

Main Idea: When God’s Word is unleashed, amazing things happen. That was the case in Ephesus and it will be today. In Acts 19:11-22 we see four results of the ministry of the Word.

- I. There will be confirmation (11-12).
 - A. God is powerful.
 - B. God does things to bring attention to His Word.
 - II. There will be counterfeits (13-16).
 - A. Some people try to use Jesus (13).
 1. If Satan can’t stop God’s work, he tries to copy it.
 2. His aim is to cause confusion.
 - B. People who do are in serious trouble (14-16).
 1. It is dangerous to dabble with the evil one.
 2. It is foolish to have second-hand knowledge of Jesus.
 - III. There will be changed lives (17-20).
 - A. When God works, lost people take note (17).
 - B. When God works, saved people take action (18-20).
 1. You will believe (18a).
 2. You will make confession (18b).
 3. You will get rid of specific sin (19).
 4. You will live for a new purpose (20).
 - IV. There will be more challenges (21-22).
 - A. We must commit ourselves to new opportunities (21).
 - B. We must commit ourselves to work as a team (22).
- Application: Since God’s Word is so powerful, let’s...
1. Make the Word priority.
 2. Make the Word personal.
 3. Make the Word known.

At the beginning of Acts 19 we see Paul engaging in the ministry of the Word at Ephesus. Verse 10 says, “This continued for two years, so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord.” What are the results of a Word-centered ministry? We see the answer in today’s text.

Scripture Reading: Acts 19:11-22

What can change this world? What can change our country? What can change us? There’s only one thing, and we’ll see what it is this morning.

I want to begin with a story. There was a time in England when it was illegal to preach God’s Word in any public place besides a church building. Church and civil leaders said the law was necessary to prevent dissidents from disturbing order in society. George Whitefield, citing allegiance to a higher authority, put the law to the test.

In 1737, Whitefield, a contemporary of John and Charles Wesley, hit the scene. Whitefield was dismayed by the prevalence of empty religion that filled the churches. When he started preaching that religion wasn’t enough, that even “good” people need to be born again, the clergy began to lock this traveling preacher out of their pulpits.

So Whitefield began to look elsewhere for a place to preach, to the open air. It had never been done before in England, at least not by reputable preachers. Why, even Wesley, when he first heard Whitefield suggest the possibility of preaching to the masses outside of church buildings responded by saying it was a “mad notion.”

**Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

But God enabled Whitefield to see what others couldn't see, namely a vast harvest waiting to be gathered in England. One of the untouched corners of God's field was the group of Kingswood coal miners living outside of Bristol. These coal miners were looked down upon by established society. A mayor of Bristol called them "Indians." In his biography of Whitefield, John Pollock describes the coal miners:

"Respectable citizens were afraid of them; they caused violent affrays, had shocked even hard-bitten sailors by digging up the corpse of a murderer whose suicide had cheated them of a public execution to hold high festival round it. They were totally illiterate. Their shacks, like the mines, lay on the far boundaries of four different parishes, so they were ignored by the clergy of all. Gin-devils, wife beaters, sodomites—the Bristol world had not a good word for the colliers of Kingswood..."¹

How do you help people who can't read, who've never been to church, and who are foul-mouthed, wild-living, and sin-loving? Some people say you can't. Others might try social reform. Whitefield knew there is only one answer. He went to them and *preached the Word of God*.

One day, against the wishes of the religious establishment, Whitefield traveled out into the forest, found a hill in an open area near where the coal miners came out of the mines, and called out, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for they shall see the kingdom of heaven!" The miners stopped and stared. They heard Whitefield continue, "Matthew, Chapter 5, verses 1 to 3." They had no idea who Matthew was nor what "chapter" meant, but they gathered nearer to hear. Pollock tells what happened:

"By now quite a crowd had collected. Almost all were coalminers, the grime of the pits making them look like Indians indeed. George told a story that made them laugh. They had never heard a parson who cracked a joke in a sermon—but they had never heard a parson at all! ... The Crowd grew until perhaps two hundred were clustered around Hannam Mount. George Whitefield spoke of hell, black as a pit, of the certainty of judgment for evil done. He turned to talk about 'Jesus, who was a friend of publicans and sinners and came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.' He spoke of the cross, and the love of God, and brushed tears from his own eyes. On and on he went, in dead silence except for his own voice and the slight stirring of wind through the bare trees behind him.

