

SERMON NOTES

SERIES: **Acts: To Be Continued**
TITLE: **Kingdoms in Conflict**
DATE: February 21, 2016
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In Acts, Luke shows Jesus' friends continuing the kingdom mission that Jesus started in his earthly life and ministry. The Book of Acts is all about Jesus' followers continuing his mission in the world. We are the ones God has entrusted with carrying the message of Jesus forward.

Today, we look at Acts 19:8-41. In Acts 19:8-41 we see how the Gospel of the Kingdom continues to advance in spite of great spiritual opposition. We see two kingdoms in conflict—light and darkness—life and death, heaven and hell—but God, through Paul and his friends, shows himself sovereign and supreme over the forces of evil. So much so, that all the residents of Asia are exposed to the Gospel of Jesus and, many prisoners of war are set free from the bondage of their past lives and become citizens of the kingdom of God.

If you are a Christian, you need to know that you live in a spiritual war zone and you have an enemy who has an active, systematic strategy to defeat you.

In Acts, we follow the missionary journeys of Paul. By Acts 19, we find him back in Ephesus, engaged in one of the most strategic battles of the New Testament. **What Luke is showing us here is how the Gospel of grace continues to spread in the face of the most intense spiritual opposition.**

- Verses 8-10 begin with a summary of Paul's two-year ministry in Ephesus. Paul is leading an assault into enemy territory.
- Ephesus was a gateway to Asia Minor. It had a reputation as an epicenter of dark magic.
- Even Paul was personally engaged in a season of intense spiritual warfare. (See 1 Cor. 15:30-32 and 2 Cor. 1:8-9.)
- **The battle we're in is not with people, it's with Evil spiritual forces in unseen places.** (Ephesians 6:12)

- Paul's teaching about the Kingdom of God was exposing this dark, unseen world that lay behind the occult practices in Ephesus.
- **The Enemy's #1 strategy is to deceive you into not taking God's Word seriously.** When you hear biblical truth it will have one of two effects on your heart. It will either harden you or it will transform you *depending on what you do with it.* (v. 9)
- **Right knowledge (solid biblical truth) is absolutely essential to a saving faith, a growing faith, and a grounded faith.** (Hebrews 4:12) Do nothing with the truth—fail to believe it and act on it—and you've taken a bullet—you're one step closer to becoming a casualty of war.

After the summary, Luke gives snapshots about how intense the spiritual warfare was.

- God uses miracles to validate the message of the Kingdom which Paul taught. (v. 11-12)
- **God is still in the miracle business of setting people free from their bondage to sin, but he chooses how he sets them free. He chooses when and where and whether or not to use miracles as part of his rescue operation.**
- **Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world.** (1 John 4:4)

Every time you hear about war on evening news—let it be a reminder that you are living your life on a spiritual battlefield—with an enemy who has an active, systematic strategy to take you down—let it be a reminder to take God's Word seriously no matter what the cost.

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For Discussion:

1. How have you experienced spiritual warfare?
2. What is your response to hearing this truth? Are you letting the Spirit press it deep into your heart to expose sin and cultivate a deeper love for Christ and a greater appreciation for the grace we've received—OR—Are you ignoring it and becoming calloused, apathetic, or resistant to the truth?
3. What has the Spirit brought to your mind that you need to act on?