



## **Wisdom & Maturity – Part 3**

### **Discerning the Work of Demons**

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Well, it's really no surprise that people tend to associate particular places with particular subjects and interests. It happens when we get cities and we think of what that city is known for. You think of Nashville, you think of music. You think of Atlantic City, you think of gambling. You think of Cupertino, California, you think of Apple computers. When I was a kid growing up, you thought of Dallas, you thought about oil. When you thought about Detroit, you thought about cars. Still today if you think of Augusta, Georgia, I trust most of you think about golf. Right? Orlando, theme parks. If you think about Hollywood, of course, you think about movies. If you think about Las Vegas, you know that sin, let's just call it that, I guess. Sin.

Now if you played this word city association in the ancient world and you said cities like Jerusalem, of course, everyone's going to think about that huge Jewish temple. If you think about Alexandria, Egypt, you'd think of this extensive, massive library. If you think of Athens, you'd think about storied and ancient, even in that day, ancient universities. If you think about Corinth, people would think about these international athletic competitions. And if you thought about the city that we find the Apostle Paul in today, in Acts Chapter 19, the city of Ephesus, it might surprise you, but people would think generally across the ancient world, they'd think about sorcery, they'd think about incantations and spells, they'd think about magic. They'd think about all these spiritual things that relate to the spiritual world.

And even as we introduce the city to you when Paul got there after Apollos took off, we saw this last week, we know that the city was dominated by this giant temple, the temple to Artemis or Diana, depending on what language you're talking in and that was huge. I mean, much bigger than the Parthenon in Athens. This was a huge worship center and everything around it, as we'll see in the next passage, but really it was predicated on the people who came and worshiped there at that temple to Diana. There were all kinds of industries that grew up around it. Everything was related to this. They sold trinkets and all kinds of amulets and good luck charms and things related to the temple.

As I told you last week, there are over a quarter million people who lived in first-century Ephesus, and it was a place where a large number of Jews as well. But there was a lot of a focus on anything that related to you finding a spiritual solution to whatever ails you or any protection you thought you might need. This is the dominant feature of the city of Ephesus in the first century. Because we're so conditioned in our Christian thinking when we think about Ephesus, we think about the Bible, we think about Paul, whatever we think about in terms of the letter to the Ephesians. But you need to know what was thought about in that day because it helps us understand what was going on in the last verse we left off on last time in verse 12 of Chapter 19. If you haven't turned there already we need to understand this in its historic and even geographic context. Some strange things were happening.

And I should say, even before I leave the idea of a city known for something, like Nashville, you think about music, or you think about like finances, Lower Manhattan, you think about



Wall Street. Clearly, the emphasis and focus on the financial district there it is dominated by thinking about finances. Everybody's job is related somehow to that. But it doesn't mean that finances aren't something that affects the whole of the country, or in our case, the world. Finances are important it's just not as concentrated in that place where everyone's talking about it every day and every lunch hour at every, you know, hot dog stand on the street, they're talking about finances. It's just that it takes a special focus in that particular place. And so there's much more emphasis and much more talk about it.

So it's true in Ephesus. There's a focus on the spiritual realm, on things that are going on that you cannot see. It was obviously a magnet for all kinds of charlatans to come in and take advantage of people's superstitious beliefs. But still, there has to be something as we grow and mature in Christ that we understand about what was going on in Ephesus that holds true everywhere in every culture. If you lived in South Korea, right, the shamanism of that culture, or you lived in some Indonesian country and you thought about the animistic cultures there. There might be different kinds of levels of interest in the spiritual that lies behind the material, but it doesn't mean that there's not reality to that all across the board.

I say that because the things that are happening in Ephesus, as we left off in verse 12 last week, are bizarre. They're even bizarre for the Scripture. Even Luke, the doctor, right at the beginning of this paragraph that's headed in your English Standard Version Bible as the idea of these Sons of Sceva here that have this weird thing that's about to happen. But we took those last couple of verses in last week's message that set up the rest of this. I just want to remind you that even he says this is an extraordinary thing. Extraordinary miracles were happening by the hand of the Apostle Paul. That's not unusual because as Second Corinthians 12:12 says the signs of a real apostle who's speaking new revelatory information, establishing churches, we understand that the way, the imprimatur, the certification of that was the ability to suspend natural law. Those are called miracles. So that we expect.

But they were extraordinary miracles and he gives that example in verse 12, if you glance at it again, you can remember where we were last time, that people were swiping his tent-making aprons and his sweat rags, and they were bringing them to people and they were being healed. Like, who would even think to do that? Even if the guy was doing these miracles. I guess you could get there. But you need to know that Ephesus was the place where this is all about that. Everyone's about that. It's all about which deity can help you keep you from that and which prayer can you pray for this and which incantation can you recite for that. And what kind of charm can you wear to keep away this problem? This is what Ephesus was all about.

So let's pick it up in verse 13 as we study today verses 13 through 20 in what I just confess up front is another weird thing that's happening in a place that's all about this stuff. But we'll try and understand what God's trying to teach us in this and recognize there's some truth that I think bleeds over into the reality of everything that we deal with in our day, which we shouldn't shy away from.

So let me read this with some comments here beginning in verse 13. Are you ready? Buckle in. Here we go. "Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists." Well, there's a mouth full just to start with right there. The what? These aren't like the Brooklyn auto mechanics. This is like



"the itinerant Jewish exorcists." I mean, you have not used those words in a sentence this month, right? It's a weird thing to say. Itinerant. Itinerant, you know, which often happens, by the way, with certain jobs where you can't stay in one place very long or you're going to be found out. And I'm just recognizing that there's a lot going on, probably in the itinerant Jewish exorcists who were in a city that was all about interest in the superstitious, you know, practices and incantations and spells and all of that sorcery that probably these guys, I'm guessing as a lot of the stuff that goes on today in the name of spirituality, is nothing other than charlatans making a buck off it. They're going from place to place. That's all this word literally means, "parerchomai". It just means they are going around doing this.

They're Jewish, which you might think, well, wait a minute, I can understand this in Ephesus, if you got a quarter million people in some Roman colony on the west coast of the Aegean Sea here. But remember that many of them, I think I've mentioned this, about, I mean, some estimate up to almost close to 100,000 Jews may have lived in Ephesus at this time. So you've got a lot of Jewish people there. And like most folks who kind of contextualize their lives to the culture, like it's all about spiritism. It's all about what's going on in the invisible realm. And so these Jewish folks here are going around and they're exorcists.

