, Jesus I know, and Paul I recognize, but who are you?

And the man in whom the evil spirit leaped on them, mastered all of them, and overpowered them, so that they fled out of the house, naked and wounded. 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.

Also many of those who were now believers came, confessing and divulging their practices. A number of those who had practiced magic arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all.

[ 8 : 26 ] And they counted the value of them and found that it came to 50,000 pieces of silver. So the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily.

So today, just by way of introduction, just kind of want to, we'll get more into, so if you keep reading, you see like if you have subtitles in your Bible, it says a riot and nephesis.

We'll get to that next week. That's attached to this message though, so it'll be kind of going into next week. But just a little bit about the city of Ephesus.

It's modern day Turkey on the east side of the Aegean Sea, and it was the capital of the Roman province of Asia. So that's where their headquarters were set up. That's where the governor of that territory was.

Major port city. And it was the fifth largest city in all the Roman Empire, which at this time hadn't got as big as it would be, but it was really big already. And the big thing, and we'll talk about this more next week, not to get into all this now, but the big boast that they had was that they had the temple of Artemis, and that was also like the Roman goddess Diana.

[ 9 : 44 ] We'll talk more about all that next week. So if you like mythology, come back next week, and you'll see how Jesus kind of plays the trump card over mythology. But as we go through this today, there are going to be five lessons that we see, that we can learn from Paul in like sharing the

gospel, and kind of compare that, line that up with like how it is in your own life, as well as, there are going to be intermingles, so don't think there's just going to be the big bullets of this message.

All right, if this message had a title, it would be six ways the gospel impacts a culture. Okay, six ways that the gospel impacts a culture.

All right, so number one, the gospel causes sinners to be saved. That's what we just read in Romans 1.

The gospel causes sinners to be saved. Very clear explanation of this. We're going to walk through it like verse 1 through 7. So Paul comes into Ephesus, and he encounters some disciples of John the Baptist.

Apollos was in Corinth at the time, and so he comes in and just kind of runs into these guys. And they had probably moved, relocated from Palestine or Judea to this region while John the Baptist had his ministry.

[11:16] So they probably left before Jesus came on the scene, most people believe. And it's interesting that John the Baptist had an influence that far, and his teaching had an influence that far.

Apollos would be a great example of that. He had had the baptism of John and fully recognized that Jesus was the Messiah that John's testimony pointed to.

He just needed a little further instruction. That's what Nathan taught on a few weeks ago. So these disciples basically had a lot of pieces of the puzzle with that and had the whole complete picture put together for them yet.

So as followers of John, they would have known that John came to prepare the way of the Messiah. They would have known that, but they did not know that Jesus was that Messiah.

So here's one of those little sub-things. Something you can learn from Paul in this text is that Paul initiates gospel conversation.

[12:19] Okay? So, I'm not going to downplay this because we're going to see another example in a minute, but most people in the church today, they are not proactive in actually talking to people about Christ.

They're more reactive. They'll think, I'll just go about my day and if God just drops somebody in front of me, then I will just talk to them. Or they think, you know, I'll get a divine appointment, which is true.

That's very true. But, I'm telling you that like the gospel and the kingdom will not be where it is if that's all we did. There are people who must go out and hunt down people to share Jesus with. And, so, this is one of those opportunities. He walks up, he sees these guys, and he just starts talking to them about their belief. He knew they were disciples of John.

So, he kind of asked them, if you look at this, he uses very clear, look at verses 1 through 7, very clear, intentional questions to kind of draw out what they believe.

[13:22] It's that simple. He just said, did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? And to who were you baptized? And their answers just clearly revealed that they were not quite, I believe, not quite born again or saved yet.

And the reasons why, there's two of them, they said they had not even heard of the Holy Spirit, even though John taught that Jesus would come and baptized with the Holy Spirit and with fire. They hadn't even heard of the Holy Spirit.

