



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Acts 19:8-20

“Great Lion of God - Paul’s Third Missionary Journey - II”

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father, we are particularly grateful to Thee for this privilege and opportunity, and we ask Thy blessing upon us as we study the Scriptures. We think of the opportunities that we do have around the face of this globe. So many people are desirous of having what we have in the United States of America, but are unable to obtain it. And Lord, often we look with very short-sighted eyes at the work that Thou art doing in this world. We occasionally forget that it is extremely important to the triune God that the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ go out to all the nations. We thank Thee for the ministry in South Korea, and for men such as Dr. John Song, and ask that Thou wilt bless his ministry. Use him as a youth worker and teacher, and may also, Lord, his desire to see the gospel reach the city in which he lives be realized. And we know there are many, many other places where the gospel of Jesus Christ is being proclaimed, and give fruit, Lord.

We thank Thee for the work that has been done in the past by the Holy Spirit in Korea; such a marvelous manifestation of the grace of God and the salvation of so many thousands of people near the beginning of this century. And we thank Thee for the continuation of that work in that country in spite of the difficulties, politically. And we

praise Thee for the many who have come to this country to study and to go back and to preach the gospel to their own people.

We thank Thee for those many churches with thousands of members who are committed to the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, and often committed to the doctrine of the sovereign grace of God; we’re so thankful for that. We would particularly remember others who also labor on the mission field, and would ask especially, for the missionaries who have been held hostage in the Sudan, and pray, Lord, that if it should be Thy will, that their lives may be preserved. We commit that situation to Thee; we do not know all of the facts of it, but we pray that Thou wilt do Thy perfect will there. We commit those who are involved to Thee, and their friends and loved ones to Thee. And now, Lord, as we turn to consider the missionary work of the Apostle Paul, give us an understanding of the things that we read and ponder tonight. For Jesus’ sake. Amen.

[Message] Tonight is the second of our series of studies in Paul’s third missionary journey, and we’re looking again at Acts chapter 19. The apostle is in the city of Ephesus, one of the great cities of the ancient world, and he is carrying on a ministry there. And, just by way of brief review, remember the apostle had begun his third missionary journey from Antioch, and he had moved to the north and come into Asia Minor, and had come to the city of Ephesus, after Apollos had been there. And there he had encountered some disciples of John the Baptist who, evidently, had not heard of the consummation of the Lord’s ministry at the cross of Calvary, and the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. And so the apostle acquainted them with what had happened; they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, for they had known only the baptism of John.

And Paul had laid his hands upon them, and the Holy Spirit had come upon them, and they had spoken with tongues and prophesied. This of course, designed to testify to the fact that the apostles’ ministry was of God, and the speaking in tongues was a testimony to their office and the work that they were doing. They also had prophesied;

that is, they had given revelatory speech, and that, too, was part of the sovereign activity of the Lord God in those days. Now in verse 8 we read on, and I want to read through verse 20. The apostle continues his ministry in Ephesus, and interesting things happen when the servants of the Lord are bold enough to go out and to witness in the midst of pagan people, to the saving grace of Christ. Luke, who writes this history of the early church, says,

“And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. But when divers were hardened, and believed not (the Greek text says, “When some were hardened, and believed not.”), but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus. (Now look carefully at the name of this teacher; it’s rather humorous, we’ll say something about it later on.) And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks. And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them. Then certain of the vagabond Jews (or the itinerant Jews), exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the LORD Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. (In the original text there is an article before “Jesus” and so it is, “we adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches.) And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so (or were doing so). And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. (Now those were interesting days. [Laughter]) And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus

was magnified. (You know, it’s interesting, and it would be nice if we had time to go into detail, at all of these points, and turn to some of the passages in Paul’s letters in which he refers to things that happened in his ministry, in the places where these churches were formed. For example, we read here, “And the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.” And that reminds us of the statement that is made in Ephesians chapter 1, when he wrote the Ephesian church later on. He speaks about, in chapter 1, “the mighty working of God (verse 20) which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion (and notice) and every name that is named, not only in this world but also in that which is to come.” So, the idea of the name of the Lord Jesus, and especially of the sovereign greatness of the name of the Lord Jesus, was something that was specifically appropriate for Ephesus, as we shall try to show later on, because, due to the practice of magic there, it was very important to have the right name, and the names that the magicians used in order to practice their magic, were names that signified certain powers, and those who have the greatest power were the one who had the greatest names; the most powerful names. And so, lying back of all of this, is the fact that the one name that is really greater than all names, is the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. So one can see the harmony of the account in the Book of Acts with Paul’s letter, and the things that prevailed in the city of Ephesus. And then in verse 18 of Acts chapter 19 we read,) And many that believed came, and confessed, and showed their deeds (or their practices. That is, their spells. The things that made up their little kit of magic arts.) Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. (Now, a piece of silver, or a drachma, was about a day’s wage, some commentators believe, and so this was quite a sum.) So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.”