"Suddenly he noticed two pale streaks forming on grimy faces, on that of a young man on his right, and an old bent miner on his left, and two scarred, depraved faces in front; more and more of them. Whitefield, still preaching, saw the 'white gutters made by their tears down their black cheeks.'"²

Two things happened because Whitefield took the Word to the outcasts of his day. First, the religious leaders of the Anglican church rebuked him. And second, the miners asked him to come back and give them more. Two thousand people gathered, standing down wind so they could hear him as he preached, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God!" He preached nearly an hour in the open air.

They wanted more. So he returned again to Hannam Mount on a Sunday in March, after a late snow cleared. They brought a table for him to stand on to make it easier to see and hear. A crowd of no less than 23,000 people gathered—this wasn't Whitefield's estimate but that of the *Gentleman's Magazine* that wrote about the event. Not only were

¹ John Pollock, *George Whitefield and the Great Awakening*, pp. 81-2.

² Pollock, p. 83.

there tears that day, but also the evidence of changed lives that always accompanies true salvation. And it was just the beginning of a great spiritual awakening that would transform two continents and beyond.

My friends, this alone is what can change our world, our country, our own lives. When God's Word is unleashed, amazing things happen. That was true nearly three centuries ago in Whitefield's day. It's still true today. It's always been the case.

You say, "Okay, what exactly happens when God's Word is taught?"

This morning, we'll see the answer in living color. In Acts 19 Paul went to Ephesus, a city of more than 300,000 people in Asia Minor. And his strategy, as we saw last time, was simple. He took people to the Word (as seen in verses 1-7) and then he took the Word to people (verses 8-10). He invested more than two years making the Word of God known in Ephesus and equipping others to take the Word to the surrounding region.

What happened is staggering. Luke gives us a glimpse of the powerful effect of the proclaimed Word in the very next section. In Acts 19:11-22 we see four results of the ministry of the Word.

I. There will be confirmation (11-12).

What do I mean by "confirmation?" I mean that God will work to validate, to confirm the ministry of His Word. Here's how He did it in Paul's day, verses 11-12: "God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them."

Answer this. How should we assess someone's preaching today? We do it by comparing what they say with Scripture to see if it's true, right? But how would you test someone's message if you didn't have the Bible? That was the situation in the first century. Remember, this was before the completion of the New Testament. At this phase in history God gave certain people, namely the apostles, the ability to perform signs and wonders to authenticate the preaching of His Word. The miracles said to skeptical audiences, "You'd better listen to what this preacher is saying. His words are true."

What do we do with skeptics today? We point them to the Book. "If you don't think my message is true, check it out for yourself. Read the Book."

Please notice that our text doesn't say that *Paul* did miracles, but that *God* did. Yes, He chose to work through Paul, but the emphasis is on God. These miracles teach us two things about God.

A. God is powerful. How powerful? Elsewhere the Bible says people were healed by merely touching the fringe of Jesus' cloak (Mark 5:27ff.), and later by falling under Peter's passing shadow (Acts 5:15). This time God used Paul's handkerchiefs and aprons, and if they touched a sick person, that person was cured! That's power!

Having said that, a word of caution is in order. Kent Hughes warns, "This and other accounts have suffered disgraceful abuse in the hands of opportunists. I once received a colored brochure that featured pictures of an 'evangelist' (I am using his word) designed to show what a versatile man of God he was—praying by a waterfall, praying with his hands placed on a pile of letters, holding a baby (he liked children), shaking the hand of a poor man (he knew poor people). But what really got my attention was the offer of a

specially blessed handkerchief that had been dipped in the Jordan River and that, if prayerfully applied, would bring healing—at a cost of only 15 dollars.”³

We mustn't be duped by a misuse of Acts 19. These weren't special “prayer cloths.” The word for “handkerchief” that Luke uses is *sudaria* which means “sweat rag.” It's what a leather worker used—and that's what Paul was, remember, a tentmaker. He would tie a cloth around his head to soak up the perspiration caused from his back-breaking toil. The second word, translated “apron,” refers to what the leather-worker tied around his waist to protect his clothing while working. That's what God chose to use to be the instruments of His healing power, *sweat rags* and *dirty work aprons*.