Now, there's a word that's transliterated. We often talk about non-translated words. We talk about transliterated words from the Greek New Testament. Just raise your right eyebrow if you remember talking about that. Words like baptism, of course. Right? Angel, deacon. And there are lots of that we just bring them into English and we're saying a Greek word in an anglicized way. Here's another one. Exorcist. That's a Greek word. It's a compound word and you know the first part, "Ex," because we see it all the time in English words. About 30%, by the way, of the English language comes from Greek, derivations from Greek. That's just, I guess, the motivation to take our Greek class at Compass Bible Institute, but... I can't say it's the same for Hebrew, so. That's why it's a much harder language for guys like me.

All right, Ready? "We were ready when you started off on all that other stuff." (audience laughs) E-X, right? That one's easy. A lot of words, ex, right? It just means "out of." Okay. orkizo, though. This second part of the word, orkizo, is the word "oath." It's the word of a solemn statement. Okay? So here's the compound word "out by solemn statement." Out by oath. Out by this kind of thing that you say that is like invoking something powerful, a powerful statement makes this thing come out. Exorcist. Now, you saw the movie. I wasn't allowed, but you saw it. You know what a modern example of this is. And it's not plucked out of someone's imagination.

Obviously, in the Bible, we have experiences of Christ exorcizing demons, if you want to use that word. It's not a common word. Matter of fact, the word that maybe is more common in the English translation of the Greek New Testament is what you see two lines from now. When "some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists undertook to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying..." Here's a word, "I adjure you." That didn't come from Greek, that comes from Latin, adjure you. Adjure you, "ad," Latin, "to," "jur," we get all kinds of words, jurisprudence, jury from this word. Again it's a concept of an oath, a strong word. So to put them under oath to say something that has some binding authority, to adjure.



This is used in all kinds of contexts. Matter of fact, adjure is the word that is translated in your English translation, the same Greek word that we have here that translates when the demons are talking to Jesus in the Gospel of Luke. I'm thinking of the Mark passage, but it says, "I adjure you don't punish us." Don't send us into punishment. Okay. Demons are adjuring Christ? They're doing the best they can to make a strong appeal. Like you might say, I adjure you to do something. You see that maybe in a court context. Another one is when the high priest says to Jesus, remember at his trial, he wouldn't speak up. He's like a lamb before its shearer is silent. When Jesus is there and the high priest wants him to talk. He says, "I adjure you by God, by the living God, to tell us whether you're the Christ." I adjure you.

It's a strong demand. I'm demanding you with a strong oath. And of course, often in Scripture we see "by the living God" or "by God" I adjure you by God. And even in courtrooms, you have that concept of, you know, you swear, you know, "so help me God." The concept is you're binding yourself under oath. And this is a state where you're binding someone else under oath by God's authority. I'm telling you to do this. Well, what are they adjuring? They're adjuring to try and get these evil spirits out "by the Jesus whom Paul proclaims."

Now you can see the appropriation of what Paul has been doing. Paul has been preaching about Jesus. And even the words here are not accidental. The Lord Jesus, the King. Everyone in Ephesus was wondering which deity and which spirit outranks that spirit. And I got two of these spirits, and I'll trade you for one of those spirits. There's all of this competition about who the greatest spirits were and functioned in terms of the incantations or the amulets, the good luck charms that they sold. All of those kinds of things, it was important, like the pecking order, the brackets for the demons and the spirits.

Jesus here, Paul is proclaiming him as the Lord, the King, the boss, the one in charge of it all, at the top of the heap. Well, these itinerant Jewish exorcists had heard Paul preaching and of course, as we saw, he was doing miraculous signs. Even so much the people were swiping his apron and taking it to their sick family members and they were recovering. Now, why would God condescend to do that? The whole point of verse 12 is this: God is the real God. These people are obsessed with the spirit world. And the point is, Jesus is no common spirit. So the point of verse 12 that leads us into our passage is he's the King of kings and the Lord of lords. He's in charge of all things. Everything is under his dominion. He's the name or the authority above every name, Philipians 2.

So that's the picture and now we have these guys saying, "I want to get in on that." And you see it here. These guys, not unusual, we've seen it in Acts twice already. We've met sorcerers. Remember that in the book of Acts? And one of them is named Bar-Jesus. And they're trying to use the power that they see in the apostles for their own thing. And in this case, they're making money, exorcizing evil spirits and they say, "Wow, this one seems to be powerful. Look at what that guy's doing. We're going to now try and do our work with his God, his deity." And so they try to take it and appropriate it as their new incantation so that they can solve the problems of the people who are paying them to solve their problems.

How does that work out? Verse 14. "Seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Sceva were doing this." Now, when you see "high priest," if you have a printed Bible and you have a



writing utensil, or you want to somehow note this in your electronic Bible, put it in quotes, "high priest." Jews were very good about keeping track of the records of who the high priests were up until 70 A.D. Sceva is not a high priest. We're a long way from Jerusalem at this point and he's not on vacation in Ephesus. We got the high priest in Jerusalem doing his thing. So he's not in the records of high priests. But like a lot of charlatans, they often give themselves honorary titles and all the rest, he's calling himself this and maybe even people in Ephesus said, well, of the Jewish population in Ephesus he's like the top-ranking priest, this guy.

Well, his sons, if there are any fruit or reflection of dad, not a good guy. But he's, you know, the doctor of the demons or whatever, he's in charge of things. So just to kind of give you some historical clarity and accuracy, Sceva was not a high priest, as in high priest in Jerusalem. He's just a guy either highest ranking in Ephesus who happens to have some bad kids or he's maybe using that honorific title to try and promote himself and pass his business card out.

All right. Well, what happens as his sons try to invoke and appropriate the name of Christ and kind of put it in their incantations to make their money, verse 15? When they're doing this, "the evil spirit answered them." So now they have a scene. They're going to get their money to go exorcize this demon, to give an oath to him to get out. Now we're going to use the name and the authority of Christ to do it. And here's the response of the evil spirit through this person who has this evil spirit. "Jesus I know." So the spirit speaks through this individual and says, "Hey, Jesus I know," the one these seven guys who are trying to cast out this demon, "Paul I recognize." I know him too, right? "But who in the world are you," dude. That's a Southern California paraphrase. Well, who are you guys? What are you doing here?