[Message] Well, the apostle is now in Ephesus, and he is going to spend about three years in Ephesus, and so this is an important part of the ministry of the apostle. And I think it will help us in understanding this passage, and also in understanding the epistle that he later wrote to the Ephesians, to understand something about Ephesus itself. When you go to Ephesus today, the Ephesus that is today is located several miles inland from the Aegean Sea. But in the apostle’s day, it was right on the sea, and the river came right down to the water. But today, because of the delta and the silt that has come down through the centuries, the result is that the ruins of the city are back several miles from the Aegean Sea. But it was located right on the Aegean Sea, and it was one of the great commercial cities of the ancient world. Ephesus has been called the treasure house of Asia. It was the place that the apostle stayed in, longer than anywhere else in his missionary journeys.

And furthermore, he did it in spite of the fact that he had many adversaries there. Remember it’s in 1 Corinthians, which he wrote from Ephesus during this three-year stay, that he writes that “a great and effectual door has been opened unto me, but there are many adversaries.” And so we are reading here of the adversaries that the apostle speaks about in 1 Corinthians chapter 16 and verse 9. It was the city of the great temple of Diana, which was one of the great marvels of the ancient world. It was a city which was so well known that even Shakespeare writes of it. In the *Comedy of Errors* he has a description of Ephesus by the man from Syracuse, by the name of Antipholus, and this is what he says, “They say, this town is full of cozenage; as, nimble jugglers, that deceive the eye, dark-working sorcerers, that change the mind, soul-killing witches, that deform the body; disguised cheaters, prating mountebanks, and many such like liberties of sin.” So, it was well known as a city of magic and magic arts. And especially, was Ephesus known for the *Ephesia grammata* or, the “Ephesian letters.” Now the Ephesian letters were magical papyri; slips of parchment with symbols, or magical sentences on them. And these were called the *Ephesia grammata*, and they were worn like amulets or charms, the

kind of thing that we have today, except it’s just a little different. Today we have things like wishbones, divining rods, St. Christophers, and things like that.

Well, in Ephesus it was full of things like that, and so they would have all of their little charms. You can see this today; many people are naturally superstitious, and Ephesus was a place like that. It had its markets, and they were glittering with the produce of the world’s art. It was called, just like Corinth, the Vanity Fair of Asia. They furnished to the exile of Patmos, the local coloring, and when John wrote, in the Book of Revelation in chapter 18, about the merchandise of the merchants of the world, he describes the merchandise of gold and silver, and then he mentions, “and of the souls of men.” So, the Apostle John regarded the ancient world as being a world given over to commerce, just like our world is; it had its businesses, but their business also included the souls of men. So Ephesus, then, was a city of the great temple of Diana; it was a city of pagan superstition; it was a city of commerce, but the commerce was a commerce that touched spiritual things.

Now, there are only thirteen verses in this little section that I’ve read for you, but they tell a story that we learn much about elsewhere and, as I say, if we had time it would be nice to look at the passages in 1 Corinthians and Ephesians which bear on the point, but we don’t have time to do that, and so let’s take a look at the leading points of this little section that Luke has written for us. One thing you can say, certainly, it was exciting to be a Christian in the day of the Apostle Paul, and exciting to be an apostle, too. Now he came back to Ephesus, and remember, in the preceding chapter, he had come to Ephesus on the way down to Jerusalem, and he had entered into the synagogue and he had reasoned with the Jews then. But they desired him to stay on and tarry there but he said, no, he was unable to do that, he had to go on to keep the feast at Jerusalem, but he said, according to verse 21 of Acts chapter 18, “I will return again unto you if God will.” And so he sailed from Ephesus.

