

# The Powerful Name of the Lord Jesus

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, perhaps you'd join with me now as we turn to our Bibles, and we're back in the Acts of the Apostles, the book of Acts, and chapter 19. Paul Brennan has been leading us through this little section of Acts the last few Sundays, and we come this morning to read chapter 19 and the first section through to verse 20.

Acts 19 at 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, did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? And they said, no, we've 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. And Paul said, well, 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 they began speaking in tongues and prophesying.

[ 1 : 18 ] And there were about 12 men in all. And 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.

And this continued for two years. So that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks. And God was doing extraordinary miracles by the hand of Paul.

So that even handkerchiefs or aprons that had touched his skin were carried away to 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 the Jesus whom Paul proclaims.

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

And the man in whom was the evil spirit leaped on them, mastered all of them, and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. And this became known to all the residents of Ephesus, both Jews and Greeks.

[ 2 : 53 ] And fear fell on 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.

And a number of those who had practiced magic arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted the value of them and found it came to 50,000 pieces of silver.

So, the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily. Amen.

And may God bless to us his word. The word wins again. It wins against great odds and sweeps all before it.

Even things that look impressive from a human perspective are no match for Jesus. And so, the gospel wins again. This is a dramatic chapter, isn't it?

[ 4 : 08 ] It grabs our attention and perhaps leaves us with some questions. But the overwhelming message that Luke leaves us with is so encouraging.

He spells it out for us at the end, doesn't he? Verse 20. So, the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily. The Lord Jesus is triumphing.

And his church continues to grow just as he said it would. And in these verses, we are given reason to be glad and to be confident because we see the Lord Jesus doing just as he said he would.

And his word is going forth. He is powerful. More powerful than we tend to think. It's massively encouraging because we are given great clarity here in this passage on what is required for true repentance.

We see what is necessary for someone to become a Christian and enter into eternal fellowship with God. We're given great confidence about what is really needed for effective mission.

[ 5 : 19 ] And we're given real comfort in knowing that Jesus triumphs. And he triumphs over the powers of darkness and superstition. There is no match for him.

To put it another way, we are shown that the answer, the only answer to key questions we face in the Christian life is a simple one. It's the name of the Lord Jesus.

The powerful name of Jesus. That's the keynote through these verses. Notice verse 5. Verse 13.

Verse 13. They undertook to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus. And again, verse 17. And fear fell upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was extolled.

What's the answer to deficient spiritual experience? What's the answer to reaching more people with the gospel? Well, what's the answer to supernatural opposition?

[ 6 : 25 ] Well, the answer is the Lord Jesus. His name is powerful. And his name must be preached. And that's what we see in this passage this morning.

So we'll take it in three sections this morning, I think. Firstly, verses 1 to 7. The name of the Lord Jesus' power to impart the Holy Spirit. Jesus is the only name for true conversion.

So look at verses 1 to 7. And we see here the long journey that Paul began back at the start of the chapter has come full circle.

Many thousands of miles after he left Ephesus. He's back in Ephesus. And by this time, Apollos has moved on to Corinth. And when Paul gets there, when he arrives in Ephesus, he finds a group of disciples.

About 12 men in all. I guess their families were there too. So it's a considerable number of people.

This is the foundations of a church. But he immediately detects an issue.

[ 7 : 35 ] We're not told what alerted him to it. But he seems to sense some source of spiritual deficiency. Something prompted him to ask that question there in verse 2.

Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? Seems an odd question to us, doesn't it?

Because we know that a Christian, by definition, has received the Holy Spirit.

But this was a particularly unique situation. And unique to that time because it seems that this group of people that he meets there in Ephesus, they had only received teaching from John the Baptist.

And so as the conversation progresses, it becomes clear that they've not even heard of the Holy Spirit. And the baptism they have received was John's baptism.

Now hearing this, the penny would have dropped for Paul. You see, John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. And those who did respond to his call to repent were doing so in preparation for the coming Messiah.