And then, verse 4 reveals they didn't even know who Jesus was. So, but what's awesome, though, is Paul recognized from his viewpoint that John's legacy, John's teaching, had helped them recognize what they had missed.

And so, he basically just filled in the missing pieces of the puzzle for them. So, they were in a very, very unique state in redemptive history, very similar to, like, an Old Testament believer kind of waiting for the Messiah to come.

So, he basically is like, oh, okay, I got you. Got you. John came to tell you to turn away from your sins and to prepare the way of the Savior. He was the voice of the one crying in the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord.

[14:37] Well, the Lord came. His name was Jesus of Nazareth. He lived, He loved, He died on the cross, He was resurrected. He is the Messiah.

And so, they gladly received that and were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. And, the result of that is they began speaking in tongues and prophesying.

That's not a message about this today. But, but, very clearly, it is done, I believe, in this text as an outward demonstration and verification of giving Paul like a dramatic way to enter Ephesus. Because as we're going to read, there's a lot of like supernatural dark things going on. And for him to kind of come and show in a very visible way that the Savior who he represented was powerful was very important at the time.

And so, these men had deep roots in the Old Testament scriptures. And so, very clearly, it meant a lot to them to hear that prophecy out of Joel 2, I think, fulfilled.

[15:48] So, they were born again. They were saved right there. So, we saw that Paul initiated gospel conversation. Excuse me. Which leads to the second thing.

Alright, the gospel causes sinners to be hardened. Alright? See that in verses 8 through 10.

So, right after that, he went into the synagogue. So, he happened up on these first guys. It just kind of happened. So, it was the unintentional encounter that he had with John's disciples.

But now, he very intentionally goes into the synagogue, which, again, he initiates gospel conversation. And, it's almost like a seek and destroy mission.

He, he sought out the lost people to allow the power of God to destroy the sin of their life. And so, he went, as was his way, he went into the synagogue to engage with the people there who understood someone of the scriptures.

[16:54] So, here's some other things we can observe about the way Paul engaged in this text right here. If you look at these verses, verses 8 through 10, just ask yourself the question, how did he speak about the gospel?

Do you see him like using emotional manipulation or theatrics? It just says, Paul spoke the gospel boldly.

All right? He spoke the gospel boldly about the things concerning the Messiah, the one that met him on the road to Damascus and saved him from his sins.

And this idea to speak boldly means to speak freely, to speak confidently, to speak with full assurance about what you were saying. Think about, like, how you talk about the Savior.

Does it carry that kind of confidence? Like, I know in whom I believed. could you just think about, those of you who are married, think about the confidence you can speak of about your spouse, how they are yours, that they belong to you.

[18:01] And just think, can I speak with the same kind of boldness about the gospel? So, he wasn't unsure or timid. He didn't come across uncertain or doubtful.

He was sure about the Messiah he spoke about. So, Paul spoke the gospel boldly. And another thing to note under this is that Paul spoke the gospel persuasively.

Okay? Paul, it says here, was reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God. So, again, unfortunately, a lot of churches and ministries have used emotional manipulation to invoke a certain response from people.

I'm not even a musician and I know this. I mean, I'm not a musician, you know. You can play certain musical keys to invoke certain emotional responses in people.

So, are what people are experiencing actually real? Is it like the work of God or is it just an emotional manipulation? And usually, like 15 minutes after that service is over, you can tell which one it was by what people were doing and what they're talking about.

[19:16] And how they lived their lives outside of that. And so, what we see is in reasoning persuading, right? The genuine gospel evangelism, it's a call to persuade people to Christ.

So, to be persuaded is not to be deceived. It's the opposite. You're convinced. Like, you show them the evidence, you talk about it, here it is, this is Jesus, and they, the Lord uses that through His Holy Spirit to convince them.

They are persuaded to follow Christ. So, throughout the book of Acts, you see that idea of preaching, teaching, persuading people to believe. It's an appeal to their mind.

