

PM Acts 19:1-20 The Word will prevail

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Preacher: Rev Robert Dale

[0:00] I'm going to read verses 1-20. Acts 19, verses 1-20.

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 have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit. And he said, into what then were you baptized?

They said, into John's baptism. And Paul said, John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is Jesus.

[1:11] 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.

There were about twelve 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, he withdrew from them and took the disciples with him, reasoning daily in the hall of Tyrannus.

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 hands 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.

[2:42] 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 priest named Sceva were doing this. But the evil spirits 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. And fear fell upon 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.

[3:54] 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.

Well, let's turn now to Acts 19.

We're going to look at the whole of that passage which we read. But I'll take by way of text the very last verse, verse 20.

So the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily. The book of Acts is an extraordinary success story.

[5:08] Tells how the gospel spread in a single generation. From Jerusalem to Rome.

How a handful of disciples multiplied into thousands. How those early Christians fulfilled the Great Commission.

How they bore witness. Just as Jesus had commanded in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria. And to the end of the earth.

When Jesus spoke those words in Acts 1. It must have seemed almost impossible. That such a small group of men could accomplish anything remotely like that.

And yet they did. It's not all about Paul. In the earlier chapters we hear about Peter and John and Stephen and Philip.

[6:13] And there were many others, laboring in the gospel. But Paul certainly is the driving force in these later chapters.

And yet Paul would be the first to say that it was not his work but the Lord's. This is not Paul's eloquence or his energy or his enthusiasm.

Which produced these amazing results. But it was the Holy Spirit of God. That's clear from the start. The Spirit is poured out on the day of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2. And the rest of the book of Acts is impossible without the Holy Spirit.

So much so that some have suggested it should be called the Acts of the Holy Spirit. Rather than the Acts of the Apostles.

[7:21] Well here we see another great gospel success. Ephesus. Ephesus. In Ephesus. One of the great cities of the ancient world.

Ephesus was no mean city. It was the capital of the Roman province of Asia. It was a city of a quarter of a million people.

And it was a pagan city. Dominated by the great temple of Diana. Trading city.

Very wealthy. And apparently it was also a centre of the ancient slave trade. I watched a documentary recently by the historian Mary Beard.

And I was surprised to see her there. In Ephesus. Explaining how they made their money. By the slaves. Who came in.

[8:26] Via Ephesus. Into the empire. Not the easiest place to go. To preach the gospel.

If you were. Invited to go there. As a missionary. Just you. And a handful of others. You'd think you had a pretty big task.

On your hands. And you'd be right. But even here. The gospel triumphs. This wasn't the first time. That Paul had been there. You may remember. That he paid a brief visit there. Back in chapter 18. And he had preached in the synagogue. And they wanted him to stay longer.

And they wanted him to stay longer. He'd left Aquila and Priscilla there. And there were already Christians in Ephesus. Chapter 18 verse 27.

[9:27] Mentions the brothers there. But Paul had promised to return. But Paul had promised to return. And here he was. And on this second and longer visit.

He was spectacularly successful. Now with any passage of scripture. We need to ask. Why is it there?

What does the Lord want to say to us through this? Well I think this passage has a threefold purpose. First that we might admire the power of God.

Who alone is able to do great wonders. Secondly that we might understand. Secondly that we might understand. That the gospel really is a gospel for all nations.

Even for pagan Ephesus. But thirdly also that we might be encouraged. In our work today. Don't we need encouragement?

[10:31] Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. And what he did here in Ephesus. He could do here in Scotland.

The word of the Lord increased. And prevailed mightily in Ephesus. Against all expectations. Why should the word not prevail? Here in Scotland. Going to divide it into five parts. The Ephesian Pentecost.

In verses 1 to 7. Preaching the word. Verses 8 to 10. Signs and wonders. 11 to 17. The Ephesian bonfire.

18 and 19. And then the result of it all. In our text. In verse 20. This growth. Of the word of God.