[ 8 : 46 ] That's what Paul points out there in verse 4. Have a look. John baptized with a baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him. That is, Jesus.

And it seems this group of people had not yet done that. They had not yet believed in Jesus. They were perhaps totally oblivious to the events of Jesus' life, his death, his resurrection, his ascension. They hadn't heard that yet. They were still waiting. And what a privilege for Paul to be able to bring this good news to these folk. Jesus, he's the one.

He's come. He's the one John was pointing to. And so they are baptized in the name of Jesus. And so the Holy Spirit comes.

That's what happens there in verse 6. And we see a sort of mini Pentecost moment here. They become Christians. They're filled with the Spirit. Now, the distinction between these folk before and after the encounter with Paul is stark, isn't it?

[ 9 : 58 ] It's just significant. Beforehand, these folks, they had repented. They had heard John's message. They had repented, but they had not yet believed in Jesus' name.

Therefore, there was no Holy Spirit. But after they've heard what Paul had to say, they had repented and believed in Jesus. And so they had received the Holy Spirit.

You see, both repentance and belief in Jesus are necessary for salvation. That's what we're being shown here. And Luke is being very clear so that we can be in no doubt at all as to what is required for saving faith.

Paul articulates this later on in his time in Ephesus. Just look over the page there to chapter 20 and verse 21.

And you'll see here that Paul is addressing the elders in Ephesus. This is some years later. And look at what he says. Back in verse 20.

[ 10 : 59 ] How I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable and teaching you in public and from house to house. Testifying both to Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

So repentance and faith. There are two steps to real saving faith.

Not one. There must be repentance before God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. The issue with these particular disciples, they had repented but not yet believed in Jesus.

And Luke is spelling it out for us. We must be careful to articulate both of these things. That is how people come to a saving faith. And it's tempting, isn't it, to cut corners on that.

To ease off aspects of the gospel. Particularly easy and tempting to ease on the repentance aspect, isn't it? That can lead to some pretty tricky conversations and difficult territory.

[ 12 : 09 ] Easier, in some ways, to talk about faith in Jesus and forgiveness and eternal life. That's positive. It's good news. But it's empty good news unless the need of repentance is pressed home and made clear.

People need the full gospel. They need to hear the full word of God in order to respond and be welcomed into God's family.

And these group of folk in Ephesus there, they were clearly lacking in a major way. Paul discerned that. He saw that they were lacking spiritually. But Paul knew that what they lacked wasn't some sort of spiritual experience.

No, they were lacking the full word of God. That is what they needed more than anything else. They needed to be told the news about Jesus Christ. They needed to be told that all that John had talked about and pointed forward to was now a reality.

Because Jesus had died. He had risen. They needed that news. They needed it spelled out to them. The implications of all of that. Yes, you've repented.

[ 13 : 22 ] But now you must also believe in Jesus. Be baptized. Now for most folk, those two things are very closely tied together, aren't they?

The call to repent and believe. But for this particular group, it was stretched out. They were in a unique little time warp.

They had somehow left Palestine before the news about Jesus reached them. They were still waiting. They had heard John's message. They were waiting. But now they knew. Repent and believe in Jesus Christ.

And it's not any more spectacular for people today, is it? Today, people must still repent and believe. That's the only way to salvation.

People do not need special experiences. They need to hear the word of God. To hear the Bible read and taught and pressed home.

[ 14 : 24 ] It's clear, isn't it? Nothing complex here. There's nothing mystical. It's straightforward. And that should give us confidence and clarity.

We can do it. You can do it. It's a message that even the youngest of children can grasp and articulate. You don't need a special education. You don't need a degree.

You don't need to go to Corn Hill. No. Each of us can share that news about Jesus. And that is the extent of our responsibility.

God will do the rest. As he does here. He sends the Holy Spirit upon them. He brings them real, vital life. Eternal life. And eternal fellowship with him.