Okay. This is a great example of the fact that you can adjure your kids to make their bed and they can look at you and say, "Who are you?" Right? Adjuring someone means nothing. You can even say, I demand you in the name of the Lord Jesus to go clean the garage. You can do that all day long. Right? And unless there is some alignment of the fact that you are someone who because of your alignment with Christ and the power to enforce, the words are not the thing, but the reality is the thing. You've got to be aligned here like an apostle or those that even the 72 in Luke who were appointed to go and have power over those demons, evil spirits. Well, God did that. He does that in the first century to establish his Church, to make a record of written revelation. And these guys are going I want some of that. And so like we had on the island of Cyprus, we've had it in Paul's journeys earlier, Bar-Jesus. They just want to appropriate the power because they want to kind of put it into their arsenal.

And in this case they try it and what happens? Verse 16, "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." Now, you've watched the fanciful, you know, superhero movies that you watch, especially when the way, you know, 90-pound female who's all attractive and pretty and her hair is curled, she fights off all these big guys, you know, in this well-choreographed scene. And hopefully most of you guys are going, "Oh, come on." But you live in the fantasy of this gal. She's beating everybody up.





OK, in real life that would never happen. But in real life, you may have seen some guy who is hopped up on drugs or something take on two or three guys. I mean, you've seen some guys who are just absolutely insane with PCP or angel dust or something and they're just they're massively overtaking cops or whatever. You've seen that. Seven guys, though? Right? The exponential of power to overcome someone just by adding another guy is just huge. So this is like an extraordinary supernatural expression of rage and power.

It's like the demoniac of the Gadarenes who lived among the tombs, who they tried to bind in shackles, and he broke them. I mean, you put him in shackles thinking, okay, this isn't just like twine I'm putting him in. I know this can hold a human man, but it doesn't. Because in the case of someone who is a demoniac, who has this kind of demon-caused passivity to try and define the biblical word, they are now being utilized as a vessel for this spirit. And this spirit is exercising remarkable power. And in this case, he takes on seven guys at one time. So much so that they get black eyes and they're cut and they're gouged and they're scratched and all their clothes are off of them. So this is an embarrassing moment for dad and sons. They leave the house naked and wounded.

Verse 17, "And this became known to all the residents of Ephesus," you can imagine, "both Jews and Greeks. And fear fell upon them all." Why? Because here you had someone trying to appropriate the name of Christ and when that happened and the story was told as the seven sons went out and gave their testimony about what happened in this. They go do not mess with that name. Do not try to say that name. Don't try to enlist that name. Don't try to appropriate that power, because you can't. This power is not something you can control. The name of Christ, the authority of Christ, you can't mess with that.

So now they're going every day and hearing about Paul preaching in the Hall of Tirana, as we saw last week, and he's preaching about Christ and he's doing miracles and all of that's going on and they're going like, "Wow, this is unique." It's going to lead into the next passage where they're really concerned about losing all their income because if this deity that Paul is talking about is more powerful than Artemis, than Diana, the great god of the Ephesians, well, then you can put us all out of business.

So this is a big, big deal. And the immediate reaction before they talk about, well, it's affecting my pocketbook, we got a riot. Now they're just everyone's like, wow, don't mess with the God, the deity of the apostle Paul. And so what did they do? Many of them turning to Christ. Many of them even just respecting, I think, as a human being, thinking, wow, you got to respect the power of that. "The name of the Lord Jesus was extolled." That's a great word - spoken of in a unique category. Highly spoken. It is a big deal.

Verse 18. "Also many of those who are now believers," they put their trust in Christ, they "came confessing and divulging their practices." What were they doing? "A number of those who had practiced," verse 19, "magic arts brought their books together and burned them." Wow. Think about that. They put them in a pile and burn them all "in the sight of all. And they counted the value of them and found it came to about 50,000 pieces of silver." They started estimating, like, "What does this cost? Look at all those scrolls. Those are expensive and expensive to make and expensive to buy and they're expensive... Wow, this is a lot of



money." Was it the drachma or whatever it is? Silver pieces of... It was a lot of money. The point is, this is a very expensive book burning they've got going on here.

Why? Because they thought we have dabbled in something that we should not be dabbling in. There's only one King, one Lord, one God, one authority, one dominion, and all this other stuff that we've been messing with, we should be done with all that. In the summary statement, verse 20, "So the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail," here's a strong word of power, "mightily." That's the point. The word increased and prevailed mightily. The word that Paul was preaching is the whole point of the miracles in the first place.

And then this little showdown in the town that's all about spirits has been proved by this one scene, at least in this one scene, that Christ that Paul was teaching is really the King of kings and Lord of lords. And they all said, wow, that's an important thing. We ought to fear the one he's talking about. And then as Paul preached, his word was prevailing. People were submitting to it. They're going we ought to listen to what he says, which is the whole point of the miracles in the first place. Listen to what he says. And so it prevailed. This is a good passage. Weird, albeit weird. It's a weird passage.

But I just need to at least in the first few verses, verses 13 through 16, when we see this strange thing happen about one guy who's demonized jumping on seven sons who are trying to appropriate the name of Christ, you should at least say this: "Okay, I get it." That's not something I read in the Orange County Register this week in Anaheim. I get that. I don't know about that happening here, but you do need to know that the reality of what God does in proving something to a group of people that are enamored with the spiritual does not in any way negate the fact that the spiritual is a reality we all ought to be aware of. And we as mature and wise believers, which is the title of this series, we ought to grow, at least in our certainty about the reality of this realm.

So put this down, if you would then I'll try to prove it. Number one, "Be Certain of Spiritual Realities." Let's start there. Be certain of spiritual realities. Here's what I'm saying. I don't want you now to say, "Well, let's just try and find examples of this. Maybe not in Anaheim, maybe in Santa Ana, though. Maybe we can find a place where this happened. I got to research this." Listen, you can go to other countries and some of you have been in a lot of places. I've been in a fair amount of places. I've seen a lot of things in other cultures where the interest in the spiritual world is much different than it is here. But I want to get you down to understand what the reality is by just talking about the basics, the ontological basis of this whole thing.

Let's start with this. We live in a culture that's very naturalistic. We want natural facts, science, cells, stuff that we can see and touch and smell and taste. That's the stuff we believe in. In a culture like that, where everyone's got an iPhone in their back pocket, I just want to ask you this. How many people in our culture believe in God? The stats are still at like 90% and some polls are even higher. So you got this very naturalistic, very empirical culture. And they're still believing in God. Let me just ask you this. What is God? I just want you to think about that for a second.