It changes their disposition, and that's why they believe. Hold your hand there. I don't have many places for you to look at it all, outside our main text, but look at Acts 17, just two chapters back. Just to kind of show you this is a theme in Acts. So, he's in Thessalonica in Greece, and look at chapter 17, verse 1 through 4, and just jump ahead.

[20:29] It says, on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures. Alright? So, that was his authority. He wasn't using his own opinions or his own ideas.

He was using the Scripture, explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, this Jesus whom I proclaim to you is the Christ.

And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women. So, you kind of see this as a theme.

He's reasoning. He's persuading. Shilling people who Jesus is. And God uses that to draw them to himself. So, those are awesome words.

So, just to throw this out there, there are certain people, I think spiritual gifts are a good thing. I think they're a biblical thing. But I feel like the church is just extremely erred in the terms of, I don't have the gift of evangelism, so I'm not going to share.

[ 21 : 36 ] as nowhere in the Bible. You're called to share with the ability that God has given you to share. Right? You may not be. There are some people that are very gifted by God to communicate the truth, to communicate the gospel, but that doesn't mean that the rest of us should just sit back.

We all are heralds of the gospel. Alright? And, this is a great example of that. Reasoning, explaining, proving, persuading.

Okay? So, I also want to tell you that persuasion takes, it's more of an art instead of a gimmick or a method. Okay? So, it's more like something like fly fishing or painting.

You practice and you get better and better and better at it. You can't, I think we have such an attraction in our culture to five-step things and just show me the method and I will apply this method to every situation.

You know, those of you who are really engaged in serious evangelism know that just doesn't work. Can you sit down, please, while you're drinking your cocktail on the beach while I share five things with you and most of the time they don't even make it past the second thing.

[ 22 : 50 ] If you notice, Jesus never spoke to people the same way. You ever notice that? Like he always had, he applied the context of the gospel to the situation that he was in at the time.

So, it takes time, it takes practice to be able to learn to talk about Christ. So, exercise those muscles. Ask him to help you.

And so, it's more of an art and not a method. Kind of throw that out there. Alright? So, something else we can learn just from this few verses about the way Paul shared the gospel.

And this is a big one. I think this was definitely lacking in the American church. Paul persevered in gospel ministry. That's it. Paul persevered in gospel ministry.

Most of us go give it a shot and if we get shot down we don't want to go back out. And we think, you know, I tried and it didn't work. You know, we have to build up some thicker skin.

[ 23 : 57 ] We have to understand that winning people takes time to knock down all the walls in their heart. There are some people that come to know Christ really quickly. Others, it's just a constant battering at their sin, the idols in their life and eventually they are saved.

But just notice that it says that Paul reasoned and shared Christ in the synagogue for three months. Alright? And then he did it daily in the hall of Tyrannus.

He said it continued for two years. That's a lot of teaching, reasoning, and explaining. He said he did it daily. He said that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks. But as this bullet says, some are hardened. Okay? And that's what we read that some of these men in the synagogue were hardened. Don't bring that junk in here.

We don't want to hear it. It's against everything we've ever been taught. And so, the gospel can say, but the opposite effect is it can harden. Men love darkness rather than the light.

[ 25 : 03 ] So, when I think about perseverance, I think of a hero of mine.

His picture's in my study down there. Some of you may know who he is, but his name was, funny last name, William Wilberforce. And he was a British parliamentarian in the late 1700s, early 1800s. Young guy. was best friends with the prime minister. It was William Pitt. But, on October 28th, 1787, he dedicated his life to two goals.

He says, God Almighty has set before me two great objects, the suppression of the slave trade and the reformation of morals. So, he had not been a believer for a long time and then he came to know Christ right at the height of his political popularity, which any politician would know.

That's like a big deal because like, now I've got to turn around and tell everybody else the opposite thing. So, he was really feeling the weight of that and he hated, appalled, the slave trade.

[ 26 : 26 ] Cool enough, his pastor was John Newton, the guy who wrote Amazing Grace and a man who was a slave trader before he became a Christian. And, so Newton encouraged him, take it out,

attack it, God be with you, you know, I'm here.

