

Monday, 4 September 2017 Acts 19:3-4

And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" They said, "Into John's baptism." And Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus."

Here, in one short passage, the LORD, God, the Almighty's plan for the salvation and restoration of His Creation is laid out for all to see and understand. "Repentance and belief!" The tax collector in Luke 8:10-13 had it right, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!" Repentance is the match that lights the flame of belief. Then the Spirit can and will begin the process that leads to transformation into the image of our Lord (2 Corinthians 3:18)

Tuesday, 5 September 2017 Acts 19:8-10

And he entered the synagogue and for three months spoke boldly, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God. But when some became stubborn and continued in unbelief, speaking evil of the Way before the congregation, he withdrew from them and took the disciples with him, reasoning daily in the hall of Tyrannus. This continued for two years, so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.

Paul was not hasty; he made a concentrated effort to bring the message of grace to the synagogue in Ephesus, but when others made their resistance obvious, he moved on. The fruit of his decision was that all the residents of Asia Minor heard the Gospel.

We need to be willing to move on in similar situations today. Sometimes our message degenerates into a battle of egos. Wrong! Let the Spirit move us to a receptive audience.

Wednesday, 6 September 2017 Acts 19:18-20

Also many of those who were now believers came, confessing and divulging their practices. And a number of those who had practiced magic arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted the value of them and found it came to fifty thousand pieces of silver. So the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily.

A careful reading reveals an important step in the process of

transformation. First belief then the transformation begins. Here in Ephesus, it was a conviction that the practice of magic arts was not pleasing to the Spirit which led to a public display of their faith at work. The Word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily as a result.

Where and what is my act of transformation today? How am I demonstrating that there is a better way? Where am I providing a countercultural voice? Am I providing this voice in a spirit of humility, seeking to serve the lost, the least and the lonely?

Thursday, 7 September 2017 Acts 21:17-24 *When we had come to Jerusalem, the brothers received us gladly. On the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present. After greeting them, he related one by one the things that God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. And when they heard it, they glorified God. And they said to him, "You see, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed. They are all zealous for the law, and they have been told about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or walk according to our customs. What then is to be done? They will certainly hear that you have come. Do therefore what we tell you. We have four men who are under a vow; take these men and purify yourself along with them and pay their expenses, so that they may shave their heads. Thus all will know that there is nothing in what they have been told about you, but that you yourself also live in observance of the law.*

A couple of lessons come out of this. One is that rumors spread. Somewhere someone accused Paul wrongly of teaching a false doctrine and the cancer spread. Be careful, be very careful to teach correctly. The other point that I see in this episode is that all things are part of the LORD, God, the Almighty's plan. The elders proposed a reasonable solution, but as we see later on in the story, v 27, that the well-crafted proposal came to naught and Paul began his trip to Rome.

Friday, 8 September 2017 Acts 21:25

But as for the Gentiles who have believed, we have sent a letter

with our judgment that they should abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality.”

" the Gentiles who have believed" I love that phrase for that's me! Released from the ritual of the Law by the Cross of Christ, yet established in His Kingdom as a child of the King. Hallelujah, "How great is the love the Father has lavished upon us for we are called the children of God" 1 John 3:1

Saturday, 9 September 2017 Acts 22:17-20

“When I had returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, I fell into a trance and saw him saying to me, ‘Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about me.’ And I said, ‘Lord, they themselves know that in one synagogue after another I imprisoned and beat those who believed in you. And when the blood of Stephen your witness was being shed, I myself was standing by and approving and watching over the garments of those who killed him.’

The Jews would not accept either the words they heard from Paul or the transformation of his character. Moreover, they were not willing to allow themselves to question if the transformation existed.

No change today, the world finds endless excuses to deny that a transformation of the soul has taken place in an individual. The world accepts every rationalization except the outworking of the Spirit. And sometimes, like Paul, we get sent to another mission field.

Lord's Day, 10 September 2017 Psalm 119:139

My zeal consumes me, because my foes forget your words.

O that my zeal would consume me for I tend to be rather phlegmatic and unemotional. Stir me to zeal, fire me with a passion for You and the preaching of Your word.

VOICES TOGETHER

Daily Meditations from the Scriptures



September 4-10, 2017

Prayer of the week, based on Paul's prayer in: 2 Thessalonians 3:16

Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with all of you.

Lord, may that peace that passes all understanding be the fleece that guides us through our ministries. Our prayer for the [congregation] is that we will always be guided by that infallible lantern, Your peace; that it will be the lamp for our feet and the light for our path. *Amen*

Creational Theology hint for the week—A prayer as we begin our weekly grocery shopping. I praise You God, for this abundance, For this harvest of plenty In green, red, and gold. Bless, O Father, those whose hands picked these. Bless, O Christ, those whose hands arranged these here. Bless, O Spirit, those whose hands and mouths and bodies Will be satisfied by their eating. Anamchara Books. Earth Afire with God: Celtic Prayers for Ordinary Life (Kindle Locations 247-257). Anamchara Books. Kindle Edition.

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