

# GROWTH + GROUPS

NAVIGATE LIFE TOGETHER

## Maranatha Chapel Sermon Based Study Guide SB 07.18.2021

### THE GOSPEL TO THE HEART – Acts 19:21-41

#### Receiving the Message and Relating to the Study

What insights, principles, or observations stood out to you from this week's message? Discuss with your group.

Sunday marked the end of the three-week period known as the “dire straits”. A strait is sometimes a dangerously narrow passage a ship must carefully navigate through as to not be shipwrecked by the rocks on both sides. In Judaism, “dire straits” refers to the squeezing, narrow, difficult days, days that led to destruction and exile. It is a three-week period with the days beginning on the 17th of Tammuz, the date on which the Jerusalem wall was breached. And the days end on the 9th of Av, the date on which the First and Second Temples were destroyed. On July 24, 1933, Franklin D. Roosevelt said in reference to the Great Depression, “It is absolutely essential to do something about the physical needs of hundreds of thousands who are in dire straits.” In the same way, it is absolutely essential we do something about the spiritual need of hundreds of thousands who are in “dire straits”. Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty (John 6:35). Let’s get into our study...

1. What stood out to you during this week’s study?
2. Have you ever been in “dire straits”? If so, describe the experience.
3. It is absolutely essential we do something about the spiritual need of hundreds of thousands who are in “dire straits”. What are some things that can be done to spread the good news of Jesus to those who are in “dire straits”?

#### Digging Deeper in God’s Word: Life Lessons

#### **HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 19:20-22, 1 CORINTHIANS 15:32, & 2 CORINTHIANS 1:8-10**

In verse 20, scripture said, “The word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed”. Paul felt his ministry in Ephesus had been fulfilled. He had carried out the ministry he came to accomplish. The tremendous growth of the church and growing of leaders over the two years meant he could leave them and move on to another place of ministry. Paul’s epistles show there had been problems, but he fought the “beast” at Ephesus (1 Corinthians 15:32). He had gone through dire straits, risked his life, and suffered much affliction in Ephesus, but he was delivered by God (2 Corinthians 1:8-10). Now that everything was going well, Paul purposed in the Spirit to go to Rome (v. 21). Paul’s own spirit was in harmony with the Holy Spirit and he had a divine necessity to spread the gospel with maximum impact. From this point forward, Rome was Paul’s new objective in view.

1. Paul felt his ministry in Ephesus had been fulfilled. Have you experienced the fulfillment of a ministry? If so, describe the experience.
2. Paul risked his life and suffered much affliction in Ephesus, yet he fought the “beast” at Ephesus (1 Corinthians 15:32) and put his trust in God. Describe a time you may have put your trust in God to overcome a time of adversity.
3. Now that everything was going well, Paul purposed in the Spirit to go to Rome (v. 21). What does it mean to purpose in the Spirit?

## **Visitation/Restoration in 2021**

4. Paul's own spirit was in harmony with the Holy Spirit and he had a divine necessity to spread the gospel with maximum impact. What do you think "divine necessity" means? What might be some examples of divine necessity demonstrated today?

### **HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 19:23-41**

Of the dozens of temples in Ephesus, the greatest was the temple of Diana dedicated to Artemis of the Ephesians (19:28). It was known as one of the seven wonders of the world. All year round, but especially in May, tourists came to see the temple. Worshipers of the goddess Diana would purchase small silver statues or shrines benefiting local silversmith and merchants economically. However, Paul persuaded and turned many people away from these man-made shrines that were not gods (Acts 19:26). The great inroads of Christianity conflicted with the need for idolatrous shrines. About this time, a great commotion, or riot broke out about "the Way".

5. Describe some modern-day idols. Why are people of the world drawn to these idols?
6. Idolatry opens Pandora's box. To open Pandora's box is to do something that causes a lot of problems. How might falling into idolatry open Pandora's box?
7. Why do you think the gospel often conflicts with people's economic interests? What kind of business does it threaten?
8. The term "the Way" (v.23) was used for Christians in the early years of the church. It was a reference to the way of Christian life. How is "the Way" often contrary to the way of the world?
9. "The Way" of the Lord preaches a Spiritual Revolution (23-27). How would you describe a Spiritual Revolution?

### **Applying God's Word**

**What did you learn from this study and how does this personally speak to you? Discuss with your group.**

The First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States guarantees freedoms concerning religion, expression, assembly, and the right to petition. It forbids Congress from both promoting one religion over others and also restricting an individual's religious practices. It guarantees freedom of expression by prohibiting Congress from restricting the rights of individuals to speak freely. It also guarantees the right of citizens to assemble peaceably and to petition their government. Today, the gospel is often falsely accused and attacked just as it was in Ephesus. Yet, we have the guaranteed right to speak the truth about Jesus and not apologize for it.

1. Given our freedoms guaranteed today by the constitution, how might you purpose in the Spirit to spread the gospel this week?
2. As you purpose in the Spirit to spread the gospel, you may encounter "dire straits". Describe the courage that will be necessary to stand up against these dire straits?
3. Considering the current political condition, there is what might be considered "great commotion". How might you wisely convey the gospel in environment of great commotion?

### **PRAYER**

Praise be to the Lord of Lords and the King of Kings. While there are many dire straits we deal with today, You are faithful. You are our strength, our Rock, our Fortress, and our Deliverer. We take refuge in You, our Shield, the Horn of our Salvation, and our Stronghold. Lord, navigate us through the dire straits and help us to feel the peace and rest found only in You. We trust in the presence of the Holy Spirit who lives within us. Guide us and show us Your Way. Amen.

*"Therefore, put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand, stand firm..." (Ephesians (6:13-14)).*