[11:37] I want us to see how. Verse 20. Describes really. The history of the church. And how. It could yet.

Apply. Even to us here today. So first then. Let's look at the Ephesian Pentecost. In verses 1 to 7. Since his last visit to Ephesus. Paul has been up to Jerusalem. He's spent some time in Antioch. And then he's set out on his third missionary journey.

Traveling through Galatia. And Phrygia. Priscilla and Aquila. Are still there. In Ephesus. And there is already.

A small group of believers there. Apollos has come and gone. He's now in Corinth. And Paul has returned.

[12:37] Just as he promised. But when he arrives. His first encounter. Is. Not with the church. Not with the synagogue.

But with these 12. Disciples. Who knew. Only the baptism. Of John. Now we don't.

Know very much. About these people. But this was the same problem. You may remember. As with Apollos. Maybe they were his converts.

Or maybe they had. Come to Ephesus with him. Or maybe they were. Another wave of. John's disciples. Who had come since.

Apparently. It was quite a big movement. So it's quite possible. That there were more. Disciples of John the Baptist. Coming along. To Ephesus later. Paul.

[13:36] Paul. Took them at first. To be Christian. Disciples. And the Bible.

With the judgment. Of charity. It uses that phrase. Of them. That's what they claimed. To be. And that's what they're called. Disciples. Disciples.

But there's something. Not quite right. About them. Paul asks them. Did you receive. The spirit. When you believed.

He's obviously. Looked at them. And thought. I don't know. These people. Claim to be disciples. But. I can't see. Any evidence. At all. That they have. The Holy Spirit. And so.

The truth. Comes out. They haven't. Even. Heard. Of the Holy Spirit. Paul is astonished. Into what. Then. Were you baptized?

[14:38] If they'd. Been baptized. In the normal way. In the name. Of the Father. And the Son. And the Holy Spirit. Then. Obviously. They would have heard. Of the Spirit. But now.

The truth. Comes out. That actually. They'd been baptized. With John's. Baptism. They'd never. Properly. Heard. The Gospel. Paul.

Then. Takes them. Back. To first principles. John. Baptized. With the baptism. Of repentance. Telling the people. To believe. In the one. Who was to come. After him. Jesus. Jesus. And.

For the first time. They really. Understand. What the Gospel. Is all about. Now. They're baptized. In the name. Of the Lord. Jesus.

Paul. Lays his hands. On them. And they. Received the Spirit. And they began. Speaking in tongues. And prophesying. It's.

[15:40] Pentecost. All over again. Isn't it? On a small scale. What's happening here. These. Twelve.

Disciples. Are being. Grafted in. To the true. Church of God. Having. Previously. Presumably. Worshipped. On their own.

Completely. Unaware. Of what the. Christians. Were saying. Now. At last. They've believed. The Gospel. And they've become. Part of the Christian. Community. Now.

Years ago. When I. Moved in. Pentecostal. Circles. This passage. Was often. Used to. Prove. In inverted. Commas. That a person.

Could be a Christian. And not. Receive. The Spirit. And furthermore. That the side. Of receiving. The Spirit. Was speaking. In tongues. And prophesying.

[16:43] That's. Not. At all. What it's saying. And Paul. Actually. Assumes. In verse 2. That if they. Are Christians.

They must. Have received. The Spirit. Because. Everyone. Does. Everyone. Who becomes. A Christian. Receives. The Spirit. Straight away. Paul.

Assumes. That. If they. Haven't. Received. The Spirit. That isn't. Something. Normal. It's. Not. Something. That can. Happen. As a. Second. Blessing. Something.

Is. Radically. Wrong. The. Foundations. Aren't. Right. Everyone. Who. Is. Genuinely. A. Christian. Receives.

The Spirit. But. What. If. They're. Not. Christians. That's. The. Thought. That has. Come. To. Paul. Here. Is.