God, this invisible spirit that lives, I don't know, somewhere in a place called heaven, wherever that is. And he kind of is the architect of the world and kind of got it going or started it or BAM, created it in six days. Whatever, there's a God. And if my kid's in a car accident and in ICU, I'm going to pray to this God and talk to this God. I just want to let you know that even though in our culture we try to suppress everything spiritual, everything is empirical, everything is under a microscope that we can analyze in a lab and a blood test. You just need to know we still got a culture where people go, "Well, I believe in this invisible spirit out there somewhere."

And if I ask you, why do people believe in this invisible spirit out there? I'm going to say, because "they is one," right? They are an invisible spirit. "Oh, I'm not invisible. I looked in the mirror. I'm there." No, your body is there. You understand that. The reason we intuitively have a hard time suppressing the knowledge of a God who exists as a spiritual, invisible reality is because we are an invisible spiritual reality that happens to be encased or enmeshed and contained presently in a physical body. And the way to kind of dramatically illustrate that is to look at a living body and a dead body and go what's the difference here? The difference in Scripture is that the spirit leaves the body. Now we have a dead body.

The reality of animating a material thing is what happens in Genesis Chapter 2 when the Bible says God creates man, his body, out of the dust of the earth, and then he breathes into him the breath of life. The word breath, spirit. He gives him spirit. And the spirit, the invisible spirit animates the material body, and then the body goes around doing what it does. Now, we as encased in material things, we are affected by material things. We are, as some theologians say, a psycho (spirit), somatic, soma (body), whole. We are integrated into this thing and we move around and we talk and we see and we perceive things in the natural world, but we are not the material thing that we live in.

We're enmeshed in that and that's a part of our humanity because we're made to live in these things. But in reality, as I've often said, and you can read about the cells in our body regenerating all at different rates and depending on what part of your body you're talking about, your cells can be one year old, five years old, seven years old. But not many of them, your whole body is going to regenerate itself to a place where every like decade at least new cells are everywhere. You are a whole new physical reality. And the point is you're still the same person and you intuitively know that.

And most of us, without suppressing the truth of a God who exists, we believe in this invisible spirit out there somewhere. And I'm talking not hopefully to Christians who have good theology about that, but even your neighbors. And so we are spirit. And we just intuitively recognize that there must be a spirit out there. The chief spirit, the head spirit, the creator spirit, the transcendent spirit. And then we start reading the Bible, which is punctuated with all these proofs that God wrote this thing with predicted prophecy, coming with the miraculous bang that it does, to the unity of the text, all those things. And we say, oh, every author in the Scripture, certainly in the New Testament, every author in the New Testament talks about angelic beings. All throughout the Old Testament, angelic beings, angelic beings, angelic beings.





So there's a whole another set of spirit beings, unlike the spirit being that created everything and the spirit beings that we are enmeshed in material stuff. And they exist out there and we call them, generally speaking, as a category, angelic beings. They don't have bodies. They don't live in bodies. They're not made to live in bodies, just like God's not made to live in a body. But then the Johnny-come-lately in God's creative work is us. And they were all there, according to the book of Job. The angels were all watching all this go down. And we learned rather quickly there's a group of them that have rebelled against God, and they have, in their rebellion, turned against everything that God is for.

So then we have what seems to us this battle of good and evil, and even non-Christians recognize something about that. But what we're saying is there is this realm that exists that then interacts with the realm in which we live in. Now, some of them obediently, which is very rare, usually for revelatory purposes in the Old Testament and in the New, bringing revelation to human beings. And they're very orderly and very obedient. They're called the elect angels. That's what Paul calls them.

Now there's a whole other group you know of, and they're called angels, matter of fact, Jesus calls them the devil and his angels. They are his angels. But we use another word for them, the demons. And the demons they have rebelled against the angels. And here's a good phrase from Jude. "They have left their proper dwelling," their domain. They've left their proper nature in the sense of where they should be functioning, their realm. And they start to interact, starting in Genesis 3 with the material world. Matter of fact, we have the chief angel take upon himself with the very first two human beings and say, "I'm going to deal with this and I'm going to embody in part of this creation and I'm going to tempt these two to do what we've done and what I've done with all the rest of these angels of mine. I've caused them to rebel."

So he comes on the scene as the tempter, and in the garden he tempts them. "And instead of you being faithful to the God who created you, I want you to rebel like we've rebelled." And so out of their proper domain, even though it is a domain that has been prescribed, we understand that God has decreed to allow it, just like he says in the book of Job, they are supposed to stay in a particular domain, but they don't. They interact and engage with this domain. And in doing that we recognize that God is allowing that on a leash, as we see in Job Chapters 1 and 2, only so far as God allows it, they start doing things in this material realm. And this is the problem that we have throughout the Scripture of the mess and the chaos of what demons are engaged in.

And if you start looking in Scripture to try and understand how this works, you'll see it works everywhere in this realm that we live in, this human realm, in all kinds of things that are moving us in a direction of rebellion against God. That's the whole point. Matter of fact, there are a couple of verses that may help you with this. How about John Chapter 8 verse 44? John 8:44, when Jesus says, you need to know about this enemy of mine, right? He's not an equal. He's a created being, but "he is a murderer." He wants to kill what is good, what is living. And these are words, of course, that relate to what human flourishing and human potential. All that God means for human beings to relate to God, to exercise dominion in a proper way, in a godly way. They're always trying to kill all of that.



And then the method, he says, is lies. He is a liar. He's been lying from the beginning. When he lies, he speaks his native language. You remember this verse Sunday school grads, right? John 8:44. To summarize into one small phrase how about this, John 10:10, later Jesus says this: "He's the good shepherd." Follow me, hear my voice, follow me. But here's what he says. There's this enemy out there, right? "And he comes the thief to kill and steal and destroy." So he's always about that. And he's trying to do that always. And here's the deal. He's dabbling in a domain that he's not supposed to be in, that God allows him into certain degrees to where you can read about Job, where Satan is like, I want Job to rebel like I rebel. How are we going to do that? Well, let's have financial collapse. And he engages in the Sabeans coming and stealing all of his stuff. And then he motivates all kinds of problems, the death of his children. Then he motivates the sickness of Job later in Chapter 2, and he's sick.