That's just like God, isn't it? He loves to work, not through the high and mighty who try to take the credit for what He accomplishes, but through *servants*. He worked through Paul, a man who was willing to sweat and support himself so the gospel could advance freely. That's what God used, symbols of servanthood, sweaty rags, as the means of carrying His healing power to hurting people.

But why these miracles? It's more than humanitarian. They teach us about God.

B. God does things to bring attention to His Word. “Such as miracles?” you ask. Sometimes. In this case it was physical healing.

What about today? Can God do miracles today? Indeed, He can do whatever He wants, including heal people. He's God. Does He do the miraculous today? Absolutely. But should we expect Him to repeat the event of Acts 19:11-12 today? If we do, we are assuming that God works the same way all the time. Does He? No. In fact, He didn't work the same way even in “Bible times.”

God took approximately 1500 years to give us the Bible, and He did it in phases. There are three special periods of miracle-working in the Bible. We see miracles in the time of Moses (roughly 1400 B.C.), in the time of Elijah and Elisha (9th century B.C.), and in the time of Jesus and the Apostles (1st century A.D.). Each of the miracle phases preceded the giving of a portion of God's Word. Moses did miracles, then came the Law; Elijah and Elisha did miracles, then came the Prophets; Jesus and the Apostles did miracles, and then the New Testament was written.

The miracles were attention-getters that confirmed the validity of God's spokesmen. Then once God got the attention of the world through miracles, He put the focus on His Word.

God does all kinds of things to bring attention to His Word. In Ephesus He restored health. Sometimes He takes away health or a job or a relationship (think of the book of Ruth). Sometimes He blesses bank accounts. Sometimes He depletes them (think of Job). He does all this because, as Jesus said, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God (Matt 4:4).”

Is God doing something in your life right now to bring your attention to His Word? Are you listening?

So here's the first result of the ministry of the Word. There will be confirmation.

II. There will be counterfeits (13-16).

Satan is an angel of light, as are his ministers. We discover a fact of life in verse 13.

A. Some people try to use Jesus (13). “Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-

³ Kent Hughes, pp. 255-6.

possessed. They would say, ‘In the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out.’”

Exorcism was big business in Ephesus. It was believed that if a magic worker knew the name of a spirit, he could cite that name and thereby control that spirit. The best exorcists were the ones who knew the names of the most powerful spirits.

It was common belief that Jewish priests had access to the secret name of the God of Israel. Since they knew how to pronounce it, they had special power. It’s not surprising, then, that some Jews added the name of Jesus to their magic list, and then went around Ephesus invoking that wonderful name to cast out spirits.

What they were doing illustrates for us the very essence of Satan’s strategy.

1. *If Satan can’t stop God’s work, he tries to copy it.* You say, “Copy it? That doesn’t make sense. Why would Satan want people to cast out his own demonic spirits?” No, it doesn’t make sense. But the aim of the evil one isn’t to make sense. Rather...

2. *His aim is to cause confusion.* If he can’t stop the work of God, he will do all he can to cast suspicion on it. Sometimes Satan raises up aggressive opponents who attack God’s Word, like the atheist professor who taunts, “Your creation has no place in my classroom. It’s not scientific!”

But at other times, rather than attacking, Satan seeks to undermine by imitating. He recruits people who use the name of Jesus, who even quote the Word of God. But his goal is confusion, to make the gospel look bizarre.

Please realize that Satan imitates God’s work because he knows the world cannot tell the difference. Sadly, even God’s people have trouble distinguishing the wheat from the tares.

For instance, let’s say you want to listen to some good Christian music, so you search online. You look for the label “Contemporary Christian,” or “Southern Gospel,” or whatever style you prefer. Regardless of the style, you’ll face the same challenge. What’s that? You’ll discover that there are a lot of artists using the term “Christian” these days. Why? For many reasons. Thankfully, there are many godly musicians who truly want to exalt the Savior and edify His people with their music. But there are also plenty who know they can use the name of Jesus for other purposes. That’s nothing new.

We see it right here in Acts 19. Some people trying to use Jesus. But know this.

