

SERIES: **THE MOVEMENT-** *a journey through the astonishing book of Acts*

TEXT: **Acts 19:1-7**

**ALMOST DOESN'T COUNT**

*read text-pray*

In 1998 R&B artist Brandy- *"Almost made you love me, Almost made you cry  
Almost made you happy, babe, Didn't I? Didn't I?  
You almost had me thinking, You were turned around  
But everybody knows, Almost doesn't count"*

How many know- almost won the lottery means you're still broke; almost paid off your car means you still owe;  
Almost married means you're still not (sleep in your own bed);

**WHY THIS TEXT MATTERS-** **Almost a Christian is still not a Christian.**

**Almost an abundant Christian is still not an abundant Christian.**

**2 Corinthians 13:5** Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith. Examine yourselves. Or do you yourselves not recognize that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless you fail the test.

**Where are you in your journey of faith?**

*What would it look like if you could teleport to where you want to be in that journey?*

Less stress, more strength; less doubt, more courage; less judgment, more love

What would it look like to be the parent God wants you to be;

the single but trusting God's timing person God wants you to be;

the older but not bitter; the young but not foolish.

The once dead to your sin but now alive in Christ and full of inexpressible peace and joy.

As much as I would like to simply dive into the deep theological truths and practical principles found here, we have to lay some foundation for our 7 verses.

**FOUNDATIONAL FRAMEWORK-**

Allow me to set up a foundational framework before I get into what I really feel God wanting us to lean into this morning. Here's why-

**Bad biblical interpretation -> bad theology -> bad practice**

Some of the Bible is **PRESCRIPTIVE** (you can take it and run with it)

but some is simply **DESCRIPTIVE** (it's just telling you how it went down but you have to do the *hermeneutical* work) this section, as in much of the book of Acts, is descriptive.

2 things specifically here that need some context-

Baptism of the Spirit & Speaking in tongues as evidence of salvation

**BAPTISM of the SPIRIT-**

John (the baptizer) said-

**Luke 3:15-16** Now the people were waiting expectantly, and all of them were debating in their minds whether John might be the Messiah. <sup>16</sup> John answered them all, "I baptize you with water, but One is coming who is more powerful than I. I am not worthy to untie the strap of His sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

I had someone ask me once if I believed in being baptized with 'the fire'.

Baptism of the Holy Spirit and fire are not the same. Proof is in the context-

**Luke 3:17** His winnowing shovel is in His hand to clear His threshing floor and gather the wheat into His barn, but the chaff He will burn up with a fire that never goes out.”

God will either ‘immerse’ us in His Holy Spirit or in fire of judgment.

But there IS a baptism of the Spirit of God

Jesus said-

**Acts 1:5** for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

At Pentecost, rushing wind filled the room, tongues as of fire came over them and then-

**Acts 2:4** Then they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different languages, as the Spirit gave them ability for speech.

Having said that- I want to make 2 assessments of biblical baptism of the spirit as it relates to us today (if we just take this 7 verse in Acts 19 and don’t evaluate them with the rest of scripture, where “almost, but not quite”)

### **Baptism of the Holy Spirit is NOT a post salvation experience.**

that’s not to say there aren’t times in a believers life when we experience an abnormal move of the Spirit

I had a teacher tell me we received the Spirit in “doses” until one day we are fully baptized in Him

### **Baptism of the Holy Spirit is the salvation experience.**

It is at the point of salvation that God seals us with His Spirit. He would later write to the believers at Ephesus (which is where this takes place)

**Ephesians 1:13** When you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and when you believed in Him, you were also sealed with the promised Holy Spirit.

The last thing I’ll say about this- the nail in the coffin:

**Romans 8:9** You, however, are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God lives in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.

