

WEEKLY REFLECTION

We've been tracing as a church the movement of the gospel and the Holy Spirit through the book of Acts. We witnessed their movement through Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria—in some ways, they even reached the (then-known) ends of the earth! If your memory of what we've gone through is a little hazy, no worries. Acts 19 will be the perfect refresher for you.

Apart from the movement of the gospel and the Holy Spirit, one of the key themes in the book of Acts is God's power exemplified through His Spirit. We see examples of this in how Paul lays hands on some disciples in Ephesus to receive the gift of the Spirit. (v.6) God also does extraordinary miracles through Paul, so much so that people were taking away handkerchiefs or aprons that had touched his skin to heal the sick and to free the demon-oppressed. (v.11-12)

There may be some reason why God chose to perform such extraordinary miracles in the city of Ephesus, which was a spiritual stronghold where supernatural practices were exceedingly common. However, we must remember that as far-fetched or far-removed from our current context in Hong Kong these examples sound, there are parts of the world where similar practices remain common and ongoing today.

Even if it isn't the supernatural fight between good and evil, can we honestly admit that we have never made gods or idols for ourselves with our own hands? Have we never turned to other things instead of God, or used God to get what we want? For Demetrius the silversmith, it was the silver shrines of Artemis that he made (v.24)—and perhaps it was the unseen idols of wealth and reputation as well. (v.25, 27) For the seven sons of Sceva (v.13-14), it could have been success in their work and livelihood. What is it for you, and are you willing to search your heart, confess these things, and repent and turn to God?

QUESTIONS

QUESTION ONE:

Some of the Ephesians spent a fortune on books about the magic arts, which would have been guides to help them get what they wanted out of life. While it may not be a self-help book, we can do the same with TED talks, podcasts, or Instagram reels that promise to help us navigate life and find success.

What are some examples of the content you consume, to help you "make it" in life? How do these consumption habits line up with your habit of consuming God's Word?

QUESTION TWO:

We talked last week about how Jesus is Lord of all—family, fortune, fame, and fears. We see an example of this in Acts 19 when the gospel compels people to burn their books on magic arts, the combined worth of which is around HKD \$46,909,230 today. It also caused an entire industry (i.e. Demetrius' silver shrines and other similar trades) to collapse.

As we look at our own city of Hong Kong, what are some things we might feel pressured to bow down to? (e.g. wealth, status, specific life or career milestones, certain brand names etc.) What might happen if we choose to forsake all these things for the gospel?

QUESTION THREE:

Take some time now to reflect. Ask God to search your heart and reveal the idols you have sought to replace Him with. Ask Him too what is something you need to confess and repent from this week, so you can return to the simplicity of your first love for Him.