And now he’s back in Ephesus and he does precisely what he had been doing; he goes right back into the synagogue, and picks up where he has left off. And so we read, “He spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.” Perhaps the apostle had greater results in Ephesus, than almost anywhere else except Berea. Certainly, one of the important Pauline churches came into existence in Ephesus, and these three years of preaching did bear fruit. It’s rather sad when you think of the fact that the church that was founded through the preaching of the apostles, should later on have said of it by the Lord Jesus, “You’ve left your first love,” just about forty years later. Believers Chapel, incidentally, is twenty years old. We’re half the way on to losing our first love, maybe. That’s something to think about. Even the cities founded by the apostles can lose their first love. And then, of course, when you go to Ephesus today, there’s nothing there; it’s gone, the testimony is gone. And in fact, all through Asia Minor there is very little of significant Christian testimony. It’s one of the saddest things in the world to see an individual or a church lose the brightness of the fellowship that they have with Christ. That is sad. May the Lord deliver us from that kind of thing.

Now he spent three months there, and notice what he preached; he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God. That was one of the watchwords of early Christianity. The things that make for unusual movements in world history, often have watch-words. For example, Islam has its watchword, we still hear it today; “God is God and Muhammad is his prophet.” The French Revolution had its watchword; it was “Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity.” The democratic idea has its watchword; “Government of the people, by the people, for the people.” Student Volunteer Missionary Movement in the early part of the 20th Century had “The evangelization of the world in this generation.” Of course, they did not accomplish it, but it was a great watchword. Church of Christ has its watchword; “When the Bible speaks, we speak; when the Bible is silent,

we’re silent.” That’s a good watchword, I have to grant. They have thought up something pretty good, and you remember the movement by the watchwords.

Well, the watchword of Christianity is “The kingdom of God.” Paul preached the kingdom of God. Now of course, it’s possible for men to have a false idea concerning the kingdom of God, and the Jews had a false idea concerning the kingdom of God, because they thought of the expression as being something like, “The KINGDOM of God.” In other words, the great stress lay on the term, kingdom. Now they interpreted that as the future day in which the promises of God would be fulfilled to them, those promises made to Abraham, expanded in the promises made to David, and in the new covenant, and in the teaching of the prophets and the glorious pictures they gave of the future. And when the Lord Jesus came on the scene and the apostles came on the scene, when the term, “The kingdom of God” was used, it connoted for them the glorious future when Israel would become the head of the nations again, and they would have political authority, a measure of which they had had in the past under the reigns of David and Solomon, for example. So they laid stress on the term, kingdom.

But of course, the Scriptures lay great stress upon the fact that it is the kingdom of GOD. It’s not a kingdom that men shall bring in. Now, when I first grew up and started attending Christian church as a professing Christian, the ministers spoke constantly about the kingdom. They frequently just left off the two little words, “of God.” But, “We’re bringing in the kingdom,” or “We’re working for the kingdom,” or “Let’s do this for the kingdom.” Of course, it was never really accurately defined, it wasn’t till I was converted and began to read the Bible that I understood what “the kingdom” meant. And we seem to lose the idea that the kingdom is something that God brings in; it’s not something that we bring in. So, the apostle was preaching the kingdom of God; the watchword of the apostolic ministry.

Now, if you go back and look at what the New Testament has to say about the kingdom of God, you will discover a rather interesting thing. The term is very common in

the synoptic gospels. You’ll find it frequently used. John the Baptist comes announcing, “Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens is at hand.” The only difference between that expression and “The kingdom of God,” is simply the fact that the Jewish people did not like to say “God” and so they attached to the word “kingdom” heavens, referring to the same thing, but they did not like to use the tetragrammaton, the word for God, “Yahweh” and so to avoid it, they used the expression, “The kingdom of the heavens,” and that’s why it’s found only in the Gospel of Matthew, which was written for Jewish Christians primarily. In the Gospel of Mark and in the Gospel of Luke and in the Gospel of John we have, often, the expression, “The kingdom of God,” and “The kingdom,” defined, of course, by the addition of the prepositional phrase so often used.

But then, when we come to the Book of Acts, we read of the Apostle Paul preaching the kingdom of God, but actually the term “kingdom of God,” is not used so often, and in the epistles of the New Testament, it occurs literally just a handful of times, because “The kingdom of God” is no longer the kind of watchword for the church that it had been in the ministry of John and the ministry of our Lord, for the simple reason that the kingdom of God is largely a future concept. And that’s why, in the epistles, we have such little mention of it. And in fact, in most of the references to it in the New Testament epistles, the reference is to the future of the kingdom of God; the kingdom of God upon the earth. So when Paul preached here the kingdom of God, he was preaching what was going to happen. It was grounded, and one can read his message in Acts chapter 20, when he speaks to the Ephesian elders, it was grounded in the death of the King, the resurrection of the King. It would be realized at the Second Advent of the King for, in chapter 14 and verse 22, it is Barnabas who we read confirmed the souls of the disciples and exhorted them to continue in the faith and that “we must, through much tribulation, enter into the kingdom of God.” So notice, “we must, through much tribulation, enter into the kingdom of God.”