So these things are just normal. If Job went to a doctor, would a doctor, you know, put the stethoscope and go, "Oh, you got a demon"? No, he would say, "You're sick." He could take a blood test if you lived in the modern era and say, "Well, here's your problem." But we know the Bible says, no, Satan is engaging in the domain to make that happen. "Well, that's ancient stuff." Paul, you know this Second Corinthians Chapter 12, he's got a thorn in the flesh. Do you know what he calls it? "A messenger of," the virus. No, what does he say? "messenger of Satan." Right? It might be something you can see under a microscope, but it doesn't mean that the purpose and the driver behind it wasn't spiritual.

Matter of fact, Paul writes to his pastor, Timothy, his understudy who ends up taking over this church in Ephesus and he is talking about spiritual things. Here's what he says. He says there are some among you in your church who have fallen into the snare of the enemy, of Satan, and they've been "captured to do his will" in your church. That's what's going on. Who's doing that? I mean, I have problem people in this church, not you, not from this service, other services. (audience laughs)

And the Bible would have me say, put on the glasses to understand this to quote Ephesians Chapter 6 verse 12, "I don't wrestle against flesh and blood." Now I do, because they're willing participants. But here's the deal. I know what's behind it. There's something behind it. "I wrestle against cosmic forces of evil." Now, I got to deal with it with conversations and confrontation and dealing with..., but I'm dealing with people but behind the people are the problems of the demonic forces to try and get me off the path, either discourage me or have me change course from what's righteous or do whatever. And in this text that Paul's writing to Timothy, he goes you just need to know that some people in your church are "ensnared by the enemy to do his will."

Paul says, "I got an illness and ultimately I know this is a messenger of Satan." It doesn't mean they go to the doctor and they can see that it's not medical. It's medical. But they've left their proper domain to do this stuff. Which, by the way, if you hear me repeating that and you think, well, that's about Genesis 6. I think it's way more than Genesis 6. Matter of fact, I don't want to talk about Genesis 6 right now. But I want to say the reality of what we see is that Satan is engaging in stuff in this world. And you and I need to know that we're not wrestling against flesh and blood alone. Of course we do. Someone mugs you, you know, after the



service is over on the patio. I hope not here, but let's just say that happened, right? You're dealing with something that's trying to damage and destroy and trying to prevent human flourishing in your life. You just know that's Satan's domain. That's what he does. That's his thing.

Now, if you're in Ephesus, I know how he's going to do that. Everyone's interested in the spiritual realm. So it's going to happen in the spiritual realm. But if it's not a high priest, this, you know, headaddress that you see, you know, where your solutions might be and the forces might be that you want to manipulate, it might be a blue trading coat in the financial district on the trading floor at Wall Street. "Well, that's my thing." Great. It could be a doctor, it could be a lawyer. It could be someone I'm going to as a business consultant and you're saying here's where the solution is found. Because that's all that Satan wants is for you to be transferred in your thinking to something other than following the Good Shepherd.

Let me put it this way. When it comes down to it and you think about all that Satan is trying to do is trying to pull you into what the Bible would call idolatry. And here's how idolatry works. Two words you used all the time, or at least at church you talk about it, you read it in your Bibles, Savior and Lord. Familiar with those words? Yeah. Who's the Savior and Lord? Jesus is the Savior. Jesus is my Savior and Lord, you say. Oh, fantastic, that's great. Right? But here's the deal. Is he really? Not just in terms of I got my ticket to the spiritual Disneyland in the sky, I'm going to heaven one day. But is he really the one you rely on and trust in?

Because here's the deal. If you need some help, your grandma has got some terrible disease and you go, I need salvation from this thing. This small "s" salvation. Where do we go? Where do we put our trust? Satan's going here, here, here, here, here, come here. And once you have a savior in a particular area of life, you lost your job, how can you get a job? My business is tanking, how can I get a consultant? My finances aren't going to be what I think they should be to sustain my mortgage when I retire, I need a financial advisor. I'm sick, I feel bad, I need a physician. I have a business problem, a legal problem, I need a lawyer. I'm not saying those things are bad. I'm just saying this: Satan is going, "come back here to get saved, saved, saved, saved, saved. And that savior, the repeated savior, becomes your Lord, becomes the thing I trust in. You're in charge. I know this is where my confidence lies. That's just a shift in this whole thing that we need to be careful about. And Satan is always trying to get you there. Anywhere but Christ.

Which, by the way, is another way to think of this. You want to know the spiritual realities of this life, not just ontologically who you are and who you innately seek, but, if you had a bunch of quarters in your pocket, you could turn them and twist them and jingle them in your pocket, and they would go any which way, sometimes heads to head, tail to tail, head to tail. They would be just anyway you want. But if it was a pocket full of washer-sized magnets, how would those work? Differently? Differently. Right?

Matter of fact, you know, hopefully you played, I don't know, probably dangerous maybe even affected my mind, playing with magnets as kids. I would play with magnets now as an adult. But, you know, magnets, you turn magnets if their poles are opposing and you try to force them together, what happens? If it's a flat washer magnet and you put them in your pocket,



they would immediately flip to the side and they would hold together. And if you took them apart, which depending on the magnet, how strong they are, and you pry them apart and you try to turn them to the other side, what happens? No way.

Here's the invisible reality when it comes to the voice of Christ. Right? Which is codified now in a written text. It's called the Bible. The world will applaud you because of the spiritual battle we face of cosmic forces in invisible realms, in the heavenly realms, that are constantly fighting to get people off the path like they were in Genesis 3, just like they are in John 10. The Good Shepherd is saying, "Hey, here I am. Follow my voice." You could go to work tomorrow and you could tell them you're into ANYTHING and you could probably get people applauding, maybe with a raised eyebrow but, "Oh, good, good, good for you." Go and tell them I am an absolute, I'm a literalist, I believe in the Bible. I'm a Bible-believing Christian, man. Go tell them that. See how that goes.

Here's the deal. One of the ways you can see the spiritual realm at work, the battle, is that anything works for our culture. They will swallow anything and applaud anything except biblical Christianity. Right? You think that through. You could go on and say you're a Muslim. You want to talk about, "Well, you know, you can talk about all these nice verses in the Bible but the Koran, it seems harsh and all this jihad stuff." It doesn't matter. Right? There'd be people who would be, "Oh, no. Okay, good, good. What mosque are you going to?" I mean, it would be a different experience than the culture hearing about your fundamentalist views of Christianity and buying whatever the Bible says about marriage or ethics or sex or whatever it might be. We live in a world where there's a spiritual battle.