[17:37] This. Relevant. To. Us. Today. Well. I. Rather. Think. It. Is. Because. I. Think. Throughout. The. Church. Of. Scotland.

Throughout. The. Church. Of. England. And. Yes. Even. Amongst. Some. People. In. The. Free. Church. Of. Scotland. And. In. All. The. Denominations. There.

Are. People. Who. Have. Only. A. Vague. Idea. Of. What. The. Gospel. Is. And. They. Have. Never. Received. The. Spirit. They.

Have. Never. Been. Born. Again. They. May. Be. Very. Religious. But. They. Not. Actually. Converted. And.

They. Need. To. Be. Taken. Right. Back. To. First. Principles. We.

[18:32] Need. To. Ask. Ourselves. Have. I. Received. The. Holy. Spirit. It. Should. Be. Fairly. Obvious. Yes.

In. The. Early. Days. Of. The. Apostles. Sometimes. There. Were. Tongues. And. Prophetesers. But. That's. Not. The. Primary. Sign. Of. The. Spirit. Of. God. The. Mark.

Of. The. Spirit. Is. That. We. Know. And. We. Love. The. Lord. Jesus. Christ. That. We. Are. Bubbling. Over. With. Love. For. Him. That. We. Want. To. Talk. About. Him. That's.

The. Typical. Mark. Of. The. Spirit. The. Mark. Of. The. Spirit. Is. That. We. Are. Concerned. About. Holiness. That. We. Can't. Bear. Sin. In.

Our. Lives. He. Is. The. Holy. Spirit. If. You. Have. The. Holy. Spirit. In. You. You. You. Are. Not. Going. To. Be. Able. To. Continue. Long. Living. In. Unholiness.

[19:27] The. Mark. Of. The. Spirit. Is. That. You. Are. Praying. Person. Not. Not. Just. The. Occasional. Short. Prayer. First. Thing. In. The. Morning. Last. Thing. At. Night.

Not. Just. Coming. Routinely. To. Church. But. Prayer. Runs. All. Through. Your. Life. Those. Are. The. Signs. That. You. Have. The. Spirit. Of.

God. We. Need. To. Ask. Ourselves. That. Crucial. Question. And. If. Not. Go. Back. To. The. Beginning. Trust.

In. Christ. And. Then. You. Will. Receive. The. Spirit. Of. God. Well. These. Twelve. Disciples. Had. Received. The. Spirit. Now. And. Their. Lives. Would. Never. Be. The. Same. But. Now. Paul. Goes. On. To. The. Main. Work.

[20:21] For. Which. He. Came. The. Preaching. Of. The. Word. Verses. Eight. To. Ten. And. He. Begins. As. He. Always. Does. In. The. Synagogue. Even.

In. This. Gentile. City. Principle. Is. Still. To. The. Jew. First. And. Afterward. To. The. Gentile. For. Three. Months. He. Spoke. Boldly. Reasoning.

And. Persuading. Them. About. The. Kingdom. Of. God. But. Some. Of. Them. Refused. To. Be. Persuaded. They. Became.

Stubborn. Continued. In. Unbelief. But. Worse. Than. That. They. Were. Speaking. Evil. Of. The. Way. Before. The. Incidentally.

That. Christianity. At. That. Time. Was. Often. Called. The. Way. Presumably. Because. Of. Jesus. Statement. I. Am. The. Way. The.

[21:16] Truth. And. The. Life. Faced. With. This. Rejection. After. All. These. Weeks. Of. Preaching. Paul. Finally. Withdraws. From. The. Synagogue. There. Does. Come. A. Time.

When. We. Have. To. Admit. That. People. Are. Not. Going. To. Be. Saved. Then. We. Have. To. Withdraw. Must.

Have. Been. Very. Painful. For. Him. He. Loved. His. People. He. Loved. The. Jews. He. Would. Have. Like. To. Have. Gone. On. Forever. Trying. To. Persuade. Them. But. They. Were. Not. Going. To. Be. Persuaded. So.