It's thrilling, isn't it? It's thrilling to see this. Such a privilege to see folk coming to Christ. And being filled with the joy of knowing him. But the root to that life, to that joy, is through one name only.

[ 15 : 31 ] Yes, repentance. But also belief in the Lord Jesus. There is no other name by which men and women can be saved. And Luke is saying, be clear on that.

Don't miss that. Be clear. There is only one name for salvation. That's the first aspect of the name of Jesus we've been taught this morning.

Jesus is the only name for true conversion. But second, look on to verses 8 to 10. The name of the Lord Jesus. We see power in mission.

Jesus is the name for evangelism. We are being given great confidence here about what is needed for effective mission.

And it's nothing new or novel. And that should give us confidence. We see a very familiar pattern here with the Apostle Paul.

[16:29] He does what he always does. And you can read a paragraph like that and it sort of washes over you. It's like background noise because we read it so often in Acts.

But don't miss the significance of Luke recording it for us. He wants us to be clear about the fundamentals of reaching the world with the gospel of the Lord Jesus. Paul keeps doing the same things everywhere he goes.

He does it. And so we too are to follow Paul's pattern of ministry here. What does he do? Look at verse 8. He entered the synagogue and for three months spoke boldly, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God.

Paul reasoned and persuaded. He spoke boldly. And then later in the hall of Tyrannus, he reasoned every day. And the outcome, look at verse 10.

All the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jew and Greek. This was a highly effective ministry in Ephesus. Those two years that Paul spent there, he reached a whole continent.

[17:41] Hugely effective. And notice three things. First, persistence. Paul is persistent. He's dogged in his commitment to preaching, persuading, wherever he goes.

It's the task that the Lord Jesus gave to his disciples right at the start of the book of Acts. He said, you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth. And earlier, Luke, in his first account, unpacks this a little for us. He says, The Lord Jesus opened their minds to understand the scriptures. And he said to them, Thus it is written, That the Christ should suffer, And on the third day rise from the dead, And that repentance for the forgiveness of sins Should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, Beginning from Jerusalem.

You are witnesses Of these things. That task. That task. First given to the apostles. The task remains for us.

It is witnessing to the events of Jesus' life, His death, His resurrection, And the proclamation of repentance, And the forgiveness of sins. And that is it.

[18:58] That is the essence of the task. And there was one that Paul persisted in. Wherever he went, Witnessing, Speaking boldly, Reasoning, Demonstrated to people that Jesus was the fulfillment of the scripture.

And Paul did not move from that task. He keeps at it day after day, Month after month. Three months he spends in the synagogue before he is forced out.

And then a further two years, There in the hall, Reasoning, Keeping on with that same task. And the implication is that we today must keep on with that same task of witnessing, And speaking, And persuading, And reasoning.

Opening up the scriptures and pointing to Christ. Urging folk to repent and believe, And so a church, It cannot teach too much. We are to persist.

And that doesn't mean that we become predictable, And go through the motions. Not at all. We are to think carefully, About the ways in which we seek to persuade and gain a hearing.

[20:10] It's no good if we're faithfully preaching the gospel, There's nobody there to hear it. How do we reach and engage? We're to work hard, Aren't we? Making it as easy as possible, For folk to come, To hear, And to hear the gospel.

Paul did everything in his power to reach the lost. He would move locations. The synagogue shut down, He went somewhere else, As he did here. He would engage with those who were listening, He would engage with those who were listening, So as to be understood.

He persisted. And so must we. That's the first thing, Persistence, But then secondly, Pain. And there is here, A very familiar pattern, Of opposition, Of being forced out of the synagogue, And into a local hall.

The same thing happened in Corinth, And now in Ephesus. And look what happened there, In the synagogue. Those in the synagogue, Became stubborn.

They did not listen to what Paul was saying, About the Lord Jesus, And they continued in unbelief. An unbelief that in the end, Couldn't be contained. And so they start to speak against Paul.