You can see it everywhere and in Ephesus if what you need is some trinket or some amulet, great. Satan would go, "Great, come and get it." But if it's some guy in a \$3,000 suit trying to sell you a portfolio of stuff and you think that's where your salvation is found, you will be okay, you'll be secure if you just follow that, Satan will sell you that. Whatever it is he wants to get your trust off the one who says, "Hear my voice and follow me." That's the key and the spiritual battle that exists, the more mature you get, the more wise you get in Christ, the more you're just aware of it and you're certain of it. That's the first thing I want to say.

When it comes to this stuff you think, "Well, I don't think this is going on." Oh, it's going on. The manifestation of it really depends on the cultural appetite. And we happen to have a cultural appetite that probably you're not stopping in at the fortune teller, even though there are a few left here in South Orange County, you're probably not stopping in there. But if the culture was all about that, as it is in some places, the shamans of South Korea, you would, I mean, Satan's going to get you however he can. And all I'm telling you is be careful about where you seek to find your salvation, because you'll find your lord at the end of that. It's called idolatry.

Are we still in Acts? Let's look at verses 17 and 20. "This became known," that this is not to be trifled with here. This Christ, you can't just enlist him. He's not one of the pantheon of gods. He's the God of gods, the King of kings. "It became known, they feared, Jews and Greeks and the name of the Lord was extolled," it was set apart. It was in a category by itself. Verse 20. "So the word of the Lord," after they burned their books and everything, "continued



to increase and prevail mightily." Just some restatement of the advance of the word of God. Did you follow all that? That's a good positive statement.

And it's a positive statement because you can think about Paul in the Hall of Tirana speaking and preaching about Christ and Christianity and redemption in Christ and the resurrection and all those things, and you think, okay, that is not just another deity in Ephesus. This is THE answer. This is the Daniel 7 son of man to him, all dominion, all power, all glory, all might should be under subjection to this one, "one like the son of man," this Christ that we're preaching. That is how mature and wise people think about all the spiritual battles, they think about that under the Lordship of Christ.

Number two, let's put it this way, they "Think and Speak about Christ's Dominion." They think and they speak about Christ's dominion. I would challenge you to think more often and speak more often about Christ's dominion. I've already quoted Philippians 2, but let me quote it again. After the subjection and humiliation of Christ to crucifixion, even the ignoble, shameful naked crucifixion on the cross, after that, God "highly exalted him and gave him a name," an authority, "above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth." Every. Every single spirit, "every single person ever made will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God, the Father." He's the boss, he's the King. That's a very important word. So as Jesus, by the way, they use the word Jesus. Jesus means Savior, Yeshua, right?

So Jesus is Savior and Lord. And if you understand that as a Christian, you will not be intimidated by all the rival powers seeking attention. You will say, "I know these things can be scary. I can see people buying this hook, line and sinker, whether in our day or our culture, it's this, that or the other, or whether in an animistic culture or a spiritualistic culture, it's this, that or the other. But I know this. There's a shepherd. He's the good shepherd. He's in charge of my soul. I'm following him because one day every single power will bow."

If you go in and announce tomorrow at work, "I am a follower of Jesus Christ. I do what he says. The word of God is his word. It's been authoritatively confirmed and certified by predictive prophecy. I follow it. And whatever it says about sexuality or gender or marriage, I affirm that 100%." You go tell them that and everyone that mocks you, everyone that opposes you, everyone that's hostile toward you, every single spirit, every single one of those contained in material stuff or every demon that's going to put his crosshairs on your forehead, is going to one day bow. That's a picture, right? The Old Testament word of worship, to bow down. They're going to give a subservient deference to Christ and they're going to confess. They're going to freely admit he's the Lord. It doesn't mean they will be saved, but that's called vindication.

And so for me to think and to speak about Christ's dominion, where he one day will come and assume a position of authority and everyone will recognize it, even the demons, everyone, every human being who arrogantly sits and pontificates against Christianity is going to bow down with their forehead scraping the ground and they're saying, "Jesus is Lord." Every person on TV, every podcaster, everyone you know, saying he is the Lord, he's in charge. You might as well get on that train now as a Christian and say I got to think about that. I've got





to contemplate that. I got to put my mind on things above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God, and I need to anticipate its coming. "For one day the kingdoms of this world are going to become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ," and who will be established on a throne and everyone will be subservient to him. We might as well think about that.

And what does that do with my fear about demons or whatever, demonized people or attacks or people in my church who are held captive by Satan to do his will? It puts all of that in perspective. It takes it all down to a place where I go, okay, I realize this, the solution is the same. Because even after these services, I talk to people and they say, "Well, I think it was this and I was involved in that and I had a poltergeist here, and I think I had a demoniac over there." And they want to know, "well, what do I do and how do I do it?" And I'm like, the answer's the same. Listen to the sermon. The answer is the same every single time, right? It's about Christ, it's about him and following what he says, doing what the Good Shepherd tells us to do.

And by the way, I don't care how powerful you think you might be. I might as well quote Jude here, verse 8, I think it's verses 8 and 9, where Michael the archangel and this is a weird passage and I'll need another time to explain, is disputing with Satan over the body of Moses. And instead of being like the people that Jude is trying to point out and Second Peter is as well, the people who are trying to order people by their oath to do this or that or command spirits, he said, Michael the Archangel didn't do that. He simply said this: "The Lord rebuke you." Now, if the most powerful angel that we know of, Michael the archangel, is willing to in that situation, say, what I need is to defer to God, continue to serve God, worship God and do what he says, which in this case is get the body of Moses. Do what he says, pursue him in respect and fear of the great God who is. And if something is opposing, I pray for God to deal with that. And that's what he does.

The answer is the same every time. Do I pray about a crisis? Yes. Do I pray about a sickness? Yes. Do I pray about financial collapse? Yes. Do I pray about a legal dispute and someone suing me? Yes. I pray about all those things. But in the end, I know this: the Christ who I'm praying to every day when things aren't going bad is the same Christ I pray to today. My prayer requests look different, but I realize everything is subservient to him and one day he'll exercise his power. He'll take his great power and begin to reign. So everything going to be okay in the end. I trust that, I know that, I'm his child. The sheep and the thieves will come in and try and mess this up. But I'm going to stay focused on the voice of the shepherd and I'm going to follow him. His voice is now codified in the word, the power of Christ in getting this done.