### **SPEAKING in TONGUES as evidence of salvation-**

Not going to get into 1 Cor. 13:1 “tongues of angels”- we’ll focus on the context here, as actual languages

Four occasions similar to this appear in the book of Acts in which the Spirit is given to new believers through the laying on of hands. On 3 of those occasions this is followed by speaking in tongues aka other languages

ACTS 2- Pentecost- apostles

ACTS 8- Samaritans (no tongues)

ACTS 10- Cornelius/ Gentiles (non-Jews)

ACTS 19- those holding to the Old Covenant not realizing the New Covenant was here

### **Speaking in tongues is never a requirement for evidence of salvation.**

Some like to make the case that because of these 3 instances, it is therefore necessary to speak in tongues as evidence that you’ve been saved- that is putting a yoke on people that Jesus Himself doesn’t even put.

**1 Corinthians 14** Paul is addressing heavily church at Corinth since this whole Tongues things was out of control- **V5** I wish all of you spoke in other languages, but even more that you prophesied. The person who prophesies is greater than the person who speaks in languages, unless he interprets so that the church may be built up.

### **Speaking in Tongues cannot be taught since it is a gift God gives to some.**

**1 Co. 14:1** Pursue love and desire spiritual gifts...

Cessationists on one side- charismatics on the other

Cards on the table: I stand in the gap - Cautiously charismatic.

Biblical Context is crucial & discernment is vital- otherwise we make doctrinal messes

All of that framework is important so that we don't approach the text in this way (bad progression):

*They were saved without the spirit- they had to be taught how to receive the holy spirit- they did and then as and as evidence they received the spirit they spoke in tongues- this is the therefore the model for everyone.*

Why God chose to give His Spirit in different ways in the book of Acts, ultimately only He can say- but that's not to say there are reasons that we can link together; in this case for example Paul is the one who lays hands on them, and they receive the Spirit; previously Peter had done so. God could be validating that He was at work through Paul also, not just Peter, John or the other disciples who had walked with Jesus. That's important because God would use Paul to write 13 of the books in your bible.

Now with all of that in mind lets read through our text, and pull some practical applications.

This is now Paul's 3<sup>rd</sup> missionary journey- CH 16 God had prevented Paul and crew from traveling through the region of "Asia", but now-

**<sup>1</sup>While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul traveled through the interior regions and came to Ephesus.**

Apollos was previously at Ephesus preaching boldly but Aquila & Priscilla saw his knowledge of the gospel was incomplete, so they took him and taught him.

**He found some disciples**

disciples of what? Who or what did they believe in? Turns out it was an "almost Christianity"  
(some argue they were saved, I disagree)

**<sup>2</sup>and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"**

Though this instance will turn out to be out of the ordinary, Eph. 1:13 is the norm:

*When you heard...when you believed... you were sealed.*

We don't have the time to get into it, but for a moment think of the beauty of having the Spirit of God dwell within us!

The Holy Spirit isn't a "force", "abstract idea"- He is as much a person as the Father or the Son. He is God.

Present at creation, present through the ages;

**He is terrifying and tender!** (Slaying God's enemies on the battle fields of the O.T. and carrying out His judgment through the households of Egypt, and comforting the brokenhearted, empowering the weak)

If you are sealed with the Spirit, when you get to heaven you will not be any more closer to God than you are right now! That shouldn't lower your expectations of heaven, it should raise your awareness of your current reality as a child of God!

**"No," they told him, "we haven't even heard that there is a Holy Spirit."**

The idea isn't that they had NO knowledge of the H.S. (it's part of OT and even John's teachings), the idea is that they had no knowledge the Spirit had been given and could be received.

Its been 20 years since Ch2- Pentecost when the Spirit of God was poured out and begun this movement

**<sup>3</sup>"Then what baptism were you baptized with?" he asked them.**

**"With John's baptism," they replied.**

In Luke (same author) we meet a guy named John (the baptizer) who's assignment is to prepare the way for the Messiah

**Luke 3:15-16** Now the people were waiting expectantly, and all of them were debating in their minds whether John might be the Messiah. <sup>16</sup>John answered them all, "I baptize you with water, but One is coming who is more powerful than I. I am not worthy to untie the strap of His sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

John's baptism of repentance (V4) was in essence "I turn away from my sins publicly and so I get in the water to show that"

Yet no doubt each one of those who received John's baptism, sinned again!