[21:20] Look at verse 9. They were speaking evil of the way, Before the congregation. There is pain. There is opposition. And it can't have been easy, Or pleasant at all, For Paul to be again,

Forced out of the synagogue.

To be publicly spoken against, In this way. To such a degree, That he was no longer, Able to remain in the synagogue. It was no longer tenable. He had to go, Somewhere else to speak. There was pain in that.

But there is also pain, In the hardening, Against the gospel, That Paul witnessed. There was a progression there, In Ephesus, In the synagogue.

Look at verse 9. In response to Paul's, Bold reasoning and speaking, They became stubborn. They grew hard. And they persisted in unbelief, Which eventually, Overflowed into outspoken criticism, Of Paul and opposition.

There is a progression, In hardening, Against the gospel, Which ends up in, Speaking out against it. It's a dangerous path, To be on. And I would have grieved, Paul to see it, As it does us, When we see, Folk hardening to the gospel.

[ 22 : 36 ] And it's a path, If persisted with, That leads to, Eternal separation from God, And all that is good. It's the path to destruction. There was great pain, In seeing folk, Respond to the gospel, With growing hardness.

And if you are that person, Listening in this morning, If you've been engaging, With the word of God, Hearing it taught, Hearing it proclaimed, Then can I urge you, Not to resist, Don't grow hard, But rather humble yourself, And repent, And believe in Jesus.

Because the alternative, Is not everlasting, Fence sitting. No, In the end, There are only two ways to live, And a decision, Not to follow Jesus.

Well, That is another step, Towards hardening. So beware, Lest you should be, On the same path, That those in the Ephesian synagogue, Were on.

Initial, Stepping away, Becomes more solid, The hardening settles in, And eventually, It's outspoken opposition, And rejection.

[ 23 : 52 ] Beware. So there's persistence, There's pain, But there's also perseverance. So Paul, Having left the synagogue, He begins a daily ministry, In the hall of Tyrannus, And he was there for two years.

There was a real depth, To Paul's ministry, A longevity. And as a result, The whole of Asia, Heard the word of the Lord. His time in Ephesus, Was hugely effective.

An entire region, Is reached, And evangelized. Ephesus, Is one of those, Hub cities, Through which, Many roads came. There was a whole region, That could be reached, From that one place.

And people would come, To Ephesus on business, They would come through, They would hear Paul there, Every day in the hall, And they would take that message, On to their hometowns, And so that whole region, Is reached.

Persistence, In proclaiming the name of Jesus, A willingness to endure pain, And a perseverance, In preaching the name of Jesus, A whole region reached.

[ 24 : 59 ] And I think the impact of that, On us, Is that we are given, Great confidence, About what is needed, For effective mission. And it's nothing new, Or novel is it? And that should give us confidence, We don't have to go searching, For the latest trend, Or fad, No, It's here.

We persist, With the gospel message, That Jesus first gave us. We gain a hearing, We preach and persuade, And doing that, Whole regions can be reached, For the gospel.

So have confidence, Have confidence, Have confidence in our gospel message. And the final section, Our third and final section, Ought to give us, Further confidence, And real comfort, In knowing that Jesus triumphs, And he triumphs, Over the powers, Of darkness, And superstition, There is no match for him.

So verses 11 to 20, We see the name of Jesus, Has power, Over magic. Jesus is the name, Above every other name.

The Lord Jesus, Is the one, Who is supreme, Over all other powers. That's what Luke is showing us, In this final section, The gospel will advance, It is going to the ends of the earth, And nothing, And no one, Can stop it.

[ 26 : 24 ] Jesus, Triumphs. And he triumphs, Over the great enemy, And over magic. Three scenes, In this last little section, Verses 11 to 12, 13 to 17, And then 18 and 19.

Three demonstrations, Of the great power of Jesus. And the results, Verse 20, The word of the Lord, Continued to increase, And prevail mightily.

The word of God, Keeps winning, Even against great odds, It grows, It prevails. So look at the first scene there, Verses 11 and 12, And we read about, Extraordinary miracles here.