And, so, the slave trade and the reformation of morals in the British society, none of those were going to be accomplished in a quick speech.

None of them. He knew it would take years and years. John Wesley wrote to him in 1790 and listen to what he said, unless God has raised you up for this very thing, you will be worn out by the opposition of man and of devils.

But if God be with you, who can be against you? So like, you're going to fail. Like, if this is a mission you're going to undertake on your own, if God hasn't raised you up for this, then you're going to be burned out.

So, just think about it. Walking into a place like Congress. So, how many of you are actually aware of like, you ever watch like a British Parliament thing on TV?

[ 27 : 39 ] It is nothing like ours at all. Like, they make fun of each other, like severe sarcasm. They make fun of the highest office. It's like a comedy show sometimes. So, there's not that respect.

Sometimes we might see in ours, but ours could be going that way. But anyways, so when he went in there the first time, can you imagine this? Like, hundreds of men sitting in this room and probably 70% of them have some involvement in the slave trade.

And then they're standing up and saying like, I want to propose that we make a motion to end the slave trade. Like, the outrage that came out. So, he knew that wasn't going to come down in one speech.

He knew it was going to take years and years to bring it down. So, what he learned about perseverance, he wrote this in a letter. He says, I daily become more sensible that my work must be affected by a constant and regular exertions rather than by sudden and violent ones.

In other words, he understood that if this was going to happen, it was going to be a marathon run and not a sprint. And we have to think of sharing the gospel that way.

[ 28 : 54 ] It's a battle. So, I mentioned Cody Klikner a little while ago. So, when you see him congratulating, they won their conference, and now they're going and playing to some other big things in the nation.

And Cody really seeks to live out gospel life on the baseball team. Very few people who do that. but, so we were, I did a lot of ministry with the baseball team.

And there was one year, man, we were just shot down and shot down and shot down like nothing we did was working. And every week we just renewed our strength in the Lord.

And finally, we were able to put together an evangelistic Bible study after it was just shot down multiple times. Guys didn't show up. We were like, you know, order food, show up, and like 15 guys said they were going to be there and like two were there.

That happened multiple times. You just got to remember like they're going to resist and they're going to be hard-headed and they're going to be stubborn. But God, the power of the gospel, can draw them to himself when he's ready.

[ 30 : 00 ] And he did. And several guys came to know the Lord that year through the teaching of the word. So we have to keep with it. We can't just be upset and run away with our tail between our legs every time something doesn't work out.

Paul taught two years, almost daily, to get to where all the residents of Asia have heard the word. So persevere in gospel ministry.

So I should tell you that Wilberforce, he started that battle in 1787. Or excuse me, I flipped it over the wrong time. Yeah, 1787. 1787. So on February 1807, so nearly 20 years later, the slave trade was taken down at 4 a.m.

in the morning. That's 20 years of constant slander, being attacked. And he saw it as a work of God, a work of the gospel, not as just political change.

So such is gospel evangelism. We have to persevere. Number three, the gospel causes miraculous acts.

[ 31 : 11 ] Verse 11 through 12. So a good while back, I did a message on things like this. You can go back and look it up later. But miracles and acts, healings, they're usually a means for God to open the door, to get the attention of people in these contexts, to show that Jesus is the Christ, and to confirm the messenger, that he is being used by God.

And in the last message that I said, does stuff like this still happen? Absolutely. Why don't we see more of it in our culture? Either we're not looking, or I also believe the greatest barrier to people in

the West or in America is more ideologies and wrong thinking and secular humanism.

That's where if you go to a place like the jungle, or I have a good friend of mine from India, his nickname is Jojo, that's what I call him.

He has literally long beard and dreadlocks and he has a ministry in Delhi, and he sees a lot of this. Well, that is where people are oppressed in a spiritual way that does come out in a demonic fashion.

and so Paul was going around healing people and God was validating that message that he was the messenger sent by God.

