



ACTS

OUT OF JOY / THE CHURCH MULTIPLIES

GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

WEEK 10

LIKE A WILDFIRE (ACTS 18:23-ACTS 23:22)

VERSE FOR MEDITATION

*But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God. **ACTS 20:24***

OPENING THOUGHT

C.S. Lewis' classic series *The Chronicles of Narnia* describes Aslan (God) as "not safe or tame" but "good," and in the land of Narnia, when Aslan is "on the move," things shift drastically, bringing about both life change and opposition. In the book of Acts, the Holy Spirit brings about the same two outcomes. In the city of Ephesus, confession and repentance reach seismic proportions (Acts 19), and as revival changes the economic climate of the city, conflict ensues among the idolaters. After Ephesus, when Paul journeys to Jerusalem preaching the gospel, there is a riot in the temple, and Paul is arrested, as the Jews plot to take his life (Acts 23).

Many of us would prefer to simply read Acts than to actually be part of the story, specifically one of Paul's missionary journeys. The moving of an untamed God makes us uneasy. The sharing of the gospel and the response it stirs makes us unnerved. This is because the Word of the Lord shines light on our own sin and brings reaction from those opposed to the gospel. The believers in Acts wrestle with this tension.

So where do Paul and the other disciples get the courage to endure and trust the Lord in the midst of chaos? It is the gospel of Christ and the Holy Spirit's work in our hearts that resoundingly testifies to God's goodness. Paul often tells the story of his conversion; in fact, he does it once again in chapter 22. For all of us, including Paul, the cross of Christ and the testimony of salvation strengthen us to live faithfully when a gospel-centered life appears unsafe. The cross and our salvation confirm God's goodness, and it is God's goodness that drives us to proclaim His name.

Read Acts 19:8-20 and answer the following questions.

1. In this passage, we see revival and salvation come to the people of Ephesus. Reflect on the Lord's goodness in your own salvation. Do you remember your thoughts about the Lord when you first believed? Share them with your group.
2. When you first believed, did you confess and divulge your darkest sins? Today, is it easier or harder for you to confess your sin? Explain.
3. Look back on verse 20 of Acts 19. Notice that the confession and repentance of the Ephesians is connected to the Word of the Lord increasing and prevailing mightily. Discuss some practical ways your community can grow in strengthening one another in the gospel.

Read Acts 20:17-28 and answer the following questions.

4. Before leaving the church in Ephesus, Paul says, “But I do not count my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.” When you think about counting your life as nothing, what do you think about? What is an area of your life that to be obedient to the Lord, you need to count your life as nothing? What would the implications be for your family, finances, time, friends, enemies, hobbies, etc.?

ACTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Spend time thanking the Lord for His goodness in your personal life and our church's life.
- Pray for the Lord to reveal practical ways you can practice counting your life as nothing.
- Consider how you and your group can be equipped and grow in evangelism.