Incidentally, I said Barnabas. There is a reference to him here, but that does seem to be a kind of expression that was characteristic of them. And so, anyway, the reference of the kingdom of God is to the future. In other words, “we must, through many tribulations, enter into the kingdom of God.” That, of course, is no reference to the great tribulation; it’s in the plural, he’s talking about the experiences of life. And it is entered, so the New Testament tells us, by the new birth. That’s why the Lord Jesus said, for example, if we are going to enter into the kingdom of God we must be born again. So the apostle now, for three months, is preaching in the synagogue and preaching the kingdom of God.

Well, now in the next two verses, Luke describes the preaching of the apostle in the school of Tyrannus. I take a great deal of comfort from this, because it’s an indication of the fact that even if you’re an apostle, you don’t necessarily have favorable response to your preaching. And remember, the Lord said in Matthew chapter 7 and verse 6, “Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under feet and turn again and rend you.” So there is such a thing as giving that which is holy to dogs and casting your pearls before swine. And so the apostle preached, he preached constantly, but “when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of the way before the multitude, Paul withdrew from them.” he departed from them. And he separated the disciples and, evidently, they hired a school, and he disputed, he reasoned (that’s the meaning of the expression) daily, in the school of one, Tyrannus.

Well, one can see from this that the apostle’s ministry was not acceptable. I wonder if it was because he didn’t preach the gospel accurately; you think that was the reason? Well, no. There are people, you know, who think that if you really just gave the gospel accurately, people would respond. There is a well-known Christian leader that many of you know, and that’s his firm conviction; that the reason people do not respond to the gospel is because it is never given clearly, but when it is given clearly, then people

will always respond. That’s false; that’s false doctrine, that is not true. Our Lord’s the greatest illustration. The Apostle Paul falls right in with it. He preached the gospel accurately, but there were individuals who were hardened and who did not believe, and they spoke evil of the way before the multitude. And so, what did the apostle do? Well, he decided it was good to separate the believers from the unbelievers and to minister to them. And so he said, “Let’s separate.”

He didn’t say, like some say, “Well, we’re in the denomination, and it’s better to stick in the denomination and see if we cannot win the whole denomination.” No, there is a time when it is important to teach the believers and to see that they’re built up in the faith. It’s really basically false to continue in fellowship with unbelievers. It’s false for the believers to stay in a system that is contrary to the teaching of the word of God. And so the apostle separated the believers from the unbelievers, and he ministered to them. Now, I’m sure that they had to bear a great deal of reproach for it. People would meet their friends on the streets and say, “John, haven’t seen you recently at the synagogue. What’s the matter? I know you’re attracted to that man, Paul, but I haven’t seen him either. What’s happening?” “Well, John,” he doesn’t hem and haw like moderns, he says, “Well, I have come to believe that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, and the Apostle Paul is still in town, and we felt that we were hampered in the teaching of the word of God in the synagogue, and so we’ve rented the school of Tyrannus, and there Paul is preaching to us daily. Come on and visit us.”

Now it’s interesting that the apostle preached daily, too. That tells you a great deal about the eagerness of Paul to preach. There’s an interesting variant reading in the western text, and the western text and the leading manuscript of that family of manuscripts, says that Paul preached daily in the school of Tyrannus from the fifth hour to the tenth hour. Do you know when that was? That was from eleven in the morning to four in the afternoon. Now, I’m not saying that that is an inspired part of the New Testament; it’s probably not. But it’s an interesting thing, and it illustrates, if it even has a

measure of general truth to it, a rather interesting thing about those early Christians, because, how would you like to attend a meeting from eleven in the morning to four in the afternoon in July and August in Texas without air conditioning? How would you like it? I doubt that you would like it. And furthermore, if that hour was particularly the siesta hour, how would you like it? You wouldn’t like it. But do you know, that that was a siesta hour? In fact, it has been said that more people were sleeping in Ephesus at one in the afternoon, than at one in the morning. In other words, the kind of life that they lived: they went home at eleven in the morning, and they stayed at home because it was hot; very hot. It was the time to take a siesta, so they went home. They got under whatever they could get under and they slept, and then business resumed at about four in the afternoon. That’s characteristic of many places, as you know, today in the world. Go to Spain; it’s something like that now. Well that’s when Paul preached.

