

God is Moving

New Heroes

World Outreach Church
Sermon Discussion Guide
Sunday Sermon: **April 21, 2024**



God's activity is more evident in recent months and years than at any other time in our lifetimes—and so are the expressions of evil. This means we need to focus more purposefully and intentionally on what God is doing, and not dwell on what the media reports. God is moving, and if we are going to cooperate and participate with Him, we need His perspective. It's the only way we won't get caught up in the news cycle, which has no intention of honoring our Judeo-Christian worldview. One thing we can do is to begin to cultivate new "heroes" instead of holding up celebrities who lead ungodly lives. Cooperating with God and establishing new "heroes" has everything to do with our expressions of belief, faith, and faithfulness.

I. When God Is Moving

A. God Moves in Ephesus

Acts 19:14–16 ¹⁴ Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. ¹⁵ One day the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and I know about Paul, but who are you?" ¹⁶ Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding.

Acts 19:17–20 ¹⁷ When this became known to the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus, they were all seized with fear, and the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honor. ¹⁸ Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed their evil deeds. ¹⁹ A number who had practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly. When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to fifty thousand drachmas. ²⁰ In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.

B. Ephesian Alternatives —A Shaking in Ephesus

Acts 19:23–28 ²³ About that time there arose a great disturbance about the Way. ²⁴ A silversmith named Demetrius, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought in no little business for the craftsmen. ²⁵ He called them together, along with the workmen in related trades, and said: "**Men, you know we receive a good income from this business.**" ²⁶ And you see and hear how this fellow Paul has convinced and led astray large numbers of people here in Ephesus and in practically the whole province of Asia. He says that man-made gods are no gods at all.

²⁷ There is danger not only that our trade will lose its good name, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be discredited, and the goddess herself, who is worshiped throughout the province of Asia and the world, will be robbed of her divine majesty." ²⁸ **When they heard this, they were furious and began shouting: "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"**

***What demonstrations of the power of God are you witnessing in the world today?**

II. Cooperating with God

A. Watch, Listen, Think, & Act (The Importance of Listening)

***Discuss the benefits of listening to God. What behaviors does a good listener exhibit?**

B. New Kind of Heroes

1. Saul's Conversion

God Moves in Damascus

Acts 9:23–27 ²³ After many days had gone by, the Jews conspired to kill him, ²⁴ but Saul learned of their plan. Day and night they kept close watch on the city gates in order to kill him. ²⁵ But his followers took him by night and lowered him in a basket through an opening in the wall. ²⁶ When he came to Jerusalem, **he tried to join the disciples**, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple. ²⁷ But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul on his journey had seen the Lord and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had preached fearlessly in the name of Jesus.

Saul Chooses New Heroes

Acts 9:1–2 ¹ *Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest ² and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem.*

***Who do you think of when you hear the word “hero”? What characteristics should a hero have?**

III. EXPRESSIONS OF BELIEF/FAITH/FAITHFULNESS

A. Unbelief/Unfaithfulness Results in Loss

Hebrews 3:18–19 ¹⁸ *And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed?*

¹⁹ *So we see that **they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief.***

Numbers 14:11 *The Lord said to Moses, “How long will these people treat me with contempt? **How long will they refuse to believe in me, in spite of all the miraculous signs I have performed among them?***

Mark 16:14 *Later Jesus appeared to the Eleven as they were eating; he rebuked them for their lack of faith and **their stubborn refusal to believe** those who had seen him after he had risen.*

Acts 19:9 (Corinth)

But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way.

***What have you learned about faithfulness—yours and God’s—during your life? What are some examples of the fruit you’ve seen from living a faith-filled life?**

B. The Alternative —Encourage One Another

Hebrews 3:12–14 ¹² *See to it, brothers, that none of you has **a sinful, unbelieving heart** that turns away from the living God. ¹³ But **encourage one another daily**, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness. ¹⁴ We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first.*

Why Encouragement?

Matthew 13:20–21 ²⁰ *The one who received the seed that fell on rocky places is the man who **hears the word and at once receives it with joy.** ²¹ But since he has no root, he lasts only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away.*

The Evidence of “Good Soil” – Productive Faith

Matthew 13:23 *But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.”*

***Your prayers matter, and fasting adds emphasis to your prayers. Fast and pray this week for the upcoming *Culture & Christianity Conference*, asking God to move in the lives of people attending, and for Him to reveal Himself and awaken people across our nation and around our world.**

PRAYER

Father, thank You that You're moving in the earth. Thank You that You haven't stepped away or condemned us, but that You have made a way so we might be restored and reconciled to You. We come in humility to repent of any place we have been willingly, purposefully living in compromise or tolerating ungodliness. We will not call good what You have called wicked. We will not bless those things that You have stepped away from. Forgive us, Lord. We ask You to guide us, lead us, and show us where we can cooperate with You more fully and align ourselves with You more completely—where we can take our place in Your purposes as You're moving in this generation. We don't want to be stubborn in our unbelief. We don't want to excuse our unfaithfulness. But we want to cooperate with You, as fully and as completely as we know how. In Jesus' name, amen.