[ 32 : 39 ] And the whole handkerchief, apron thing, there's a very constant belief in the ancient East that objects associated with holy people had power, power, but really the idea is like God saw fit to give Paul an extra measure of power, that the faith of, it's like touching Jesus to him in his garment.

Jesus' garment didn't heal the guy, Jesus did. It's the same kind of concept. So it wasn't these were magical objects, but rather God saw please to manifest his power so intensely through what Paul is doing.

This happened at Cyprus and at Philippi, previously in Acts. So, another observation about Paul here was Paul was a yielded vessel for the gospel, okay?

He allowed himself to be used by God. He yielded to the power of the Holy Spirit. He had no ability in himself to save or heal anyone.

Ephesians 3, verse 7, Paul said this, writing later on to the church that was planted here. He says, of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace, which was given me by the working of his power to me through who I am the very least of the saints.

[ 34 : 00 ] So, I'm no one special. This grace was given to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. So, you don't have to be special.

You don't have to have a seminary degree. You just need to know the scripture, know the Savior, know the gospel, in order for God to use you. Be a yielded vessel for the gospel.

Number four, the gospel causes false teachers to be exposed. This is one of those stories that is like definitely rattled the cage. Verse 13 through 16, we see that there were some itinerant Jewish exorcists, right, who were around Ephesus.

And there's a lot of history and ancient records that kind of give people ceremonies and rituals and formulas to cast out evil spirits. And they would collect them in books and sell those books.

And so, even for the Jews in this time, in the first century, there was a lot of these kind of spells and there was a lot of demonic activity and they would try to use their words to get rid of these evil spirits.

[ 35 : 11 ] So, Jesus was able to cast out demons by the power and authority that he had. We all know that. And he gave that same authority to his disciples, his apostles.

So, in a very pragmatic matter, you know, these guys are watching Paul do this with the real power of Christ and they say, hmm, Jesus Christ.

Maybe that's another word or name I can throw into my formula book. To practice the same kind of thing, that'd be kind of cool. So, they go out and try this and they just get it handed to them severely. So, why didn't it work for them? Okay? Well, number one, these, they failed to know the Savior himself.

Okay? If you're going to invoke somebody's authority, you have to know that person. You have to have a relationship with that person. It can't just be a magical word that you just kind of throw out there.

[ 36 : 14 ] Example, if you were coming from Caesar in this day as a messenger and you evoked his authority, that carried a lot of power with it. Right? But, if you did not, if you were a false messenger, it could cost you your life.

So, the power of someone's name carries authority, but only as far as that relationship is there. So, these chance to get rid of evil spirits did not work.

And, they were stripped naked, and they ran away. That was a great picture of shame and humiliation, and that scared the blank out of the people in Ephesus.

Because, they were like, wow, these guys were at the top of our school here, and they just got handed to them by a real demonic spirit. These books must not work. This is dangerous.

Let's get rid of these. So, that flows into the next thing. Number five, the gospel causes idolatry to be renounced.

[ 37 : 18 ] Verse 17 through 20. Alright? So, very, very strong belief in magical incantations in this period to cast out evil spirits.

They had spells for protection, to get somebody's love, to have good child birth, to have all kinds of stuff. So, they had so many rituals. So, 50,000 pieces of silver, probably referring to the Greek dragma at the time, around six million dollars in today's currency.

So, not just like threw away comic books, they threw away like seriously published quality books at that time, and they renounced it. And it says that it was all in the name of the Lord Jesus.

It was extolled. He was extolled. And so, a severe book burning of the right kind, that's associated with a very negative thinking, but of the right kind, idolatry is renounced.

Okay? So, when someone comes to know Christ, idolatry is a big thing that they will face. Okay? It says in Romans 1 that we've exchanged the truth about God for a lot.

[ 38 : 32 ] Romans 2, excuse me. And so, all of us have worshipped idols. It doesn't have to be a statue of something. We all have loved and given our attention to things that are infinitely lesser than God.

