

No Room for Darkness

Opening Scripture: Acts 17: 16, 22, 29-30 (NKJV)

Paul went to Athens, to the very epicentre of Greek life and culture and to Mars Hill. Mars Hill was a sacred place where the Roman 'god of war' was worshipped. This was a very prestigious place where religious ceremonies continually took place, where philosophers met, and it was the place of the highest court of appeal in Greece.

- a) Verse 16 says that Paul saw the *city so given over to idols*

The whole city was consecrated, given over to idols. The devil didn't just have a foothold in the city, he had the whole city. It had been given over to him.

I am sharing this message today with the scripture in Ephesians 4:27 in mind that tells us not to give any room to the devil- no place, no foothold. Just like God is light and in Him is no darkness at all, darkness should never have any place in our lives. Hence the title of this message: No Room for Darkness!

- b) Paul's spirit '*was provoked within him*' when he saw the city given over to idols. He was stirred in his heart. His spirit had such a deep and strong repulsion to the darkness of that place. May we be just as spiritually alert as Paul was, and never indifferent towards the presence of darkness!
- c) Verse 22 KJV - *Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious.*

Superstition

Every culture has it in various forms. The Jews had it, the Greeks had it. Even the disciples of Jesus showed some residues of superstition when they saw Jesus walking on the waters and 'thought' it was a ghost (Mark 6:49). Eastern countries have superstitions. The West where we live, also has them!

1. What is superstition?

When Paul used this word, he used a Greek word that literarily means '*fearing demons*' (*deisidaimonia*).

V.16 AMPC (Amplified Bible) - *So Paul, standing in the centre of the Areopagus [Mars Hill meeting place], said: Men of Athens, I perceive in every way [on every hand and with every turn I make] that you are most religious or very reverent to demons.*

Superstition is a belief in the wrong kind of supernatural, in what we call the occult, in its different forms: idol worship, fortune telling, astrology, palm reading, sorcery, new age, spiritism etc.etc.

2. What does the Bible say about it?

Ephesians 5:11 – “*And have no fellowship with the works of darkness, but rather expose them*”.

- a) *No fellowship*: have nothing to do with it, allow it no place in your life, do not engage, do not participate!
- b) The Bible shows God’s total rejection of such practices:

- **Leviticus 19:31** – *'Give no regard to mediums and familiar spirits; do not seek after them, to be defiled by them: I am the Lord your God.*
- **Leviticus 20:6** *'And the person who turns to mediums and familiar spirits, to prostitute himself with them, I will set My face against that person and cut him off from his people.*
- **1 Chronicles 10:13** – “*So Saul died for his trespass which he committed against the LORD, because of the word of the LORD which he did not keep; and also because he asked counsel of a medium, making inquiry of it,*”
- **2 Chronicles 33:6** – *Also he caused his sons to pass through the fire in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom; he practiced soothsaying, used witchcraft and sorcery, and consulted mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke Him to anger.*
- **Isaiah 8:19** – “*And when they say to you, "Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter," should not a people seek their God? Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living?*”

- c) In the days of Moses and Joshua, God warned them not to bring the ‘gods’ of the nations that they were going to conquer, into their homes. It was the same principle: giving the enemy no place.

- **Deuteronomy 7:25-26** - *You shall burn the carved images of their gods with fire; you shall not covet the silver or gold that is on them, nor take it for yourselves, lest you be snared by it; for it is an abomination to the Lord your God. ²⁶ Nor shall you bring an abomination into your house, lest you be doomed to destruction like it. You shall utterly detest it and utterly abhor it, for it is an accursed thing.*

3. The Apostles always addressed and confronted these same powers of darkness, wherever they went.

We don’t see the early church accommodating the occult in any form.

- **Acts 8:4-13** – Phillip in Samaria and Simon the sorcerer
- **Acts 13:4-12** – Barnabas and Saul confronted a Jewish sorcerer named Bar-Jesus
- **Acts 14:8-15** – Paul and Barnabas prayed for a man who got healed. The people thought that they were the incarnation of Greek gods. Paul told them that they should “*turn from these useless things to the living God*”.
- **Acts 16: 16-19** – Paul rebuked a spirit of divination that was operating in a slave girl, and she was free.
- **Acts 17:16, 29-34** – This is the text we started today. Paul confronted their beliefs and called it superstition.
- **Acts 19:11-20** – Seven sons of Sceva

4. **The Apostles always pointed people to the superiority of the power of God**

- a) In Acts 14 Paul called their beliefs in the occult “*useless things*” and in Acts 17 (17:30) Paul called it “*times of ignorance*”
- b) Not only the apostles pointed people to the superiority of the power of God, but they demonstrated it:

Acts 8:13 – *Then Simon [the one who used to be a sorcerer] himself also believed; and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and was amazed, seeing the miracles and signs which were done.*

In **Acts 19** Paul goes to Ephesus, the epicentre of the cult of Diana. On any day there would have been a crowd of 100 000 pilgrims. Paul preached in a powerful way and God did unusual miracles (19:11). In the space of 2 years the whole of Asia Minor heard the gospel and the very people who had magical books and silver idols repented:

Acts 19:18-20 – *8 And many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds. 19 Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and it totalled fifty thousand pieces of silver. 20 So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.*

The power of God is superior!

Conclusion

As I said at the start, I am sharing this message today with the scripture in mind that tells us not to give any room to the devil- no place, no foothold. Just like ‘God is light and in Him is no darkness at all’, darkness should have no place in our lives.

Ephesians 5:8 - *For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light*

Here are 3 basic steps to the freedom Christ offers:

1. **Receive** (acknowledge, and believe) the truth of God’s word. His word is the truth that sets people free.

James 1:21 - ... *receive with meekness the implanted word...*

Repent (Acts 17:31 - “*Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent*) – Once we receive the truth that sets you free, the most liberating thing that you can do is to repent.

2. **Reclaim** – If you have given the enemy any room, after you have received the truth and repented, then reclaim what no longer belongs to the devil. Claim that space back. Give it to Jesus.