

Breaking the Strongholds of Satan (Part 3)

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.

Third, you must receive the Word of God eagerly.

1. After hearing God's truth spoken boldly in the synagogue for three months (vs. 8), the Jews hardened their hearts and began to oppose Paul's ministry. People became combative and resistant to the truth, so Paul had to part ways from them. vs. 9a-b
2. The synagogue's door of opportunity was shut, but a greater door opened up! Paul was able to move into a school building where he and his disciples could meet. vs. 9
3. Tyrannus must have been a well-known teacher in town who owned his own school building or lecture hall. Was he a convert of Paul's? We are not told for sure, but nevertheless he allowed Paul to use his building to teach God's Word.
4. Don't you love it when Satan out-foxes himself? He instigated persecution and got Paul tossed from the synagogue, but it ended up being a blessing to Paul. This was a much more desirable and advantageous situation for Paul.
5. At the synagogue, they met once per week. But now Paul could teach God's Word daily. Paul could systematically teach God's Word to his converts, disciples, and to anybody else who wanted to hear.
6. Paul systematically taught God's Word for two years and the results were phenomenal. vs. 10
 - Disciples began to sink deep roots into God's Word.
 - As a result, these disciples were sharing their faith all over Asia.
 - Satanic strongholds began to break down in Ephesus.

7. It took two years, but the daily, systematic teaching of God's Word eventually tore down Satan's strongholds. vs. 18-20
8. There is a lesson here that I don't want us to miss. When Paul entered into Ephesus, people were completely enslaved to Satan. Then, two years later, people were being set free. What was the difference? It was the daily, systematic teaching of God's Word.
 - "Systematic" means "methodical in procedure or plan; marked by thoroughness and regularity."
 - How many of you systematically eat? How many exercise systematically?
9. We have no hope of demolishing the strongholds of Satan in our lives without the daily, systematic intake of God's Word. Ephesians 6:10-11, 17
 - Many times, instead of treating God's Word as our daily bread, we treat it more like birthday cake. We take in God's Word on special occasions. Remember the word "systematic?" "Methodical in procedure or plan; marked by regularity"
10. This is what it takes to break down Satan's strongholds. You must approach God's Word with a procedure and plan, and that plan needs to be marked by thoroughness and regularity.
11. You cannot approach God's Word in a haphazard, inconsistent manner and expect to experience victory over Satan. Remember, Paul was teaching daily for two years!
 - I've had people come to me and say, "Pastor, it doesn't work like you said. I've been reading God's Word, but it hasn't helped me in my struggles." I'll ask, "How long have you been reading God's Word?" They'll say, "Two days now!"
 - That's like saying, "I've been taking vitamins for two days now and I don't feel any better."
12. You have to have a plan, and then implement your Bible reading with regularity 1 Thessalonians 1:9; cf. 2:13
13. As we begin to take in God's Word with regularity, we must also apply it to our personal lives in the same way. For example, look in our text. vs. 18-19
14. As they learned God's Word, they had to obey God and implement it by faith into their daily lives. They realized, "These things no longer belong in our lives. They are creating bondage and addiction." They burned the bridge (literally) to these things.
15. This is what it takes to break the strongholds of Satan. It takes receiving God's Word with a ready heart, and then applying God's Word with an obedient heart. James 1:22-25
 - **Illustration:** Can you imagine eating a chocolate donut before church and getting chocolate all over your face? You look in the mirror of your car, see your face, and say, "Wow, my face is a mess." But you get right out of your car and walk into church that way without ever wiping it off and cleaning your face.
 - The Bible is like a mirror. It reveals the sin and dirt in our lives. But then we must make a choice to believe it, trust it, and obey it.

In Conclusion:

1. If you know Christ today, you can break the strongholds of Satan in your life. You don't have to live in bondage, but you can be set free. We see three keys to breaking the shackles:
 - You must possess the Spirit of God internally.
 - You must know the Son of God personally.
 - You must receive the Word of God eagerly.
2. *“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”* **John 8:32**