And God calls that idolatry. It's making things into ultimate things over God. And so, Paul wrote in 1 Thessalonians 1.9, he says, I remember how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God and to wait for His Son from heaven whom He raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

So, idolatry is renounced. These people who have this deep pagan past turned away from it and turned to Christ. So, ask yourself, though I'm not worshiping a statue or reading a spell book, what are idols in my life that still compete highly for my love and my attention to love more than the Savior?

So, number six and lastly, this is what we'll get to next week, the gospel causes hostility, severe hostility. That's number six and that'll be the rest of this chapter.

chapter. But, I thought it would be fitting to read you something because I have a great, there's a great tendency of people in the western church to think that this stuff isn't real anymore.

[ 40 : 06 ] It is. So, there's a ministry that I supported in years past called The Every Tribe. I encourage you to look them up.

They're very gospel-centered, solid, reform, mission group to every tribe. This is, the founder of it is a man named David Seton and he did a ton of ministry in Papua New Guinea and the tribes and jungles there.

Very brave man for the gospel. He wrote a book called Reckless Abandoned. So, if you want to read a book that really pushes you, it's called Reckless Abandoned by David Seton.

So, excuse me, I'm still in recovery by the way, so thank you for bearing with my health right now. He did a lot of work with a tribe called the Chambri Tribe and he started it in the late 80s.

And, as you know, like in a lot of tribal cultures in Papua New Guinea, there's sorcery, there's witch doctors, there's a lot of serious death and paganism.

[ 41 : 17 ] In those cultures, and it's real, it's like demonic oppression. And, so I'll read to you, my reading out loud voice is not the best this morning, so, but I hope that God enables you just to listen to this, it's really good.

But I want you to see that all the things that we just talked about, all these points, still happen.

They're all the same thing, when a gospel comes into a culture and shakes it. okay, he says, this is David talking, he says, over hundreds of years, the Chambrite tribesmen have devised a ritual to help them discern the identity of the person who is responsible for death.

Then that death could be avenged and the spirits satisfied. The ritual is called muabu, which means the shaking of the bamboo, initiated by men, call upon evil spirits to come and possess them and to empower a bamboo pole, which will indicate the guilty person in the Chambrite.

So they lay a stick of bamboo on the ground and it would move and point to the person guilty of the crime. And so he says, the Chambrite men have boasted to me for six years about how easy it was to conjure up evil spirits.

It is so simple, they would say, even our children can do it. Tribal children grow up learning how to manipulate the spirits through a variety of sacrifices and magical rituals.

[ 42 : 53 ] So just like we read, and he says, Antonio, who was a woman in this tribe who had died, she was a Christian.

And so they were trying to find someone to blame for her death. And so she was buried that afternoon in the chamber were prepared for the ritual that same evening.

As the sun was setting, more than 200 people gathered in the open area before the huts. Two young men stood up to begin the solemn incantation.

One man held a five-foot-long bamboo pole while the other tapped on it rhythmically with a human bone. He chanted softly, at first inviting the spirit of Antonio to take control of the bamboo.

Then his chants became louder and more aggressive. Excuse me. He says, I inched over toward the bamboo. So David's moving right up towards it.

[ 43 : 59 ] And he said, Annoyed that they were attempting to conjure the spirit of Antonio, to him was a sister in the Lord. I shouted at them, Antonio is a follower of Jesus.

She is in heaven with God right now, and her spirit will not appear tonight. Some minutes later, an intense verbal and spiritual warfare ensued. The chamberly sorcerers were begging with the spirits to come and take over the bamboo physically.

But I prayed the Lord of restrain them to show himself to be more dominant than these ancestral spirits. Finally, after many hours, they gave up and disgusted, they said, the spirits won't come tonight.

And I said, that's right. I snapped back at them. Our great God is more powerful than the spirits, and he has proven his superiority by disarming your spirits and forbidding that bamboo to move tonight. It's every time before it had moved, and he said, it's not going to happen. In the name of Jesus, and it didn't happen. He says, suddenly, anger and confusion erupted as people were running around screaming and throwing coconuts at us.