B. People who do are in serious trouble (14-16). “Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. One day the evil spirit answered them, ‘Jesus I know, and I know about Paul, but who are you?’ Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding.”

If it weren’t so sad it would be funny. These seven sons of Sceva thought they could use Jesus’ name for their own purposes. But they failed to account for two things, the worth of Jesus’ name, and the power of Satan’s forces. God isn’t pleased when people trifle with His Son’s name. And here He allowed this evil spirit to teach Sceva’s boys a lesson they’d never forget. In fact, they learned two lessons we should take to heart.

1. *It is dangerous to dabble with the evil one.* It’s like handling an unfamiliar weapon. If you’re not careful, somebody’s going to get hurt. And they did here.

2. *It is foolish to have second-hand knowledge of Jesus.* In the third commandment God forbid people to take His name in vain. That’s what a person does when they use the name of Jesus in a flippant way.

Children who grow up in Christian homes face this danger. They know the lingo, the right religious words to say. But if they're just substituting second-hand knowledge for the real thing, they're deceiving themselves.

So when God's Word is unleashed, there will be confirmation, and counterfeits.

III. There will be changed lives (17-20).

Two basic things happen when God works. We see them both illustrated here.

A. When God works, lost people take note (17). "When this became known to the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus, they were all seized with fear, and the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honor."

News spreads fast, even in a city of 300,000 people. When people started hearing about the power of Jesus to heal the sick and later about the danger of playing games with this Jesus, they couldn't go on with business as usual. Fear fell on them, and they started having a different attitude towards the name they mocked when they first heard it.

This is what we need today, for the fear of the Lord to grip our land. And this is what we need to pray for, for the Lord to work through the ministry of His Word to cause lost people to take note.

But if lost people are to take note, it needs to start here, with us. And it will.

B. When God works, saved people take action (18-20). What kind of action? The Word of God produces very specific action when we respond rightly. In this passage we see four steps of change in a person's life.

1. *You will believe (18a).* Notice the beginning of verse 18, "Also many of those who were now believers." In the NIV, "Many of those who believed." That's where true change starts. It's not by looking within yourself, for we don't have the power to change in a way that pleases God. You must look beyond yourself. You must look to the One God sent, to Him who met God's perfect standard with His perfect life, who died to pay sin's debt, and who conquered death. You must admit your sinfulness and place your faith in Jesus Christ. This is where change begins. You must *believe*. Then...

2. *You will make confession (18b).* "Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed their evil deeds."

Prussian king Frederick the Great was once touring a Berlin prison. The prisoners fell on their knees before him to proclaim their innocence -- except for one man, who remained silent. Frederick called to him, "Why are you here?" "Armed robbery, Your Majesty," was the reply. "And are you guilty?" "Yes indeed, Your Majesty, I deserve my punishment." Frederick then summoned the jailer and ordered him, "Release this guilty wretch at once. I will not have him kept in this prison where he will corrupt all the fine innocent people who occupy it."⁴

It's a tragic reality that much contemporary evangelism barely addresses, if at all, the subject of *sin*. This is tragic because a person cannot be saved until he acknowledges that he is *lost*, indeed, a sinner who is hopelessly lost.

Think about how the gospel is so often presented these days. "Are you empty and searching for meaning and purpose in life? Would you like to experience personal fulfillment? If so, my friend, know this. God has a wonderful plan for you. He loved you so much He sent Jesus. And Jesus loves you so much He died for you. Let Him into your heart and He'll give you new life."

⁴ [Today in the Word, December 4, 1992.](#)

But something's missing. It hasn't addressed the problem, which is man's sinfulness, and the consequence, God's wrath and the deserved and certain judgment to come.

So what happens? A person hears this "good news" and responds. How? He "receives" Jesus, yes, but it's not Jesus of the Bible, the *Savior* of sinners. Instead, it's a fictional Jesus who exists for my self-fulfillment. Is there any remorse or brokenness or confession? No. Why should there be? "He loves me because I'm a good person. Why else would He die for me?"