He. Took. The. Disciples. With. Him. Reasoning. Daily. In. The. Hall. Of. Tyrannus. The. Disciples. Presumably.

[22:09] Had. Remained. In. The. Synagogue. Right. Up. To. This. Point. They. Stayed. On. As. Long. As. They. Could. And. That. Actually. Has. Been. A. Pattern.

In. Church. History. You. Think. Of. The. Reformers. They. Stayed. In. The. Roman. Catholic. Church. As. Long. As. They. Could. In. Hope. Of. Winning. People. But. The. Catholic. Church. Rejected. Them. And. There. Came. A. Point. Where. There. Was. Nothing. For. It. But. To. Withdraw. Paul. Withdraw.

These. Disciples. They. Now. Become. A. Distinct. Christian. Congregation. Hall. Of. Tyrannus. We. Know. Nothing. About. It. Maybe. He.

Was. A. Philosopher. Sympathetic. To. The. Gospel. Presumably. It. Was. A. Hired. Hall. And. Here. He. Continued. Preaching. For. Two.

[23:01] Years. It. The. Longest. He. Stayed. Anywhere. And. It. Was. A. Spectacularly. Successful. Time. All.

The. Residents. Of. Asia. Heard. The. Word. Of. The. Lord. Both. Jews. And. Greeks. When. It. Says. Asia. Of. Course. It. Means. The. Roman. Province. Of. Asia. Of. Which. Ephesus. Was. The. Capital. People. No. Doubt. Came. In. From. The. Surrounding. Countryside. And. Christians. From. Ephesus. Would. Be. Going. Out. Into. The. Villages. The. Whole. Area. Heard. The. Gospel. Wasn't. An. Easy. Time. Paul. Says. Later. In. Acts. 20. That. He. Served. The. Lord. There. With. Tears. And. Trials. Because. Of. The. Plots. Of. The. Jews. But. He. Still. Taught. Them.

[23:54] Both. In. Public. And. From. House. To. House. Says. This. In. Acts. 20. Testifying. To. Both. Jews. And. Greeks. Of. Repentance. Toward. God. And. Faith. In. Our. Lord. Jesus. Christ.

He. Preached. Them. He. Says. The. Whole. Council. Of. God. And. Many. Were. Saved. And. A. Church. Was. Built. Up. That.

Same. Church. To. Which. He. Wrote. The. Famous. Letter. Preaching. The. Word. Was. The. Very. Core.

Of. Paul's. Ministry. And. It. Must. Be. Of. Ours. Paul. Preached. To. Both. The. Saved. And. The. Unsaved. He. Gathered. His. Disciples.

Together. In. The. School. Of. Tyrannus. And. He's. Preaching. To. Them. Explaining. To. Them. The. Doctrine. Of. Christ. But. Also. They're. Going. Out. Into. The. Whole. Area.

[24:48] Round. About. Preaching. To. The. Unsaved. As. Well. Or. Perhaps. The. Unsaved. Hearing. About. This. Is. Starting. To. Come. To. Them. That.

Is. Still. The. Work. Of. The. Church. Today. Preaching. The. Gospel. Teaching. The. Believers. Yes. But. Also. Preaching. To. The. Vast. Multitudes. All.

Around. Us. Seems. Likely. Incidentally. That. He. Did. Something. Else. During. Those. Two. Years. He. Probably. Wrote. His.

First. Letter. To. The. Corinthians. At. This. Time. If. You. Look. At. One. Corinthians. Sixteen. Verse. Nineteen. He. Sends. Greetings. From. The. Churches. In. Asia. And.

Especially. From. Aquila. And. Priscilla. Now. The. Word. Of. God. Has. A. Power. Of. Its. Own. And.

[25:43] The. Chapter. Could. End. At. That. Point. Preaching. The. Word. Many. Were. Saved. But. God. Often. In.