One passage on this, if I can turn you there, Luke Chapter 4. In Luke Chapter 4, Jesus encounters a demon and instead of going to some prescribed incantation or even invoking God's name like the great high priest did, when he says, you know, "I adjure you by the living God." Jesus does none of that. He speaks as the godman who's been given all authority and one day will take that authority and begin to reign over all spirits. He reigns over this one spirit in this passage in his hometown of Capernaum. It's his base of operations, not his home hometown.



But in this Galilean ministry in verse 31, Luke 4:31, "He went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee. And he was teaching them on the Sabbath, and they were astonished at his teaching, for his word possessed authority," which is the whole point of all of this. "Hear his voice and follow him." That's not sitting on a cliff and then pondering your navel and thinking about how you feel about God. It's reading his word, it's interpreting his word rightly and doing what it says, the authority of the word. That's the point. It hadn't been written here, the New Testament part at least. But he's teaching and his word, this is right, this is wrong. This is black, this is white. This is how it ought to be done, this is how it's not to be done. Authority.

"And in the synagogue there was a man who had a spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice, "Ha! What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are -- the Holy One of God." Now this is Luke 4 and in all the ministry of Christ he was holding back a lot of this revelation because even when they started to get glimpses of who he was, they tried to take him by force and make him king. They were concerned about the geopolitics of Jerusalem. They wanted to do things with Christ when they learned who he was. So he was meted this out in a pattern here. So with the demon coming in and going, "ha," whatever that means. Right? His expletive about who is encountering here, the one who created him, he starts exposing who he is and Jesus wants him to shut up.

So he says in verse 35, "Jesus rebuked him, saying," here is the incantation of the Ode of Solomon. No. In the name of the living God. No. He simply says what he wants done, "be silent and come out of him! And when the demon had thrown him down in the midst, he came out of him," the demon did, came out of the person, "having done him no harm." He dusts himself off. But wow, that was weird.

Verse 36. "And they were all amazed and they said to one another," this is interesting, "'What is this word?'" What is this word? What are they looking for? What are even the Jewish itinerant exorcists looking for? What's the word that he used? How did that happen? What was the incantation? What was the spell? What did he enlist? What is this word? And they're thinking because there is no word. It's a rhetorical statement. There was no word. "'For with authority and power he commands unclean spirits,'" and they just obey them, "'they come out!' And reports about him went into every place into the surrounding region." And what is the point? The point is the word.

Listen to me preach in the synagogue, Jesus says, and he commands this demon and he comes out because he has inherent authority. I'm just saying I'm going to pray to that person every day. I'm going to submit to that person. I'm going to do what that person says every day because everything and everyone is subject to him. And in the end, I know I will be vindicated and it'll be good to be a part of his good little flock, because that good little flock he's pleased to give us the kingdom and he's going to usher us into his place of regent oversight, the kingdom of God. You need to think and speak about that more often. This is the Christ we serve. And they were all about that in verse 17 and verse 20 of Acts Chapter 19. "They extolled the name of the Lord," and "the word of the Lord prevailed mightily."



Now, there are two verses left here in this passage with 2 minutes to go. Verse 18. "And many of those who are now believers came, confessing and divulging their practices." What were they practicing? "A number of those who practice the magic arts they brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. They counted the value of them and it came to be about 50,000 pieces of silver." Expensive.

Now you won't want to invite me over after this. But if I go to your house, I'm just drawn when you give me the house tour and you show me your study, I go in there and I look at that place and I always look at your bookshelf. And I can't help it. I'm just a book guy. I look at your books. And a lot of times I'm like, "Ah, man, these are great books," and a lot of times I can't say that. So if I'm silently looking at your bookshelf or whatever, like, "Oh..." And it's not just the bad theology books I might see, the Joel Osteen books or, you know, whatever. Ruth Myers, you got all that. I mean, I might even grab those and confiscate them. (audience laughs)

But once we get past all your religious books, which many of them, I hope, come through the Focal Point, we send you a good book every month. Thank you. Two of you get those. (audience laughs) I start looking at the rest of your books. I can tell a lot about you by the books you got on your shelf, right? And again, it's not bad. Is it bad to reach some nice "Success for Life in Business in the 21st Century" by, you know, Cal McDougall, you know, "The Almighty"? It's like, it's not bad I suppose to read that. But when I see book after book after book, if you're like your stuff I'm thinking, okay, wait, wait a minute. I want to make sure that you haven't transferred your trust to these things. And I don't want to haul around like a mini hibachi to burn your books. (audience laughs) But sometimes I'm tempted. And I think there are books here that probably I just, and here's what I think and I can't say more, but recently I thought, how many hours have you stood there reading these books? And where do they take you? Where do they take your heart and your trust and your confidence?

Is it wrong to read a book on how to overcome your diverticulitis or whatever? No. Fine. Read it. Right? Or to be a better salesman at work? Fine. That's great. Or how to save for retirement? Fine. Read your book. Read your book. What I don't want is for you to transfer your trust. I need you to dissuade yourself and everyone else from reliance on lesser powers, because all of those things are lesser powers than the one who says, "I promise you I'll take care of you. I promise you I'm going to be your solution."

Number three if you didn't catch that "Dissuade Reliance on Lesser Powers," and that's the deal. You have to in your life be sure that you are not like David first trusting God when you have a slingshot in your hand, but then when you have a standing army, you got to go, "Go count them, go count them, go count them. I need to make sure I got enough." God really dealt severely with David for counting the troops. Do you remember that? Here was David who said, "I trust in the name of the Lord Almighty." Psalm 20 says that. I don't trust in men, "I don't trust in chariots, I don't trust in horses," we trust in the name of the Lord.

Well, you better make sure you do when you're reading your books. You better make sure that you do when you have these things that you do in these seminars you go to and these things... If your heart starts to trust in that, that's called idolatry, because that becomes your



savior and eventually becomes your lord, and God will have no rival gods. Are you following me on this? This is subtle and you got to sort this out. I'm not against you reading books. I just want you to make sure that what you're doing is not allowing anything to pull you off the path of keeping your focus where it belongs.

