Session 4

Read Acts 19: 1 - 7

These opening verses are a real challenge. It is not sure what led them to call themselves disciples, other than their earnest desire to know and love God. Can people be true Christians even though they are fundamentally misinformed about faith in Jesus? What about being misinformed about the Holy Spirit? What are the core beliefs required in order to be an authentic disciple of Jesus? How do we make sure that we don’t think “people not like me” are not Christians? On the other hand, how can we help people who may have misunderstood or not truly grasped the Good News of Jesus?

Read Acts 19: 8 – 22

We are not sure what the ‘Hall of Tyrannus’ was, whether it was a public space or somewhere that was hired for Paul’s work as a tentmaker. However, what is clear is that Paul shared the Good News of Jesus here. Are there equivalents of the ‘Hall of Tyrannus’ in our community where we might be to share the Good News of Jesus? What does it say to us about the possibility of work placed evangelism? What would this look like for you?

Often we are in danger of seeing evangelism much too exclusively as only happening in ‘Christian’ settings, with a model of come. This is “go” evangelism. What kind of “go” evangelistic opportunities are currently open to us that we should explore? What individual opportunities could we explore alongside church opportunities?

Are we continually alert to the ‘spiritual warfare’ which is an invariable part of faithful mission activity of the local church? What forms might it take?

How would you explain evil spirits to another person? Do you think evil spirits are active today? What evidence of this activity do you see? What are the resources given to the church to help combat this? What forms of sorcery are practiced today? How do you explain to a young person what sorcery does and the dangers of being involved and whether it really does or doesn’t work?

Syncretism is the word used to describe when people blend different aspects of different religions together. In what ways do we encounter this today? In what ways might it affect our evangelistic message and methods?

Read Acts 20

Paul’s ‘Farewell’ to the elders at Ephesus is a deeply moving testament to pastoral ministry in every age. It covers many aspects of what the church should be; notably, its essential character as service (20:18–19); its biblical base and content (20:20–21, 27); its submission to God, and costliness (22–23); its pastoral charge, and grounds for diligence in fulfilling it (28–31); its resources (32–35); and its unashamed loyalties (36–38). Review it carefully and prayerfully. Where do you find yourself most encouraged? Where in our church do our standards today most need to be brought into line with Paul’s here?

How have leaders of your church been an encouragement to you in your Christian growth? How have you encouraged them? What are the four key ways in which your church should be an encouragement to you?

What kinds of sermons does your church encourage your pastor to preach? Are there sermons that your preacher knows better than to preach? Why?

Remembering Evelyn Glennie, it your desire to reach out and impact others with the Good News of Jesus?