And so, evidently, he went to Tyrannus. What a beautiful name for a teacher, “Tyrant.” [Laughter] That’s his name. So he went to Mr. Tyrant. One wonders if that was the name his mother gave him when he was a little child, or his pupils later gave him. Tyrannus. One of the ancient men has spoken of his teacher as, “Thrasher.” That was the name that the pupils had for their teacher. Well, I had some teachers something like that in the past, myself. But anyway, they went to Tyrannus, and they said they’d like to rent the place, and so they rented it. But Tyrannus said, “Of course, we’re carrying on a school here, and we don’t have any free time except in the middle day. You probably wouldn’t want that.” But Paul said, “We’ll take it.” And so in the school of Tyrannus, we read that “he ministered the word of God daily in the school of one, Tyrannus.” It was Horace who called his teacher “Thrasher.” So here, in the school of Mr. Tyrannus. Now we read, in verse 10, “this continued by the space of two years, so that all which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.”

Now of course, I cannot prove that that is not every single individual, I doubt that that is what Luke means, when he says, “all heard the word.” I think that what he means

is that a general testimony to the grace of God in Jesus Christ was given to Jews and Gentiles. It would seem almost inconceivable to say that every single person who lived in the whole province of Asia, heard the apostle in the school of Tyrannus. But, what it precisely means, it’s difficult to be absolutely certain about. So I’m not going to say that’s the meaning of it. There are times, when you study the Bible, you have to say, “I think this,” and when we get to heaven we’ll be corrected. So when we get to heaven, if it’s not that, you have my permission to come up and say, “Ah, Lewis, you remember back, many years ago, in 1983 when you said that ‘all’ in Acts chapter 19 didn’t mean every single individual who breathed?” I will say, “Yes, I remember.” And you’ll say, “Well, it did.” And you will have a great deal of joy there, and I won’t mind because then I will be sanctified, at the present I’m not. [Laughter]

Now, in verse 11 through verse 20, Luke the evangelist describes the apostle’s experiences with some of the magicians who were there, and particularly one special case of one, Sceva, a Jew who had seven sons, and they were doing the things that Luke describes as “dealing with the evil spirits.” Verse 11 and verse 12, “And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul.” These were apostolic signs. You see, that’s the reason, in the early church, the miracles were done. They were done by the Lord Jesus to attest his Messianic ministry. They were done by the apostles. The apostle speaks of them as the signs of an apostle; they were the things that marked him out as an authorized representative of the Lord Jesus, and that his teaching, which he was giving, was true teaching.

So, “God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons (an apron was a working kind of apron that a carpenter or leather worker might put around himself), and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.” So then, what we have here is special miracles which were done. God did them through the Apostle Paul. They were not violations of natural law, but they were the activity of God’s law on a higher scale.

Can you not imagine what might have been made over this? Here is a person who is healed by virtue of a handkerchief that had been around Paul’s head when he was preaching the gospel, and probably the apostle had perspired in it, and so there is a new church started called “The Church of the Perspiration Band.” [Laughter] Or something like that. That’s the way it would be today, you know, in which names are given that really don’t have a great deal to do with the teaching of the New Testament at all. We have churches today that are called “The One True Church,” I’ve seen that. And of course, we have all of the other kinds of names with which we are familiar.

Well, Luke goes on and says, “Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists,” they wanted to take advantage of the situation. There are always people who want to take advantage of Christians. And so they wanted to take advantage of the Christians. Do you know why? Because Christians are usually very simple folk. They’ve been brought to the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, and a lot of the chicanery that characterized their lives before, goes. They tend to be frank and open, contrary to the world, because the work of the Holy Spirit is in process, sanctifying them. And so they are marvelous objects for con-people to con. And some of the people who labor in Christian circles are the greatest con artists of all.

So, the vagabond Jews, they are exorcists, they take upon them to call over them which had evil spirits, the name of the Lord Jesus. They hear there’s a fellow named Paul here who, when he comes into the presence of people who have the evil spirit, he calls out upon the name of a fellow by the name of Jesus. He calls him *Kurios* Jesus. And so remember, everything was dependent upon the power of the name that you invoked, and so “if the name of Jesus accomplishes such results, we’ll use it ourselves.” In Ephesus Diana’s worship was tottering, and votaries were rushing to the defense of the religious system there. So these exorcists, who thought that virtually in the formula that was used, the name that they invoked, here’s a new one. And so they decided that they’re going to use that name.