[ 45 : 12 ] I thought the people were chasing after us, so I yelled to our team, run. They took off, sprinting down through the grass. As a part of my team hustled back to our campsite, I continued to shout at them God's truth and power and authority over their spirits.

So he's running and yelling back at them kind of thing. I persisted with loud preaching about the supremacy of God over evil spirits. And then unexpectedly, a woman appeared out of the shadows of a thatched hut.

Along with those by my team, it was obvious that she had a surge of demonic power. Obviously, this was a very and more potent sorceress.

she waved her hands over her head and began to chant and dance to plea with the spirits to move the bamboo. Once again, there was a time of intense spiritual conflict as she begged the spirits to reveal themselves.

I continue to pray loudly for the power and presence of our Lord to invoke her and disempower her to raise the spirits and to take control of the bamboo.

[ 46 : 24 ] Amazingly, to me, the Lord promoted me to issue a challenge. It sounds like something I like a lot here in the promise of Baal. I yelled at her, Rosa, bring out your most powerful sorcerer.

If he can persuade these spirits to shake the bamboo, we will follow and worship your spirits, but if he can't do it, you will need to repent and worship and follow our God.

Sounds just like Elijah. him. So Rosa became even more desperate, twisting around, dancing frantically to summon the spirits, but the bamboo remained lifeless.

Finally, with loud cursing, she gave up and retreated back into the night. One of the men grabbed the bamboo and angrily shoved it through the doorway of a hut.

As the villagers began to disperse, I quickly issued the challenge once more for them to bring out their most powerful sorcerer, like this is all you got? Anybody else here want to give it a go?

[ 47 : 25 ] But they refused to try. Instead, these furious villagers chased after us as I shouted, Christ is greater than your spirits.

So, this is when a machete wielding tribesman ran after me. He took three quick steps forward and raised the bush knife over me.

I wheeled around to avoid being hit in the head. Fully expecting to be hit, he slashed and he missed. When I peeked around, I saw one of the unsaved chamberly men had jumped between us and said, leave this man alone.

Why would an unsaved man do this? Not because he was a believer. He wasn't. He did it because he had seen the obvious demonstration of God's authority over the evil spirits.

And he was afraid of what our God would do to him if I was killed. To my amazement, forty chamberly villagers encircled me and quietly take me back to my camp.

[ 48 : 27 ] My strength left me and I began to fall on the ground weeping. I wept because of the great love for the chambery. I wept because of this incredible adrenaline rush of almost having my head chopped off.

I wept because of the realization God had just shown through us of a display of his power openly rebuking the spirits that ruled over the chambery for thousands of years.

All that emotion exploded. The machete man, the guy tried to kill him, came to visit me the next day. He brought a gift of two beetle nuts and apologized and he says, I don't know what came over me last night, but I almost killed you.

He says, I responded to him, I know what came over you. You are a servant of evil spirits, but last night our God showed himself to be more powerful than your spirits.

You need to repent and turn to the Lord Jesus. This man's western name is Bob. Sorry, Bob. I now jokingly refer to him as Machete Bob.

[ 49 : 42 ] He has become my best friend among the chambery and recently has come to know Christ and he follows us around every day helping us in everything we did.

So before he became a believer, he insisted I use his canoe and boat motor whenever I needed to go up the river to talk to the tribes about Christ.

the spiritual conflict with the sorceress was a turning point in evangelism of this tribe. Dozens of villagers began inviting us to speak with them and many came to know Christ.

This demonstration of God's power has given them courage to listen to the gospel message and seriously consider who Jesus Christ really is. Good stuff.

So you see all these things we just mentioned happening even in cultures today and they still will even in ours even though we don't always see supernatural signs.

[ 50 : 43 ] So believe and trust in the gospel is the power of God for salvation to all who believe. Let's pray together. Let's pray together. Let's pray together.