

Breaking the Strongholds of Satan (Part 2)

Acts 19:1-20

Introduction:

1. In Acts 18:23, Paul left his home church in Antioch and began his third missionary journey. Over 1,000 miles later, his travels landed him in the city of Ephesus, the capital city of Asia. It was a city of several hundred thousand people.
2. Ephesus was a pagan city that, for the most part, was morally and spiritually corrupt.
3. When the apostle Paul arrived on the scene and began sharing with people the message of Jesus Christ, the shackles of Satan began to loosen in people's lives. vs. 20
4. The gospel of Christ permeated this city and forcefully began to break down the strongholds of Satan. Notice verses 18-19. People were loosed and set free!
5. Did you know that all people can break the strongholds of Satan in their lives? How? Let's learn from this incredible text.

First, you must possess the Spirit of God internally.

Second, you must know the Son of God personally.

1. Paul was in the city of Ephesus two years, teaching the Bible and revealing Jesus Christ to people through the written Word of God. vs. 10
2. He had tried to do this in the Jewish synagogue, but they refused Christ and wouldn't believe on Him (vs. 8). So Paul left the synagogue and set up shop in a place called the school of Tyrannus. Tyrannus was a man who owned a school or lecture hall in Ephesus.
3. Paul now had a meeting place. God also granted Paul the miraculous signs of an apostle (vs. 11-12). These signs would demonstrate to unbelieving Israel that the Jesus that Paul preached truly was Israel's Messiah and King.
4. Paul was enjoying a very fruitful ministry with people being loosed from the bondage of Satan (vs. 12 – "...and the evil spirits went out of them.").
5. There arose a problem though. There were seven brothers that decided they would capitalize on the power of this Jesus that Paul proclaimed. The Bible describes these men as "*vagabond Jews, exorcists.*"
 - What this means is that they were like a traveling magician show, equivalent to Gypsy fortune-tellers. They would tell people's fortunes, cure diseases by charms, claim to have the power to conjure up spirits, etc.
6. These men wanted to use the name of Jesus for self-interest, that is, to make money. They knew **about** Jesus and were going to use His name as some kind of a charm. They would call the name of Jesus over people who were plagued by evil spirits. vs. 13-14

- Do you think this still happens today? Just turn on the TV and channel surf the “religious” networks. The name of Jesus to many people is simply a money-maker. It is a way to extort money from unsuspecting people and pad their own pocketbooks. 2 Peter 2:3a
7. But these men in our text received quite a surprise. They learned that the powers of Satan are indeed real, and when they attempted to use Jesus’ name and associate themselves with Jesus Christ the demonic spirit knew they were fakes. vs. 15
 8. Their entire plan backfired, and the man who was possessed attacked and wounded these spiritual phonies. They ran like dogs with their tails between their legs. vs. 16
 - Wouldn’t this be fun to watch on the “religious” channel every time a charlatan tried to use the name of Jesus for covetousness means? They get chased off the TV screen by some big brute who knows they’re fakes.
 9. Word traveled fast about this particular incident, and God used this satanic attack for good. Notice verse 17.
 - It had a sobering effect on people; many turned to Christ in true repentance and faith, and they were truly set free from Satan’s bondage. Don’t you love how God can take bad things and turn them around for good?
 10. Here is the point I think we can all learn from this. These seven Jewish men knew **about** Jesus Christ, but they did not know Him personally like Paul did. Even the evil spirit knew that. How much more does God know the hearts of men and women!
 11. Did you know that true salvation is a heart issue? Romans 10:9-10
 12. You can know all about Jesus Christ in your mind and yet still not know Christ in your heart and be saved from your sin. These men obviously believed in Jesus and believed that He had power. But this did not save them and set them free from Satan’s bondage.
 13. There is only one way to get out of Satan’s family and into God’s family. You must place your complete faith and trust in Christ to save you from your sin.
 - It has been said that the difference between heaven and hell is 18 inches – the distance from the head to the heart.
 - To know about Jesus simply is not enough. You must place your faith and trust in Him and the payment He made for your sin. Romans 5:1; Galatians 3:22, 26
 14. These seven men in our text learned all **about** Jesus through Paul’s teaching and testimony. But they left Ephesus still in bondage to Satan because they never trusted Christ and never knew Him personally. I don’t want you to leave CrossRoads still in bondage to Satan today. My desire is that you know Jesus personally.

In Conclusion:

1. Sometimes we ask the question, “Do you know Jesus Christ as your **personal** Lord and Savior?” It isn’t simply a question of whether or not you know He lived, died on a cross, and rose from the dead. It is wonderful if you know that, but have you trusted Him personally to save you from your sin?
2. Maybe you are struggling today with some particular issue – an addictive habit, a prideful spirit, a heart of bitterness and unforgiveness, or maybe a past event that plagues you mentally and emotionally. Satan loves to keep us in bondage to these things.
3. You can be set free, but only Jesus Christ can set you free. John 8:36
4. Have you ever trusted Jesus Christ? Have you ever believed on Christ with your heart? Do you desire a personal relationship with Christ today? He desires to have that with you. Acts 16:31a