H. A. Ironside tells of a visit to Los Angeles when he was the pastor of the Moody Church, when a certain spiritless median, by the name of Helen Templeton, sent him a letter with a communication supposedly coming from Dwight L. Moody. And it was supposedly from Dwight L. Moody’s disembodied spirit. Now, Dr. Ironside was the successor to Moody in the Moody Church in Chicago, and so the letter from Helen Templeton came to him and what the letter said was that Dwight L. Moody now wanted to give a message to the man who was the pastor of his old church, and he wanted to tell Dr. Ironside that he had failed to preach the glorious truths of Spiritism (that is, Moody had) because he was ignorant while he was on the earth. And now that he was dead, he realized that he had been all wrong, and in the letter, which Dr. Ironside had, Helen Templeton said that he said, “You know, the whole trouble was my father. He followed in the old paths and he brought me up in the old ideas. Of course when I became of age I was responsible and I should have refused and excepted the truths of Spiritism. But not knowing any better, I followed his teaching.” And so now Dr. Ironside is to follow the principles of Spiritism.

So, Dr. Ironside wrote back to Helen Templeton, and this was what he wrote to her. He said, “I wrote to her and I said, ‘Evidently the spirit that controlled you was not very well up on his history. He didn’t know that D. L. Moody had no father after he grew up. His father died when Moody was a little baby. And certainly his mother never taught him the old truths because she was a Unitarian, and was converted through Moody himself years afterwards.’” And then Ironside says, “Evidently some impersonating demon put one over on Helen. He made her think it was Moody, but it was not him at all.” Well, there were individuals in Ephesus just like that and you know, there are people like that today. And believe it or not, in Believers Chapel I hear people, some come to me, and say, “So-and-so claims to have had a vision.” And they say, “So-and-so and such-and-such.” And seriously say, “Do you think that could be true?” When there is a denial of the truth of the word of God often, of course it’s nonsense.

And so anyway, the sons of Sceva attempted to use the name of the Apostle Paul, and the evil acts up and said (I love this expression), “Jesus I know and Paul I’ve heard about (really the word means something like, “I know about.” There are two different words for “know” here) but who are you?” In other words, “I know about the power of the Lord Jesus and I know about the power of Paul, but I don’t know anything about you.” You see, there is a difference between being in right relationship to the Lord Jesus and using the name of the Lord Jesus, and having no relationship to him whatsoever and still using his name. There’s all the difference in the world between the power that flows out of the Holy Spirit through a man who is a true believer in the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and preaches the gospel, and an individual who does not know the power of the life of Jesus Christ in experience, but who nevertheless mouths the same phrases, and even sometimes the same kinds of doctrinal statements. All the difference in the world. One can sense it. You know, you can sense when a person is speaking through the power of the word of God, and you can sense when a person is mouthing expressions that seem to be true of themselves, but there is no power flowing out of the personal experience of the truths.

So, “Jesus I know and Paul I know, but who are you?” And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them and overcame them, prevailed against them so that they fled out of the house, naked and wounded.” It’s almost as if the evil spirit within this man said, “When they said, ‘We, in the name of the Lord Jesus, say come out.’” The evil spirit said, “I can whip you.” [Laughter] And with that came, in the person of the man, and chased them out of the house naked and wounded.

“And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks dwelling at Ephesus, and fear fell on them all (and no wonder). And the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified, and many that believed came and confessed and showed their (This is a word that means practices. That is they brought out all of their little books and parchments and spells that they had accumulated and that they were using. And incidentally, these are believers. You can see

that sanctification has not progressed so far. They need that teaching in the school of Tyrannus.) Many of them also, which use curious arts, brought their books together and burned them before all men, and they calculated the price of them, and found fifty thousand pieces of silver. So mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed.”

Well, our time is up; we’re going to have to stop. Let’s close with a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for the ministry of the great apostle, and we thank Thee for the principles that are found in that ministry. And we ask, Lord, that Thou wilt, by Thy grace, enable us to enter into an experience of the Christian life in such a way that we, too, are faithful to the truth committed to us. We pray Thy blessing upon Believers Chapel. Deliver the Chapel from the lethargy and indifference that so often characterizes bodies of believers who have known the Lord for a lengthy period of time, but who may have allowed the things of the world, or of the flesh, to gain again a measure of control...[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]