Those. Early. Days. Confirmed. The. Word. With. Miracles. And. So. It. Is. Here. So. Let's. Look. Now. At. The. Signs. And. Wonders. Verses.

Eleven. To. Seventeen. Read. Here. In. Verse. Eleven. That. God. Was. Doing. Extraordinary. Miracles. By. The. Hands. Of. Paul. Not.

Just. By. His. Hand. But. By. His. Handkerchief. As. Well. Verse. Twelve. Even. Handkerchiefs. Or. Aprons. That. Had. Touched. His. Skin.

Were. Carried. Away. To. The. Sick. And. Their. Diseases. Left. Them. And. Evil. Spirits. Came. Out. Of. Them. Now. These. Really. Were. Extraordinary.

[26:37] Miracles. They're. Not. Quite. Unique. You. may. remember. A. woman. In. the. Gospels. Was. Healed. Once. Just. By.

Touching. The. Hem. Of. Jesus's. Garment. In. Acts. Five. People. Were. Bringing. The. Sick. Out. Into. The. Streets. So. That. The. Shadow. Of. Peter. Would. Pass. Over. Them. And. They. Were. Healed. But. Miracles. Like. These. Were. Very. Unusual. Even. Then. Why. Did. They. Happen. In. Ephesus. And. Not. Elsewhere. I. Don't. Know. But. Maybe. The. Lord. Was. Showing. The. Ephesians. That. His. Power. Was. Greater. Than. The. Magicians. Who. Were. Obviously. Very. Prominent. There. Now.

[27:30] We. Need. To. Remember. That. These. Were. Extraordinary. Miracles. And. We're. Not. To. Expect. Them. Ever. To. Become. Normal. You.

Will. Know. Perhaps. That. The. Roman. Catholic. Church. Attaches. Great. Importance. To. Relics. I've. Been.

To. Rome. And. I've. Seen. The. Nail. Supposedly. Used. At. The. Crucifixion. And. The. Supposed. Chains. Of. Paul.

And. All. Kinds. Of. Other. Relics. Even. If. They're. Genuine. Which. Is. Unlikely. That. Is. Pure. Superstition.

Genuine. Historical. Relics. Can. Be. Very. Interesting. I. Was. Fascinated. By. Seeing. And. Holding. A. Covenant. A. Sword. In.

[28:27] Dalbiti. Museum. A. few. Weeks. Ago. Ago. But. I. Don't. Expect. To. Be. Healed. By. It. These. Were. Extraordinary. Miracles.

To. Help. The. Faith. Of. These. Ephesians. In. These. Very. Early. Days. I. Don't. Say. That. God. Couldn't. Do. The. Same. Today.

Obviously. He. Could. If. He. Wished. But. It's. Not. Likely. That. He. Will. But.

Alongside. These. You. In. Miracles. Of. Paul. There. Were. The. Charlatans. As. Well. Verse. 13. Some. Of. The. Itinerant. Exorcists. Undertook. To.

Invoke. The. Name. Of. The. Lord. Jesus. Over. Those. Who. Had. Evil. Spirits. Saying. I. Adjourn. You. By. The. Jesus. Whom. Paul. Proclaims. They. Don't. Know. Jesus.

[29:18] They. Only. Know. Him. As. The. Jesus. Whom. Paul. Proclaims. He. Singles. Out. These. Seven. Sons. Of. The. Jewish. High. Priest. Sceva. These.

People. Are. Treating. The. Name. Of. Jesus. Like. A. Magic. Formula. And. It. Doesn't. Work. The. Evil. Spirit. Answers.

Jesus. I. Know. Paul. I. Recognize. But. Who. You. Even. The. Demons. Regard. Them. With. Contempt. They. Come. To. A. Rather. Scary.

End. Demon. Possessed. Man. Leaps. Up. Overpowers. Them. And. They. Fled. Naked. And. Wounded. God.