Things that Paul, Had merely touched, Were taken to the sick, Bringing healing from illness, And demon possessions. And notice what Luke, Emphasizes here, Isn't Paul's initiative.

He's not going around, Drawing attention to this. No, Look, Verse 11, And God was doing, Extraordinary miracles, By the hands of Paul. Paul wasn't even aware, Of what was going on.

[ 27 : 37 ] People were taking things, He had touched, And taking them all over the place. God was doing this. Great power. And it's deliberately set, Alongside, The next scene.

Which we'll consider in a moment. But Luke is making, A distinction between real, Supernatural healings, Which only God can do, And the fraudsters, He cannot. That's what we see, In the second scene, From verses 13 to 17.

Now, We are introduced here, To the seven sons, Of Sceva. These were, Itinerant, Jewish exorcists. I can imagine, They were a big deal, At the time.

They were sons, Of the high priests. They were, Folk with credentials. They were known. They were, Almost Jewish, Aristocracy. They were a big deal.

You can almost imagine, Posters, Around, The towns, Of the Mediterranean, Advertising the, Magnificent, The wonderful, The incredible, Seven sons of Sceva. And the posters, Would have things like, Sold out, New dates added, Come and see these guys.

[ 28 : 48 ] They were a big deal, At the time. Quite the attraction. And they would have, Particularly gone down well, In a place like Ephesus. Which was a real, Center, For the superstitious, And magical.

We'll see a bit more, About that next week. But, There was all sorts, Going on in Ephesus. It was a real center, For that sort of thing. And the seven sons, Of Sceva, Thought they'd stumbled, Across a great new trick.

They'd heard about Paul, And about the things, That were happening in Ephesus. They knew enough, To have heard that the name of Jesus, Was, A powerful name.

And they think, That they can wield it, Just like, Any other magic word. Look at, Verse 13. They undertook, To invoke the name of Jesus, Over those who had evil spirits, Saying, I adjure you, By the Jesus, Who Paul proclaims.

I think they've got a new trick, Up their sleeve. Something to impress the crowds. But they were, Of course, Totally, Unsuccessful.

[ 29 : 58 ] They were fraudsters. They didn't believe, In Jesus, At all. They thought, They could use his name, Like a magic word. But of course, The name of Jesus, Is only effective, In bringing transformation, When used by those, Who generally call upon him, As, Lord.

People like Paul. Even evil spirits, Could tell the difference, Between the real deal, And fraudsters. That's what we see, With the encounter, Between the seven sons, Of Sceva, And the demon possessed man, There in verses 15 and 16.

He sees right through them, Doesn't he? Look at what happens, The spirit answered them, Jesus I know, And Paul I recognize, But who are you?

It's the ultimate put down, Isn't it? I've heard of Jesus, I know him, I've heard of Paul too, But, Who are you? Got no idea. In other words, You have no authority, At all, To wield the name of Jesus, This spirit could recognize that, If it was Paul, Who was uttering the commands, Then, Well that would have, A different story, And to demonstrate, Their total lack of authority, The demon, Overthrows them, Totally embarrasses them, Look at verse 16, The man in whom, The evil spirit, Leapt on them, Mastered all of them, And overpowered them, So they fell out of the house, Naked and wounded, Seven grown men, Were vanquished, By a single demon, But the mere rags, That Paul touched, Look back at verse 12, His rags, Could vanquish evil spirits,

And achieve what seven grown men couldn't, And the result, Was that these events, Became known to all the residents, Of Ephesus verse 17, I bet they did, Can you imagine the conversations, In the marketplace the next day, Did you hear what happened, To the seven sons of Sceva, And they were trying to do, What Paul does, It wasn't just gossip, There was real, Fear, Or, Look at the end of verse 17, Fear fell upon them all, And the name of the Lord Jesus, Was extolled, Fear fell on all of them, They were afraid, Too right, They were coming face to face, With the power, The real power of Jesus, They realized, That his name,

