The Book of Acts Lesson 35

Acts 19:1-41

“The Word Exposed“

What is a disciple? Merriam Webster says it is – *“One who accepts and assists in spreading the doctrines of another: as* ***a******:****one of the twelve in the inner circle of Christ's followers according to the Gospel accounts* ***b******:****a convinced adherent of a school or individual.”* The term disciples is used 232 times in the New Testament and only one in the Old. It is used referring alternately to disciples of Christ or to disciples of others, like John the Baptist.

The proper definition for this term in Acts 19 is crucial to our understanding of the passage. Many Charismatic religious groups look at this passage to try to justify speaking in tongues and other “gifts” of the spirit that they practice. We will look at these this morning.

# Paul had a special ministry in Ephesus. 1-12

1. The backdrop for Paul’s question to the disciples is Apollos.
2. A fervent man with incomplete knowledge was led to Christ by Paul’s disciples.
3. Acts 19:2 calls the group Paul encountered in Ephesus “disciples:
   1. Disciples in this verse is referring to the second definition of disciples. Just as Apollos was a disciple of John the Baptist, the disciples Paul dealt with were not Christians, but they were apparently open to the gospel.
   2. This verse does not indicate that Christians receive the Holy Spirit after salvation.
4. The Holy Spirit had come down upon believers after Christ ascended into heaven.
5. The laying on of hands by the apostles was one way that God placed His stamp of approval upon what these men were preaching.
6. Their receiving the Holy Ghost after they encountered Paul is evidence that they were not indeed true disciples of Christ until then.
7. 1Corinthians 12:1 tells us that the body of a believer is the temple of the Holy Spirit. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is not something that comes after salvation, it comes at the moment of salvation to every believer.
8. Paul remained for two years and had healing hankies.
   1. These miracles are not unlike the healing of the woman with an issue of blood who touched the hem of Jesus’ garment in Matthew 9:20.
   2. This and other signs done in the passage are in line with God’s special works found in the book of Acts. But even Luke, the author regards these things as “special”, in verse 11.
   3. These were all legitimate, however they are not the standard by which God’s work is made evident.
9. Paul’s ministry was one of progression.
   1. Wherever he went his purpose was to help believers get to the next level.
   2. He helped unbelievers come to Christ.
   3. He helped unenlightened disciples understand that Christ was the Messiah.
   4. He helped Christians grow in their faith.

# The Word magnified exposes imitators. 13-20

* + - 1. Jewish sorcerers attempt to use the name of Jesus as a trinket or a charm.
         1. They tried to gain a reputation by using Christ.
         2. But the true power of a demonic possession exposed them as being frauds. Seven men were overpowered by one.
      2. Unfortunately people today still try to use Jesus’ name for their own profit.
         1. Many claim to have power to heal and even to be able to send supernatural handkerchiefs.
         2. Time and again these people are exposed as fakes. They are able to manipulate emotions but cannot truly cure people’s illnesses.
      3. The testimony of one young soldier who is a member of Hillcrest is that he believed the charismatics until he started reading the Bible.
         1. We do not fear that people study the Bible.
         2. Many true students of the Bible have come to be strong in Baptist doctrine.
         3. We are not a Baptist church for any other reason than what we see in the Bible leads us to be thus.
      4. The role of the Word of God is still to help us grow and prevail as in verse 20.
         1. Through the Word Paul carried out his ministry in Ephesus.
         2. The Scriptures proved his teachings.
         3. The Bible is the means God has given us by which we are to discern whether a church is actually doing God’s work.

# The Word is the means through growth.

1. Just as Paul worked to see people reach the next level, we are to be always growing.
   1. Salvation
   2. Becoming a member of a New Testament church
   3. Being faithful in Bible Reading and Prayer
   4. Forsaking sinful activities
   5. Attending church faithfully
   6. Enrolling in a Sunday School class
   7. Participating in outreach efforts
   8. Becoming involved in a ministry of Hillcrest
   9. Submitting to God’s will and direction for your life
   10. Helping others follow these steps
   11. Etc.
2. No matter where you are, there is a step ahead of you.
   1. Taking a step forward always takes faith.
   2. The steps of a righteous man are ordered by the Lord. This is confirmed by the Word of God.
   3. What step does God want you to take today?
3. The next step will require His Word.
   1. If you are not sure what step to take, look into the Bible.
   2. The Bible is as a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path. Psalm 119:105
   3. The more you expose yourself to the Word of God you will find God’s direction and peace about the decisions of life.