John was simply pointing forward to Jesus-

## Repentance out of sin, without faith in Jesus, leaves us stranded.

Repentance is essential but insufficient in itself.

Essential- without it the heart remains focused on self and sin, and far from God

Insufficient- doesn't provide a pledge of forgiveness, it's simply admittance and renouncing of wrong;

<sup>4</sup> Paul said, "John baptized with a baptism of repentance, telling the people that they should believe in the One who would come after him, that is, in Jesus."

We should approach God with repentance towards God AND faith in Jesus so we may experience the filling of the Spirit of God.

<sup>5</sup> When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

If you consider yourself saved, but have not yet been baptized- I want to encourage you, follow Him

<sup>6</sup> And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began to speak in other languages and to prophesy. <sup>7</sup> Now there were about 12 men in all.

## Faith in Jesus allows the Holy Spirit to flow freely.

A.W. Tozer- "The Spirit-filled life is not a special, deluxe edition of Christianity. It is part and parcel of the total plan of God for His people."

**John 7:38-39** The one who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, will have streams of living water flow from deep within him. <sup>39</sup> He said this about the Spirit....

You can be filled with the Spirit or you can be full of yourself- Do you believe in Jesus

For salvation; for direction; comfort; strength

## TREMENDOUS THEOLOGICAL TRUTH- Both the Christian birth *and* life are marked by 2 rhythms:

**1. Repentance that rejects sin.**

**2. Faith that embraces the spirit of God.**

Jesus has the authority not only to forgive your sin but to fill you with His Spirit

## MAIN TAKEAWAY- I have as much of the Spirit of God as I actually want.

*Illustration*- we are like this cup\* The Holy Spirit is this water\*

We realize the cup is full of air and so we try to scoop it out, but never enough.

Or we try to fill it with other things (vices, working, possessions, positions, people) never quite enough.

He is WITH everyone in this moment, convicting the world of sin (John 16:8); A prayer away from much more.

**Luke 11:13** If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?"

\*fill cup- the air is gone, all other things make way for His living water

Yet this is the idea some of us have of the Holy Spirit (topped off cup)

\*overflow cup- this is what Jesus promised- Spirit-filled and overflowing

Stop living a conformed life of "almost breakthrough, almost revival, almost saved"

**CALL TO ACTION-** (if not yet a christian) **ASK THE HOLY SPIRIT TO FILL YOU**

(if christian) **ASK THE HOLY SPIRIT TO OVERFLOW FROM YOU**

## God goes where He's wanted

Lets pray: God fills us, revive us

## BULPEN-

On tongues- each time mentioned in acts it was to point out a particular people group who were now undoubtedly welcomed into Gods family and kingdom. The Jews, the Gentiles, these guys – these is the last time tongues mentioned in Acts.

In the book of Acts reception of the Holy Spirit does not follow any set pattern. He came into believers before baptism in Acts 10:44; At the time or after baptism in Acts 8:12-16, 19:6; by the laying on of hands in 8:17, 19:6. What is certain is that Paul declared in Romans 8:9 that anyone without the Holy Spirit is not a Christian.

### WITH REVELATION COMES RESPONSIBILITY (V5-6)

The Gospel is light, but only the Spirit can give sight - Tozer

V2 Paul found it necessary to ask the tough question and teach the right ways

V4- John's baptism pointed to Jesus' baptism

Deficiencies in their faith

Religious people need to hear the gospel too because they may just be unsaved

Johns baptism was "repent"- Jesus' baptism is "live"

V2 receive when believe- *PISTEUSANTES*- indicates action simultaneous with the verb receive

This goes along with what Tommy was saying last week- are you living in the fullness of Christian life?

\*make case for beauty of the Holy Spirit in believers life  
Make case for tragedy of those living so close but not in Him

1 John marks of true Christian  
True obedience (experiential);  
true belief (doctrinal);  
true love without gaps between loving God and loving others (ethical)

V2- the true believer HAS received the Holy Spirit- what Paul is trying to uncover is what in fact did they believe?

