CORNERSTONE

DISCIPLESHIP

GROUPS

THE PREVAILING WORD
DR. BARRY BURNS
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2026

NEWS & EVENTS

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UPCOMING EVENTS:

- November 4 & 15 - Communion
- November 7-8 - Guest Speaker, Chad Gonzales
- November 15 Operation Christmas Child Collection
- November 21 - SERVE: One Gen Away
- November 25 - No Service; Happy Thanksgiving!
- December 5 - Ladies Christmas Event

OVERVIEW

Core Scriptures: Acts 19:1-20; 1 Corinthians 16:8-9; Ephesians 5:15-16; Luke 11:20

Overview
This message explores the book of Acts as the ongoing story of the Holy Spirit working through ordinary people to accomplish extraordinary things. Drawing from Paul's ministry in Ephesus, Pastor Barry challenges believers to recognize open doors of opportunity, stand firm against opposition, and boldly advance the kingdom of God in their communities.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. **The book of Acts is still being written.** The work of the Holy Spirit through ordinary men and women continues today, and every believer is part of that story.
2. **Open doors are God-given, time-sensitive opportunities.** When God opens a door, it requires a faith response from us to step through it. Opportunity seized with boldness yields extraordinary fruit.
3. **Opposition does not mean you are in the wrong place.** Pushback, resistance, and adversaries are often signs that you are advancing the kingdom in a meaningful direction.
4. **The kingdom of God is the message that prevails.** The proclamation of God's rule and reign in the hearts of people is more powerful than any cultural stronghold, demonic influence, or opposing ideology.
5. **Spiritual power is essential for effective ministry.** Just as Paul's ministry in Ephesus required the active work of the Holy Spirit to break the grip of the occult, believers today must be equipped with spiritual power to make a lasting difference.
6. **The Word of God grows and prevails.** Acts 19:20 serves as the capstone of the entire chapter: sustained, faithful proclamation of the Word produces results that outlast every form of opposition.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Opening Question

Go around the group and briefly share: Has there ever been a moment in your life when you knew something had changed spiritually — before and after — similar to what Pastor Barry described about being filled with the Holy Spirit? What was that like?

Section 1 — Open Doors and Divine Opportunity

Pastor Barry described a "mega door" of opportunity that God opened for Paul in Ephesus — one that was large, active, and deeply productive. What does it look like in everyday life when God opens a door of opportunity? How do you personally recognize one?

Ephesians 5:15-16 describes "buying up every opportunity" because the days are evil. What does it mean practically to redeem your time and seize opportunities in your current season of life? Are there any opportunities around you right now that you may be letting pass?

Section 2 — Opposition and Perseverance

"Rarely does the devil let you just walk in and take a city or take a region and establish a beachhead for the kingdom of God without pushback," Pastor Barry said. Have you ever experienced significant opposition right at the moment you were stepping into something God called you to do? How did you respond?

Opposition in Acts 19 came from multiple directions — religious leaders in the synagogue, craftsmen whose livelihoods were threatened, and angry crowds. In what forms does opposition tend to show up in your life when you are pursuing something God has called you to? How do you discern the difference between a closed door and a door worth pushing through?

Section 3 — The Kingdom of God

In Luke 11:20, Jesus connected the casting out of demons with the arrival of the kingdom of God. What does it tell us about the nature of the kingdom that it is demonstrated not just in words but in power? How does that shape the way you think about prayer, ministry, and your own life of faith?

The message Paul preached in Ephesus declared that gods made with human hands are no gods at all. What are the modern-day "gods made with hands" that compete for people's allegiance in your community? How does the message of the kingdom speak directly to those things?

Section 4 — The Word of God Prevails

Acts 19:20 summarizes the entire Ephesus revival with the phrase "so mightily grew the Word of God and prevailed." After two to three years of sustained ministry, the cultural stronghold of an entire city began to crack. What does this teach us about patience and faithfulness in ministry and in personal spiritual growth?

The burning of the books of magic in Ephesus was a public, costly, and decisive act of turning away from darkness. Is there anything in your own life — habits, influences, mindsets, or associations — that needs to be decisively removed so that the Word of God can grow and prevail more fully in you?

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

This week, choose at least one of the following:

Identify an open door. Spend time in prayer asking God to show you a specific opportunity He has placed in front of you. Write it down. Ask Him what your next faithful step is.

Stand firm against opposition. If you are currently facing resistance in something you believe God has called you to, find a trusted believer this week and ask them to pray with you and for you. Do not navigate the opposition alone.

Proclaim the kingdom. Look for one intentional opportunity this week to speak truth into someone's life — whether through a conversation, an act of service, or sharing your own story of faith.

Remove what hinders. Identify one thing in your life — a habit, a form of media, a mindset — that is working against the growth of the Word of God in you. Make a concrete plan to remove or reduce it.

Pray for your city. Using Johnson City as your "Jerusalem," spend intentional time this week praying for the spiritual climate of your community. Ask God to open doors of opportunity for the gospel to advance right where you live.

CLOSING

Close your group time by praying together over the following areas:

- That God would open mega doors of opportunity for your church, your group, and each individual member
- That the Word of God would grow mightily and prevail in your city and region
- That every member of the group would be filled with spiritual power and boldness to advance the kingdom
- That those who are bound by sickness, mental torment, or spiritual darkness would experience the freedom that only the kingdom of God can bring

"So mightily grew the Word of God and prevailed." — Acts 19:20