

When God Moves: Are You Ready for What Comes Next?

Acts 19 gives us a vivid picture of what happens when God truly begins to move in a life, a church, or a community. It is not always comfortable, and it is not always what we expect. But it is always powerful.

What Does It Look Like When God Moves?

We often pray for God to move. We ask Him to do great things in our lives and in the lives of people we love. But the real question is not whether God can move. The question is whether we are ready for what that actually looks like.

Acts 19 shows us four things that happen when God moves: a message is shared, miracles happen, men are changed, and mayhem comes from the enemy. Each of these is worth examining closely.

Have You Been Filled with the Holy Spirit?

When Paul arrived in Ephesus, he found a group of disciples who seemed spiritually dry. Something prompted him to ask them a direct question: "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"

Their answer was startling. They had not even heard that there was a Holy Spirit.

Paul explained the difference between John's baptism, which was a preparation for the coming Messiah, and faith in Jesus Christ, who had already come. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of Jesus, Paul laid hands on them, and the Holy Spirit came upon them.

What Is the Baptism of the Holy Spirit?

Jesus described the Holy Spirit's work in three distinct ways. First, the Spirit comes alongside every person to convict them of sin, righteousness, and judgment. Second, when someone accepts Jesus as Savior, the Spirit comes into that person, producing the fruit of the Spirit and securing their relationship with God. Third, Jesus promised in Acts 1:8 that the Spirit would come upon believers with power for witness.

"And you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." - Acts 1:8

That third dimension is what Paul was asking about. The dryness in your walk or the weakness in your witness may be a direct sign that you need to be filled afresh with the Holy Spirit. We leak. We need to be filled daily and ask God to use our lives for His purposes.

What Should the Church Be Focused On?

Paul spent three months in the synagogue reasoning and persuading people about the kingdom of God. When some hardened their hearts, he moved to the school of Tyrannius and continued for two years. The result was remarkable: all of Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus.

Paul carried three things into Ephesus: the power of the Holy Spirit, the plan of God's kingdom, and the person of Jesus Christ. These are the same things the church needs today.

It is easy to get distracted by politics, social issues, and the noise of the day. But the world will never hear about Jesus unless it comes from people who truly know Him. Everything else is secondary. The call is to stay fixated on Jesus Christ and Him crucified, because He is the One who changes lives.

Do Miracles Still Happen Today?

Verse 11 says that God worked unusual and extraordinary miracles through Paul. Sweatbands and work aprons were brought from Paul to the sick, and diseases left and evil spirits went out. These items were simply points of contact for faith to be released, much like the woman who reached for the hem of Jesus' garment or the shadow of Peter that fell on people and brought healing.

This was not a new ministry formula. It was a unique moment, and God was confirming His word through it. The works will always follow the word. God backs up His message with His power.

What Happens When People Try to Use God's Power Without Knowing Him?

Seven sons of a Jewish priest named Sceva tried to cast out demons by invoking the name of Jesus without any personal relationship with Him. The evil Spirit's response is chilling.

"Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are you?" - Acts 19:15

The man with the evil Spirit overpowered all seven of them, and they fled naked and wounded. This is a serious warning. Dabbling in spiritual things, whether tarot cards, Ouija boards, or occult practices, without knowing Jesus Christ is deeply dangerous. You are engaging with something far greater than a game or a gimmick.

But for those who are in Christ, there is real authority. It is not your own power. It is His. Through the authority of God's word and a genuine relationship with Jesus, believers have the power to stand against darkness.

The result of this incident was that fear fell on the whole city and the name of the Lord Jesus was greatly magnified. God used even this to point people to Himself.

What Changes When God Gets a Hold of Someone's Heart?

Verses 18 through 20 describe something remarkable. Many who had believed came forward confessing their deeds. Those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them publicly. The value of what was destroyed totaled 50,000 pieces of silver, roughly equivalent to one million dollars today.

Three things happen when God truly moves in a person's heart.

1. Conviction

What once seemed minor becomes heavy. Sin that was easy to overlook becomes something you cannot ignore. That is the Holy Spirit doing His work, and it is a sign of God's love, not His condemnation.

2. Cleansing

The people of Ephesus did not try to sell their magic books or find a way to profit from them. They burned them. When God sets you free, there is no reason to hold onto what kept you in bondage. Whether it is alcohol, pornography, or anything else that has had a grip on your life, the moment God moves, the right response is to let it go completely.

3. A New Course

Verse 20 says the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed. That growth happened in direct connection to what was burned up. When you let go of what is in the way, God's word and His Spirit grow powerfully in your life.

If you feel distant from God, if worship feels dry, if Bible reading feels like a chore, something may be in the way. God is gentle in how He points it out, but He will point it out because He loves you. And the moment you surrender it, the moment you let it burn, He is ready to do something greater than you can imagine.

"Let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith." - Hebrews 12:1-2

What Can We Expect When God Moves?

To summarize what Acts 19 shows us:

- Believers are empowered by the Spirit to be effective witnesses
- Miracles happen to confirm the word and authority of God
- Sin is owned, surrendered, and left behind
- People are set on a new course in Christ

And one more thing worth noting: the enemy does not sit still when God begins to move. He will try to disrupt, derail, and discourage. That is a topic worth preparing for, but it does not change the call. God is moving, and He is inviting you to be part of it.

Life Application

This week, ask God to show you if there is anything in your life that is standing between you and a deeper walk with Him. It might be a habit, an attitude, a relationship, or something you have been holding onto that you know does not belong. When He shows you, do not wait. Let it go. Surrender it fully, and watch what He does next.

Ask yourself these questions as you reflect:

- Have I truly been filled with the Holy Spirit, and am I asking Him daily to empower my witness?
- Is there something in my life that I know needs to be surrendered but I have been holding onto?
- Am I more fixated on Jesus than on the distractions and noise around me?
- When God moves in my life, am I ready to respond, or do I keep putting it off for later?

God is not looking for perfection. He is looking for surrender. Give Him what is in the way, and trust Him to fill that space with something far greater.