In. Heaven. Must. Have. Been. Laughing. At. Them. But. It. Serves. A. Good. Purpose. All. This. Became. Known. To. The. Residents. Of. Ephesus.

[30:15] Both. Jews. And. Greeks. And. Fear. Fell. On. Them. All. That. This. Strange. Little. Incident. Is. A. Warning. To. Us. To. Take. The. Devil.

Seriously. And. Maybe. Also. To. Reflect. Strange. Question. This. But. Does. The. Devil. Recognize. You. Does.

He. Say. That. You. Are. A. Disciple. Of. Jesus. The. Lord. Knows. Those. Who. Are. His. And. The. Devil. Knows. Them. Too. And.

He. Is. Afraid. Of. Them. But. The. Devil. Knows. That. These. People. Are. Just. Impostors. And. He. Is. Not. Scared. Of. Them. Is.

The. Devil. Afraid. Of. You. Or. Does. He. Regard. You. As. An. Impostor. This.

[31:09] Fear. Has. An. Effect. On. The. Church. So. We. Come. In. Verses. 18. And. 19. To. The. Ephesian. Bonfire. Also.

Many. 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. They. Counted. The. Value. Of. Them. And. Found. It. But.

Not. Altogether. Surprising. For. All. Of. Its. Roman. Sophistication. Ephesus. Was. A city. Full. Of. Magic. There. Were. Apparently. Rings. Carried. Around. As. Lucky. Charms. There. Were. Secret. Words. Known. As. Ephesian. Letters.

[32:06] Used. To. Ward. Off. Evil. And. There. Were. These. Books. Magic. Incantations. Now.

When. People. Become. Christians. They. Not. Only. Believe. In. Christ. They. Also. Renounce. The. Works. Of. The. Devil. And. That's. What's. Happening. Here. What. We. See. Here. Is. Practical. Repentance. In. A. Very. Spectacular. Way. It's. A. Remarkable. Testimony.

To. The. Grace. Of. God. That. People. In. The. Occult. Were. Converted. Yes. Even. People. As. Deep. Into. Sin. As. Them. Can. Be. Saved.

But. They. Wanted. To. Be. Thoroughly. Rid. Of. The. Past. Hence. The. Bonfire. Fifty. Thousand. Pieces.

[33:01] Of. Silver. Is. A. Lot. Of. Money. I. Gather. That. It's. The. Equivalent. Today. Of. Over. A. Million. Pounds. Just. Imagine. That. A. Million. Pounds.

Worth. Of. Books. All. Going. Up. In. Smoke. In. The. Town. Square. In. Ephesus. Jane. Is. Smiling. Because. She. Would. Like. To. See. Some.

Of. My. Books. Go. Up. In. Smoke. But. They're. Good. Christian. Books. Or. Good. Neutral. Books. About. History. And. Travel. But.

These. Were. Magic. Books. And. They. Had. To. Go. No. Question. Of. Selling. Them. You. Can't. Give. Them. Away. Because. They. Would. Corrupt. Other. People.

Only. Thing. You. Could. Do. With. Them. Was. To. Burn. Them. Now. Today. The. Occult. Is. On. The. Rise. In.

[33:53] Scotland. We. Have. Our. Fortune. Tellers. And. Tarot. Cards. And. Horoscopes. And. Anyone. Who's. Involved.

In. Any. Of. That. Kind. Of. Thing. It's. Got. To. Go. I. Remember. When. I. Was. First. Converted. Almost.

A. Week. Or. So. After. I. Was. Converted. I. Had. To. Spend. Some. Time. In. A. Hotel. In. London. Because. Of. My. Work. And. I. Was. Writing. To. A. Christian. Back. In. Hazel. Me. And. I. Read. Something. In. My. Horoscope. Which. I. Thought. Was. Appropriate. And. I. Started. Writing. It. And. Instantly. I. Thought. No. This. Has. Got. To. Stop.