Friends, that's not the gospel. The true gospel, according to Jesus in Matthew 5:3, requires a person admit his spiritual bankruptcy. For the issue isn't whether *you* are satisfied with your life, but whether *God* is satisfied. *And He isn't!* He tells us in His Word that He is offended. Why? We've broken His law. We have gone our own way in His world. Which is why we need a Savior.

And here's a key evidence that you've truly been saved. You make confession. You no longer hide your sin or makes excuses for it. You confess it, to God and others, by calling it what God calls it.

This is what happens when God is truly at work in your life. First, you will believe. Second, you will make confession. The third action is closely related to the second.

3. *You will get rid of specific sin (19)*. Watch what the Ephesian believers did in verse 19, "A number who had practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly. When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to fifty thousand drachmas."

The city of Ephesus was full of religious hucksters, with lots of superstition, and spell casting was a big business. Bruce says, "According to magical theory, the potency of a spell is bound up with its secrecy; if it be divulged, it becomes ineffective."⁵

That's what these converted magicians did. These men and women who once loved darkness and secrecy now made *open confession*. But they didn't stop there. They made a huge bonfire and destroyed their sinful paraphernalia.

The total value came to 50,000 drachmas (ESV 50,000 pieces of silver). A drachma was a day's wage. For round numbers, let's say an average day's wage in America is \$100. The equivalent of 50,000 drachmas would be about five million dollars in our currency.⁶

These new believers in Jesus burned up five million dollars of things they once treasured. Why would they do that? Because when God saves us, He gives us a new heart. And with a new heart comes a desire to get rid of old ways. The Ephesians are a great example for us. Barclay says this about them, "They made the cleanest of clean cuts, even though it meant abandoning the things that were their livelihood."⁷

When we receive salvation, we receive a new heart that desires to make clean cuts. We know that we cannot love Christ and continue to love our old sins.

Men who trap animals in Africa for zoos in America say that one of the hardest animals to catch is the ringtailed monkey. For the Zulus of that continent, however, it's simple. They've been catching this agile little animal with ease for years. The method the Zulus use is based on knowledge of the animal. Their trap is nothing more than a melon growing on a vine. The seeds of this melon are a favorite of the monkey. Knowing this,

⁵ F. F. Bruce, p. 391.

⁶ Boice, p. 326.

⁷ Barclay, p. 144.

the Zulus simply cut a hole in the melon, just large enough for the monkey to insert his hand to reach the seeds inside. The monkey will stick his hand in, grab as many seeds as he can, then start to withdraw it. This he cannot do. His fist is now larger than the hole. The monkey will pull and tug, screech and fight the melon for hours. But he can't get free of the trap unless he gives up the seeds, which he refuses to do. Meanwhile, the Zulus sneak up and nab him.⁸

The refusal to let go of certain things leads to certain trouble. But when there is true change there will be a willingness to get rid, not just of sin, but of *specific* sin. For the converted Ephesians, it was sorcery scrolls. What would we have to burn today if the Spirit's conviction gripped our church as it did in Ephesus?

Am I suggesting we have a bonfire? No. I am suggesting, as the Word of God says clearly, that we take steps to put off specific sins from our lives.

But even that's not the end of lasting change. "Put off" must lead to "put on" (Eph 2:22-24). Here's the fourth step truly saved people will take.

4. *You will live for a new purpose (20)*. Verse 20 says (NIV), "In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power." How did the Word spread? Luke says it happened "in this way" (ESV "So"). That is, as these new Jesus-followers took specific steps to apply God's Word to their own lives, and did it publicly, God continued to unleash His powerful Word so that it reached even more people.

There's one more result seen in this account. When God's Word is unleashed there will be confirmation, counterfeits, and changed lives.

IV. There will be more challenges (21-22).

Until Jesus returns our mission continues, and there will always be new challenges to face. This means two ongoing commitments are in order.

A. We must commit ourselves to new opportunities (21). "After all this had happened, Paul decided to go to Jerusalem, passing through Macedonia and Achaia. 'After I have been there,' he said, 'I must visit Rome also.'"

That's strange. If Paul wanted to go to Jerusalem, why would he head west to Macedonia and Achaia first? Actually, the trip west had a lot to do with his trip to Jerusalem. Luke doesn't tell us here why Paul went west first. Paul's letters do.

