

Embrace the Fullness

Acts 18:24–28, 19:1–20

Each day, it's important to take your bearings. Where are you today? In the Easter season, in the scriptures, in your daily life, in your very self? Spend a few minutes getting your bearings for the day.

Let's briefly examine where we are in the Book of Acts and then begin our day with a prayer for deliverance—for ourselves, our fraternity brothers, and all Exodus Men.

You are fighting through difficulties. Whenever we set out on mission, there will be many obstacles. We have to remain faithful, no matter the challenge, and look for new ways to witness to Jesus.

Pray that the Lord grants deliverance to you, your family, and your fraternity.

Pray for freedom for all men in Exodus, just as they are praying for you.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created, and you shall renew the face of the earth. O God, who have taught the hearts of the faithful by the light of the Holy Spirit, grant that in the same Spirit we may be truly wise and ever rejoice in his consolation. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

A Reading from the Book of Acts

Now a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent man, well versed in the Scriptures. He had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John. He began to speak boldly in the synagogue; but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him and expounded to him the way of God more accurately. And when he wished to cross to Achaia, the brethren encouraged him, and wrote to the disciples to receive him. When he arrived, he greatly helped those who through grace had believed, for he powerfully confuted the Jews in public, showing by the Scriptures that the Christ was Jesus.

While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the upper country and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples. And he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they said, "No, we have never even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." 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." On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them; and they spoke with tongues

and prophesied. There were about twelve of them in all. And he entered the synagogue and for three months spoke boldly, arguing and pleading about the kingdom of God; but when some were stubborn and disbelieved, speaking evil of the Way before the congregation, he withdrew from them, taking the disciples with him, and argued 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.

And God did extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, so that handkerchiefs or aprons were carried away from his body to the sick, and diseases left them and the evil spirits came out of them. Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists undertook to pronounce the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches." Seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Sceva were doing this. But the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?" And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, mastered all of them, and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. And this became known to all residents of Ephesus, both Jews and Greeks; and fear fell upon them all; and the name of the Lord Jesus was extolled. Many also of those who were now believers came, confessing and divulging their practices. And a number of those who 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 grew and prevailed mightily.

Reflection

You have to admire Apollos. Even though he is a new Christian and very limited in his knowledge, he still shared his faith boldly. You also have to appreciate his willingness to learn more. He doesn't insist on his way of doing things but is willing to be guided by Priscilla and Aquila and the rest of the community.

God has more in mind for all of us; we must be willing to embrace the fullness of his plan for us. This entails continuing to learn, growing in prayer, sacrificing to put God first, and entering more fully into the mission he has given us. We are taking important steps, but we need to continue to embrace the fullness of our faith. Putting this into action is the missing component for so many people.

We certainly will face challenges. Look at the sons of the Jewish priest who confronted demons in the name of Jesus and Paul. We can avoid this kind of disaster by staying within the authority of the Church. Paul had been given authority, just like our bishops and priests. When they exorcise and forgive sins, they do so with the authority that Jesus bestowed on the apostles. Just like Apollos, we need the guidance and direction of the community to support us in the battle. We also need to get rid of the things in our lives that give the devil an open door. Just as the converts burned their books on magic, we must cut any harmful media and practices.

Pray about what needs to go in the fire and turn to your fraternity for

support in making this sacrifice.

Week 5 Action Items

Pray about your mission.

Watch an uplifting movie.

Stay vigilant with technology use.