And. Immediately. I. Scrapped. That. Letter. Horoscopes. Are. Not. For. Christians. We. Shouldn't. Touch. Them. Maybe.

[34:50] There. Are. Some. People. Who. Do. Need. A. Bonfire. To. Get. Rid. Of. Some. Of. The. Evil. Books. That. They. Have. Some. Of. Course. Have.

Taken. This. Idea. Of. The. Bonfire. To. Extremes. In. 1497. In. Florence. There. Was. A. Great. Bonfire. Known. As. The. Bonfire. Of.

The. Vanities. When. Many. Valuable. Artworks. Were. Destroyed. Now. That. Was. Going. Too. Far. And. Sometimes.

Of. Course. Good. Books. Have. Been. Burned. 1526. Bishop. Tunstall. Had. A. Great. Book. Burning. To. Burn. Tyndale's. Bible.

Well. That. Was. Appalling. That. Was. Definitely. Wrong. But. Where. There. Are. Evil. Books. They.

[35:44] Must. Go. And. Even. If. We. Don't. Need. A. Physical. Bonfire. Of. The. Vanities. We. Certainly.

Need. A. Spiritual. Bonfire. Of. The. Vanities. If. We. Would. Follow. Christ. Everything. Evil. Has. To. Go. So.

We. Come. Finally. To. The. Result. Of. All. This. In. Verse. Twenty. So. The. Word. Of. The. Lord. Continued. To. Increase. And. Prevail. Notice.

The. Word. So. That. Links. It. To. Everything. That's. Just. Been. Happening. As. A. Result. Of. All. These. Things. We've. Been. Talking. About. This. Evening. The. Word. Of. The. Lord.

Prevailed. There. Are. No. Numbers. Very. Seldom. Many. Numbers. Given. In. The. Book. Of. Acts. Three. Thousand. On. The. Day. Pentecost. Because. That.

[36:40] Was. So. Remarkable. But. After. That. These. Churches. In. The. Later. Chapters. Were. Not. Told. How. Many. There. Were. But.

Over. Time. One. Would. Think. There. Must. Have. Been. Hundreds. Converted. Maybe. Thousands. And. The. Word. Prevailed. Over. All. Opposition. It. Prevailed. Over. The. Opposition. Of. The. Jews. It. Prevailed. Over. The. Pagan. Powers. Of. Darkness. Later. In. The. Chapter. We'll. See. Next. Time. That. It. Prevailed. Over. A. Riot. And. It. Didn't. Fade. Away. After. Paul. Had. Left. In. His. Letter. To.

The. Ephesians. Written. When. He. Was. In. Prison. In. Rome. At. Least. Five. Years. Later. He. Mentions. That. He's. Heard. About. Their. Faith. In. The. Lord. Jesus. And. Their. Love. Toward. [37:33] All. The. Saints. The. Work. Was. Still. Going. On. Yes. They. Had. Their. Problems. Later. Thirty. Years. Later. In. The. Book. Of. Revelation. The.

Lord. Has. To. Rebuke. Them. For. Leaving. Their. First. Love. But. They. Seem. To. Have. He. Did. That. Now.

We. Could. View. The. Whole. Of. Church. History. In. Terms. Of. This. Twentieth. Verse. The. Word. Of. God. Has. Continued. To. Increase. And. To. Prevail. Mightily. For. Two. Thousand. Years. Paul.

Himself. Would. Be. Amazed. To. See. How. The. Gospel. Has. Spread. If. He. Could. Travel. All. Over. The. World. Today. And. See. The. Gospel. Thriving. In.

[38:37] Countries. That. He. Never. Even. He. He. Would. Be. On. His. Knees. Praising. The. Lord. From. Dawn. Till. Dusk. God. Has. Done. Great.

Things. And. The. Word. Has. Prevailed. Over. Every. Kind. Of. Opposition. And. Persecution. In. Many. Parts. Of. The. World.