Many of the Christians in Jerusalem were poverty-stricken and struggling to survive. That's why Paul headed west, to collect a benevolent offering from the churches in Macedonia and Achaia for their Jewish brothers and sisters in Jerusalem (Rom 15:25-27; 1 Cor 16:1-4; 2 Cor 8-9).

But that offering did more than put food on the table for the saints in Judea. It taught the new Christians in Greece about the unity of the church and the importance of sacrificial love.

Don't miss this. When the Word is unleashed, yes, it changes lives but it also creates new challenges, like the need for sacrificial giving and more laborers for new harvest fields. That's why we're called to be people who put our names on the line when new challenges. I'll give. I'll serve. I'll go.

In verse 22 Luke reminds us that Paul didn't work alone, nor must we.

⁸ [Bibliographic Reference is Uncertain: Charles Swindoll, *Living Above the Level of Mediocrity*, p.150ff.](#)

B. We must commit ourselves to work as a team (22). “He sent two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia, while he stayed in the province of Asia a little longer.”

Paul sent these two men as an advance team to get things ready. The ministry of the Word is the ministry of the Body, the *whole* Body.

“I must visit Rome also.” What a lofty goal, the capital city of the empire. “I’m going there,” Paul said. And from this point on to the end of Acts, the light at the end of the tunnel will be Rome. That’s where Paul’s heading.

Far too often we set our sights too low. There’s so much more we could be doing for Christ.

Kent Hughes shares the parable Soren Kierkegaard told about the wild duck: “Flying northward across Europe with his friends one spring, a certain duck landed in a Danish barnyard where there were tame ducks. Enjoying some of their corn, he stayed for an hour, then a day, then a week, then a month. Finally, relishing the good fare and safety of the barnyard, he stayed all summer. One autumn day when his wild-duck friends were winging their way southward again, they passed over the barnyard, and the duck heard their cries. He felt the thrill of joy and delight, and with a great flapping of wings he rose in the air to join his old comrades in their flight.

But he found that his good fare had made him so soft and heavy, he could rise no higher than the eaves of the barn. So he dropped back again to the barnyard and said to himself, ‘Oh well, my life is safe here, and the food is good.’ Every spring and autumn when he heard the wild ducks honking, his eyes would gleam for a moment and he would begin to flap his wings. But finally the day came when the wild ducks flew over him and uttered their cry, but he paid not the slightest attention to them.”

And Hughes concludes, “If God is calling us, whether for salvation or for increased service, by all means we ought to respond *now*.”⁹

For Paul it was, “I must take the Word to Rome.” For Whitefield it was, “I must take the Word to the coal miners.” What’s your passion? Where are you going to take the Word this week?

We’ve seen today what happens when God’s Word is unleashed. But it must be *unleashed!* Which is why I offer these three challenges in closing.

Application: Since God’s Word is so powerful...

1. *Make the Word priority.* We have a treasure, beloved. Let’s treasure it.
2. *Make the Word personal.* It’s great to give it to others, but are we letting the Word change *our* lives day by day? Make it personal.
3. *Make the Word known.* There’s nothing that can change lives like God’s Word. Let’s spread it this week with confidence!

Closing Song: #97 “*All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name*” (verses 1, 3, 4)

Community Group Discussion:

1. This week’s message was entitled, “*Four Results of the Ministry of the Word.*” Take time as a group to re-read the passage, Acts 19:11-22, and notice the powerful effects of the ministry of the Word. What stands out most to you when you hear this passage read?

⁹ Kent Hughes, *Acts*, p. 259-60.

2. Verse 11 says, “God was doing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul.” What’s significant about the wording of this sentence? Who did the miracles, and how? And why did these miracles occur (notice the context provided by verse 10)?
3. What happened to the seven sons of Sceva in verses 13-16, and what do we learn from this incident? How is having a second-hand knowledge of Jesus a dangerous thing, and what should we do about it?
4. Easy-believism is a deadly thing. What is easy-believism, and what’s missing from it? Verse 18 gives a clear answer, by showing visible evidence in the lives “of those who were now *believers*.” What kind of evidence accompanies true faith?
5. What do you appreciate most about the Word of God? After sharing with one another, spend time in prayer as a group, giving thanks for God’s precious Word and what He accomplishes through it.