Does the Spirit of God live in you?????

Almost Christians are not Christians- almost saved is still lost

V5 they openly accepted it

Repentance- faith- baptism- Holy Spirit (not necessarily in that order but all certainly present in true believers)

Ephesus becomes Pauls base of operation during his 3<sup>rd</sup> missionary journey

They were "rebaptized"

Defective faith- they were disciples of John; aware of the existence of the HS but it appears unaware that the Messiah had been Jesus, had died, rose again and that at Pentecost the HS was given to His disciples  
Repentance towards God was good, but it is faith in Jesus and His work that saves, and even further empowers our repentance

**Ephesians 4:4-6** There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope at your calling—<sup>5</sup> one Lord, one faith, one baptism,<sup>6</sup> one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

20 years after Pentecost

Likely they had heard Apollos teaching(Ch 18) who by now has also come to know the fulness of the gospel.

**Acts 18:24-25** A Jew named Apollos, a native Alexandrian, an eloquent man who was powerful in the use of the Scriptures, arrived in Ephesus. <sup>25</sup> This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught the things about Jesus accurately, although he knew only John's baptism.

**1:14** He is the down payment of our inheritance, for the redemption of the possession, to the praise of His glory.

**Galatians 5:25** Since we live by the Spirit, we must also follow the Spirit.

The Greek word translated "disciple" simply means "learner," and does not in itself indicate saving faith. In fact, John describes a group of "disciples" who turned back entirely from following Jesus (John 6:66). They were "disciples" but not believers. It seems to be the same here.

Apollos, it appears, was a disciple of Jesus—though in need of some clarification—it may be these were disciples only of John the Baptist.

Some argue these people were saved, but ignorant about some things; I tend to disagree, I think they had good intentions, but good intentions aren't ever good enough- so God in His grace sent them Paul

Every commentator agrees they had in fact knowledge of the existence of the Spirit of God (O.T. and even John the baptizer's teaching), what they had no knowledge of however is the sense that the Spirit of God was "given" to us, or to be "received" and indwell us

Paul is now on his 3<sup>rd</sup> missionary journey (started back in 18:23)

Paul is putting the pieces together- if they had no knowledge of the Holy Spirit abiding in believers, and if Jesus had commanded to baptize in the name of The Father, The Son and Holy Spirit....then they probably weren't baptized as Jesus had commanded- and so Paul's question.

Baptism identifies s with Christ's death, burial and resurrection

**Romans 6:3-4** Or are you unaware that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? <sup>4</sup> Therefore we were buried with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too may walk in a new way of life.

These 12 had a general; belief in A Messiah, but not in Jesus as the Messiah

**Acts 2:36-38** "Therefore let all the house of Israel know with certainty that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah!" <sup>37</sup> When they heard this, they came under deep conviction and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles: "Brothers, what must we do?" <sup>38</sup> "Repent," Peter said to them, "and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

"He must increase, but I must decrease." The work of John was simply the work of the axe; to cut up by the roots ancient falsehoods; to tear away all that was unreal. A great work, but still not the greatest. And herein lay the difference between the two baptisms. The one was simply the washing away of a false and evil past; the other was the gift of the power to lead a pure, true life.

**Colossians 1:27** .... Christ in you, the hope of glory.

3 different prepositions when the bible speaks of the Holy Spirit \*\*\*no reliable argument for this interpretation though :/

**WITH (para- alongside)**- He is with everyone in this moment, convicting the world of sin (John 16:8); And a prayer away from much more

**IN (en- within)**- If you are a Christian this is the 3 beautiful guarantee of your salvation, He's In you (Romans 8:9); Guiding, directing, comforting, correcting

**ON (epi- upon)**- John 7:38-39

*AW Tozer- The degree of fullness in any life accords perfectly with the intensity of true desire. We have as much of God as we actually want. One great hindrance to the Spirit-filled life is the theology of complacency so widely accepted among gospel Christians today.*