It's. Still. Increasing. Today. I. Read. A. Statistic. Recently. That. 2. 7. Million. People. Annually. Convert.

To. Christianity. That's. Not. Counting. The. Children. Growing. Up. In. The. Christian. Faith. There. Are. Said. To. Be. Some. 2. 2. 2. Billion. People. Who. Identify. As. Christians. Okay. We. Know. Some. Of. Them. May. Not. Be. Genuine. But.

[39:31] A. Lot. Of. Them. Are. God. Has. Worked. Amazing. Wonders. And. The. Word. Has. Spread. If.

You're. Not. Amongst. Those. Millions. Of. Believers. Then. Perhaps. You. Should. Be. Admittedly. Most. Of. The. Growth. In. Recent. Years. Has. Been. In. Africa. Latin. America. And. Asia. Not. So. Much. In. Europe. But.

Still. I. Think. We. Can. Call. Church. History. A. Success. Story. But. What. About. Scotland. Today. What.

About. Dumfries. Let's. Be. Honest. We. Couldn't. Without. Our. Tongue. In. Cheek. Apply. Verse. 20. To. Ourselves.

[40:24] Could. We. We. Can't. Say. That. The. Word. Of. The. Lord. Is. Increasing. And. Prevailing. Mightily. In. Scotland. We.

Can't. Speak. Of. A. Success. Story. In. Our. Own. Generation. Here. In. Our. Own. Land. But. The. Point. Of. This. Passage. Is. Not. To. Depress. Us. And. Think. Oh. If. Only. We. Had. Lived. In. Those. Days. It's. Not. To. Leave. Us. With. A. Sense. Of. Failure. Why.

Can't. We. Do. This. It's. To. Encourage. Us. Such. Things. Are. Possible. In. Order. For. There. To. Be. That. Same. Growth. Of. The. Church. Today. There. Are. Two. Vital. Things. And.

[41:19] They're. Very. Simple. The. Word. And. The. Spirit. Paul. Preached. The. Word. That. Was. The. Heart. Of. This. That.

Was. What. Produced. The. Conversions. That. Was. What. Produced. The. Repentance. The. Word. Of. God. We. Have. The. Same. Word. Available. To. Us. Believe.

In. Its. Power. But. Also. We. Need. The. Spirit. When. Paul. Said. To. Those. Twelve. Disciples. Did. You. Receive. The. Holy. Spirit. The. Implication. Is. That. He. Had. Of. course. He. Had. Paul. Was. Full. Of. The. Holy. Spirit. And.

Everything. That. He. Did. All. This. Preaching. Was. Done. In. The. Power. Of. The. Spirit. And. That. Is. What. Is. Needed. Today. Preaching. In.

[42:14] The. Power. Of. The. Spirit. Of. God. We. Need. To. Pray. For. That. We. Need. Pray. That. We. Might. See. Here.

In. This. Country. The. Success. That. Was. Seen. Back. In. Those. Far. Off. Days. Yes. There. May. Be. Other. Factors. Too.

I. Don't. Doubt. That. There. May. Be. The. Sword. Of. Judgment. Over. Our. Land. We. Live. In. A. Country. That. Has. Cast. Off. Its. Christian. Heritage. A. Country. That. Has. Deliberately. Turned. Its. Back. On. Christ. And. Perhaps. A. Famine. Of. The. Word. Is. The. Judgment. That. Has. Come. Upon. Us. Well. Then. We.

Need. To. Pray. Over. That. As. Well. We. As. Christians. Need. To. Confess. The. Sin. Of. Our. Nation. And. Seek. That. The. Lord. Would. Have. Mercy. And.

[43:05] That. The. Spirit. Will. Be. Poured. Out. And. That. We. Might. See. The. Church. Of. God. Growing. And. Christ. Glorified. In. Our. Land. And.

Our. Day. Amen.