One passage on this because there are a lot of idols in our day, but this is one in particular that really covers a lot of other ones. First Timothy Chapter 6. Go to the bottom of this little epistle that Paul writes back to the Ephesian church ultimately to do with our pastor, Pastor Timothy. And he says this about people who have stuff. When you have stuff, that's the problem. As Jesus said, "It's hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God," because the more you have the harder it is for you to divest yourself from the trust in those things. But you had better. And here's a passage that deals with the trusting in lesser powers and certainly your desire for riches. When I see eight books about you wanting to be a rich person, I think, "Oh man, we got a problem." Verse 17. I'm getting no more invites to people's homes. (audience laughs) Or at least you'll forego the house tour. Or you'll clean your bookshelf up before I get there.

Verse 17. "As for the rich," this is First Timothy 6:17. "As for the rich in this present age," get rid of all your money because you shouldn't have any, underline that part. Do you see that? No, no, no. Here's what you need to get charged. That's a strong word. "Charge them not to be haughty," to get your nose out of the sky. Don't sit around and think you're better than everyone else because you have more money. You're not. God can readjust his resources however he wants. He just happened to put a bunch in your lap. Good for you. That's great. And I am glad for you.

But here's the challenge. Do not "set your hopes on the uncertainty of riches," whether that's family or whether that's patriotism or whether that's your business or your career or whether it's your athletic prowess or whatever it is that you have been endowed with. Praise God for that. That's great. But you don't set your hopes on it. You don't trust in that. But you want to dissuade any reliance on any other power that you might be encountering in some good asset in your life. That's uncertain, but you ought to set it on God. As a matter of fact, he's the one that gave you that athletic ability. He's the one that gave you that business acumen. He's the one that gave you that family. He's the one that gave you kids who didn't go crazy. Right? You set your trust on God who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. He's the source of it all in the first place.

So what should I do? Why I should "seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness." His righteousness is going to be things like this. Verse 18. Do good. Hey, rich guy, be good at being rich in good works. Be generous with your stuff, be ready to share it. If you start doing those things because you show that you don't trust in what God has given you, you don't trust in the success you've had or whatever it might be that you're leaning on. Stop leaning on it. Lean on Christ. Lean on God. Say I'm going to instead keep doing these things and the Bible says, "You'll be storing up treasure for yourself as a good foundation for the future, that they may take hold of that which is truly life." And though I think this is over the fence line of this life looking on to eternity, it certainly applies everything up to the fence line. Trust me.



You become a generous person where you don't trust in your troops. David would have been much better at the end of his life if he sat back and go, "Yeah, we've got a great army. But you know what? Great army, small army, ridiculous army, bad shooters, whatever. God is my hope." Had he stuck with that, he wouldn't have ended the way he did with that terrible plague upon Jerusalem. I'm just saying we need to keep our hope where it belongs. How are your finances doing? It doesn't really matter. How are things going in your business? In the end it doesn't matter. In the end it really doesn't. All I'm saying is when you have that stuff, you just need to make sure whatever it is that is working for you, your prescriptions, your new doctor, your new cancer treatment, whatever it is, do not set your hope on that. Right? We say there's only one God. He has dominion over all things and he is the source of everything that is good. Every other antagonistic force, every evil spirit, I'm not afraid of that. I trust in God.

Now, here are two problems with anybody in a spiritual battle or any battle at all. Number one, that you don't know that there's a battle going on. That's a recipe for failure. If you're in a warfare, as it says in Ephesians 6, and I'll just cut you loose on that in our small groups and you think about the fact that we don't wrestle against flesh and blood, we're wrestling against spiritual forces. And then he says, "Put on the armor of God." He talks about "extinguishing the flaming arrows of the evil one." If you don't know there are arrows of the evil one, you're definitely a vulnerable person. So I preach a sermon like this to people who think they're a million miles from Ephesus. They think, "There's no spiritual reality out there." I hope you know there is. Not just the God you pray to, but this whole intermediate realm.

So you got to know that there's a battle going on and you need to be prepped for it knowing you're in a battle. You should know that it was sober thinking that there's an enemy that's "prowling around like a roaring lion seeking someone to attack." And if this sermon can help people who don't think that way to think that way, then we've done some good here this morning.

But there's another problem. Problem number one, being ignorant that there's a battle. Another problem is being, you know, wearing the uniform and you come to the mess hall between skirmishes and battles and campaigns to go out, and you go there and you think, well, the cook is trying to poison me, and this guy, I'm sitting next to you is probably going to put a dagger in my back. And there are probably microphones at the mess hall here listening to everything I say. Listen, you can know you're in a battle and then think that there's a demon under every bush and every single thing that happens... You got a splinter. "Oh man, Satan is attacking me," right? You've got to be careful that you don't become paralyzed with some kind of focus of I got to find the spiritual angle on this.

You've got to realize we're in a battle. So wake up. If you're on this side, you got to wake up to the battle. If you're over here going, "Well, I'm already there, man. I'm already freaked out about everything because there's a demon under my bed." Here's the deal. Slow down and realize the answer, no matter what you think might be going on, is to focus on the Good Shepherd, to hear his voice. He sent apostles and prophets, Ephesians 2:20, and he's given us a book that's come out of that. It's called the New Testament and it's predicated on the Old Testament. He's given us that through the prophets of the Old Testament. Study it, know it, read it, be enriched by it.





Go back to Psalm 119 and see what this does for us. It makes us strong, it puts us spiritually in the place we should be. Go to Psalm 19, the second half of that psalm, and remind us how we are empowered by having the "word of Christ richly dwelling in us," to conflate Colossians to that concept. We need to be all about his word. We got to know the Good Shepherd, stay on course and recognize the battle without being obsessed with every little part of what may or may not be a part of the battle.

Let's pray. God, this morning it's good for us to talk about these things if for nothing else to heighten our awareness and clarity about what your word says on these matters. We know we don't live in Ephesus where everyone's obsessed with spiritual things. But God, of course, there are places, missionaries around the world and people who live in various places, that this is the encounter every day, every week of their lives they're dealing with this kind of stuff. I pray we would know that Satan will certainly have a mechanism to do whatever it takes in our culture to tempt us to veer off the path. We'd like to stand with Christ, who in Matthew 4 was tempted by the evil one and responded every time, it is written, it is written. Here's what the word says. So as we read in Ephesians 6, to put on the full armor of God is to believe what you have said, to wield the sword of the word, to do what accurately believing what you have said in your word, and aligning our lives with it by priority and purpose.

And I pray this morning we'd be charged up to live another week like that for you to bring us back together again, to study your word in this great book of Acts next time as we feel like we've had progress and strengthened and we've moved into a greater maturity and greater wisdom in the Christian life because of our study of your word together.

In Jesus name. Amen