[ 32 : 59 ] Is a powerful one, The fraudsters, Are exposed, They're humiliated, And the name of Jesus, Is honored, And that's what we see, In the final scene, Verses 18 and 19, Just have a look

with me there, Verse 18 also, Many of those, Who are now believers, Came, Confessing, And divulging their practices, And a number of those, Who have practiced, Magic arts, Brought their books together, And burned them, In the sight of all, And they counted the value of them, And found it came to 50,000 pieces, Of silver, This must have been quite the sight, A significant, Public repentance, Confession of all sorts, Of dark magic, And evil practices, A mass, Burning of books, This was significant, And we see the real cost, Sometimes,

Of what real repentance looks like, We're told that the value of these books, Came to about 50,000 pieces of silver, Now that's something in the region, Of about 130 years worth, Of wages, So if you take the median wage today, Of about 30,000 pounds, Then the value of these books, Is about 4 million, That's a significant amount of books, Isn't it?

Significant worth, And value, What was going on, To have this happen? Why were they doing this? Well, These people realized, Didn't they?

They'd seen what had happened, With Paul, With the seven sons of Sceva, And they realized, That Jesus alone, Was supreme, And sovereign, They couldn't, Possibly keep hold, Of their old practices, Their magic, It had to go, In a place like Ephesus, Which was rife with it, They were seeing, Perhaps for the first time, Real power, They'd come face to face, With Jesus, And so their old ways, Had to go, You see, Jesus demands, Absolute loyalty, And you must know, That Jesus is Lord, And that he must be taken seriously, He triumphs over all, Including evil, So do not be tempted, To keep a hand in, With old sins, And idolatries, They must be turned away from, It may be, Something like this, That you're clinging on to, It may be, Something supernatural, Of this sort, Magic, The occult, New age, Witchcraft, Whatever it might be, Perhaps, You have even in your home, Objects associated, With false religion, And idolatry, Get rid of them, It may be crystals, Which you considered, As having special powers, Apart from God, Wands, Tarot cards, Ouija boards, Whatever it may be, Get rid of it, Burn it, There must be, A turning away, From sin, And a turning to, Jesus Christ, You cannot have, A saving faith, That precludes repentance, It always includes repentance, Turning away, From, The old ways of life, And this, Here in, Acts 19, Is such a vivid illustration, Of that, Isn't it?

[ 36 : 35 ] This is what repentance, Sometimes looks like, Burning up books, Saying goodbye, To the old way of life, And we are being shown here, The absolute sovereignty, Of the Lord Jesus, There is no match, Why would you, Follow anyone, Or anything else, Jesus triumphs, And he triumphs, Over the great enemy, Over magic, Nothing can compare to him, The name of the Lord Jesus, Is powerful, Be in no doubt, That's what we see there, In that final section, In Acts 19, This morning, The name of the Lord Jesus, Is powerful, Nothing comes close, It's in his name, That eternal life, Is to be found, It is through his name, That the Holy Spirit, Is given, It is his name, That brings salvation, It's his name,

That rules over all others, His name, Is mighty, His name is powerful, Be in no doubt, About that, And so, We are to tell out, The greatness, Of his name, We are to make known, His might, The deeds, That his arm has done, His holy name, The Lord, The mighty one, So the word of the Lord, Continues, To increase, And prevail mightily, Be encouraged, Let me pray, As we close our time together, Father, We do thank you, For your word, To us this morning, Lord, Help us, To be a people, That have great confidence, In your word, And what you're doing, In your world, Lord, We do not come,

To a weak, Or impotent God, But rather, The almighty, Powerful, Creator of all things, And so, As we call upon your name, Give us great confidence, Because your name, Is a mighty name, The mighty name, In all the universe, So help us this morning, Give us confidence, In the Lord Jesus Christ, We ask, In his name, Amen, Amen, Amen, Amen, Amen,