

## **Responding to the Good News**

Acts 19:1-20; Coast Community Church; Pastor Earl Miles; 5-19-2024

### **Introduction**

The gospel is the good news of salvation from sin by God's grace alone through faith alone in Jesus alone. God created us to be holy and happy in His love. We have rebelled against God and cannot save ourselves and will not come to God for mercy. God chose to save a people for Himself and to exalt His Son. God sent Jesus to save us from sin and satisfy us in God. Jesus lived the life we could never live and died the death we deserve to die. Jesus rose from the dead and reigns over all as the only Lord and Savior. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to grant repentance and saving faith to sinners. Jesus sent His church to spread the good news that Jesus is an able and willing Savior for all. Jesus will return to judge all men and to restore heaven on earth. God calls everyone to turn from sin and trust in Jesus for the forgiveness of sins and the gift of eternal life.

The question for all of us is: How will we respond to this good news?

Saving faith (1) Rests in Jesus for pardon (forgiveness of sins) and perfection (gift of imputed righteousness), (2) Hopes in God for help (provision and power) and happiness (joy in God) and (3) Pursues love in obedience (to the commands of God's Word) and submission (to God's sovereign will).

How do we see people responding to the gospel in Acts 19?

### **1. The Incomplete Response (1-7)**

These verses are about the Ephesian believers. Ephesus was the capital city of the Roman province of Asia. Paul comes to Ephesus and finds some 'disciples'. The question is: What kind of disciples are these 12 or so men? Some think they must have been disciples of John the Baptist. Others believe that they were disciples of Jesus. It is a hard knot to untie!

What is certain is that whatever faith they had was, at best, incomplete. And the 'incompleteness' centers around the ministry of the Holy Spirit. They seem to be experiencing what the disciples experienced before Pentecost, a true faith without the gift of the Holy Spirit under the New Covenant. They lacked both understanding and experience. Their faith was incomplete in that sense. There appears to be an incomplete understanding of all that was promised in the gospel.

We need to grow in our understanding of the gospel.

*Enlightening the Eyes of Our Heart – Ephesians 1:13-23*

### **2. The Hardened Response (8-10)**

These verses are about the mixed response to Paul's preaching in Ephesus. We often quote the Scripture that says that 'the Word of God will not return void' (Isaiah 55:11) and we may seem

to imply that it will always produce faith in those who hear. It is true that the Word of God has an impact on all who hear it, but that impact may be either softening or hardening! We need to pray for eyes to see and ears to hear.

*The Closed Eyes of the Hard Road – Matthew 13:3-23*

### **3. The Manipulative Response (11-17)**

These verses are about the power of the name of Jesus. We need a healthy respect for the powers of darkness but without fear as believers in Jesus. There are those who see Christianity as the means to their own selfish ends and will use the name of Jesus and His Word to try to get what they want and to see their will done, rather than seeking to do God's will. They want something that will help them control their world and make them successful and they see Jesus as one way to do that.

We need to check our goals.

*My Will or Thy Will Be Done – Matthew 7:15-27*

### **4. The Repentant Response (18-20)**

These verses are about believers' repentance from the use of magic. Magic is just one way we try to replace a proper dependence on God. The faith that saves is a faith that repents. Repentance is basically a change of mind about sin and about God. We naturally see sin as our friend and God as our enemy. But when we repent or have a change of mind about sin and God, we then begin to see sin as our enemy and God, as revealed in Jesus, as our Friend.

We need to examine our relationship to sin.

*The Repentance of the Prodigal Son – Luke 15:1-24*

### **Application Questions**

- Are you actively depending on the Holy Spirit? (Luke 11:13)
- Are you looking for ultimate happiness in the kingdom of God? (Psalm 16:11)
- Are you trying to use God or wanting to be used by God? (Matthew 26:39)
- What has changed in your life because you are a Christian? (Romans 12:1-2)
- What does it mean to you to believe in Jesus? Are you trusting Jesus for deliverance from sin and satisfaction in God? (Mark 1:14-15)