

# VOYAGER

*Experiences That Shape Our Faith*

**About the Series:** Experiences are powerful and can shape our Christian faith. But experiences should not be what defines our faith. Rather, it should serve to strengthen our faith and affirm what we already know to be the facts of our faith as recorded in the Scriptures. In this sermon series, we explore the journeys of Apostle Paul and how encountering life-changing experiences can teach valuable life lessons to voyagers like us who are on a journey called life.

## Part II

### Discerning the Supernatural

Acts 19:1-41 | Dr. Stephen G. Tan

#### DISCUSS

The devil is very crafty. He will use people or mask things to make it look like it is from God to lead many astray. His strategy is to often approach us under the guise of good to get us to embrace his lies. It will require great discernment and wisdom on our part to know what is of God and what is from the Evil One. Acts 19:1-41 records Paul's third missionary journey in Ephesus, the largest and most important commerce city in Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey) and a center of pagan and occult practices. Read and study the passage and discuss these five biblical principles for how to discern what is of God and what is of the Evil One and how followers of Jesus are to respond when faced with the supernatural.

#### **True miracles from God should always point us back to God and His word (v. 1-12)**

- Why didn't Paul focus on the miraculous, the experiential, and the supernatural, but rather placed greater emphasis and importance on the preaching, teaching, and the understanding of God's Word?
- Why did God allow Paul to do some unique and unusual miracles (v.11-12)? How did those miracles authenticate the message that Paul presented?
- From this passage, how can you tell that a miracle is true and not from Satan?
- How would comparing miracles and experiences with God's Word help you to see the differences of the messages people claim come from the divine with the character of God of the Bible and His Divine will?

#### **The spirit realm acknowledges and submits to the authority of Jesus Christ (v. 13-17)**

- Why did some Jewish exorcists use the same words that Paul did in casting out demons? What happened when they did it? Why?
- Why do you think that Satan and the demons acknowledge and submit to the authority of Jesus Christ (James 2:19)?
- Is Satan omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent and eternal like God?
- What should you do so that you can find protection and help against the demonic spiritual realm?
- Why should you not live in fear and worry about curses or whatever enchantments may be placed on you knowingly or unknowingly?

#### **Christians need to rid themselves of demonic things and repent of occultic practices (v. 18-20)**

- What did those in Ephesus, who turned to Jesus by placing their trust in Him, do to get rid of their involvement in occultism and the work of Satan?
- What are some examples of practices today that you should discern are from Satan?
- What was the Lord's clear instruction to His people in Deuteronomy 7:25-26 in getting rid of demonic things and to repent of occult practices?
- Do you believe that spiritual warfare is very real and shouldn't be taken for granted? What should you do to win in this warfare?

**Religious practices that have money as a primary concern are to be avoided (v. 21-28)**

- Why did the impact of Christianity in Ephesus become a source of problems to local craftsmen?
- Why should any religion or practice that puts money as a primary concern be avoided?
- What is Christianity all about? Why is it never about money?
- Should Christians avoid talking about money?
- As followers of Christ how could we be good stewards of that which God has entrusted to us? How should giving money to God through His work be done?

**Keep away from spiritual practices that deceive, confuse, and lack order (v. 29-41)**

- What was the cause of the uproar in the city of Ephesus? How was it characterized by deception, confusion, and disorderly conduct?
- What does 1 Corinthians 14:40 tell us about how things should be done?
- What should you do if you attend a religious service or gathering that seems to be out of control, causing confusion and making you skeptical of what is being taught?

**REFLECT**

Why are so many people, including Christians, falling into the lies of Satan who deceives and masquerades as an angel of light? How would you be able to wisely discern the miraculous, the supernatural, and various religious and spiritual practices through a biblical framework and act accordingly?

**PRAY**

Heavenly Father, I acknowledge that Satan is real and that he is there to deceive everyone, including your children. Lord, please help me to soak myself with Your Word and please give me the discernment to know what is not from You. Help me not to be deceived by Satan, but to wise up. This is only possible through Jesus Christ. Thank You that I can be a victor in any spiritual warfare because You are greater than he (Satan) who is in this world. In Jesus' precious and mighty name I pray. Amen.