

Outside The Box Series

Lesson 1 of 8

Outside The Box – Church

Acts 19

King James Version (KJV)

19 And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples,

2 He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.

3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism.

4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.

5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

7 And all the men were about twelve.

8 And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.

9 But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.

10 And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

Outside The Box – Church

Apology = Cliché

For years I've heard churches asking – “How do we get our church outside these 4 walls?”

- If there ever was a generation that needed reached it's this one.
- If there ever was a generation that was harder to reach with traditional means, it's this one.

But, how do we get our church **Outside The Box**?

First, let's answer the question, what is the box?

- Traditional mindsets.
- Comfort zones
- Our church's history
- Generational boundaries
- Our personal history's and experiences.
- An “It's never been done that way before” mentality.

This is not a traditional church.

- I doubt that we will ever conform to everyone's idea of a traditional church.
- We did not start out from traditional means and we will not end up with traditional means – if we are careful.

Tradition has a way of holding you to your past, which some people love.

- But it also has a way of limiting your future.

Sticking with the norm is often safer, but it seldom allows you the opportunity to experience the miraculous in your life or ministry.

We understand that to be effective in this community and the communities that we all come from, we are going to have to be a church that is outside the box of normal church conformism.

- Conformity cannot be the starting place for God's church.
- As a matter of fact, it was never the starting place of any move of God or effective ministry mentioned in the Bible.

When you look at the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, you see very quickly that His ministry was definitely an "Outside The Box" ministry.

- His very birth was completely unconventional. – Virgin birth
- His Childhood was unusual. – 12 yrs. old Teaching in the synagogue
- His first known miracle was controversial even to this day. – Turning water into wine.
- The choosing of His disciples was completely unorthodox. – Ignorant Fishermen, Tax collectors, Publicans.
- Many other miracles so strange, many never believed they happened. – He purposely waited for Lazarus to die before he went to help him.
- The religious people of His day thought him so unorthodox and so eccentric in His ministry that they hated him – so much that they wanted to kill him.

Think about it – how "Different" would this church have to be that the rest of the religious world would want to destroy us because we were so different than the norm?

This was how it was for Jesus...

- His ministry was so different from what other people thought it should be that they failed to recognize who He really was.
- Their ideal of who and what God was, was completely different than who and what He really was.

- They missed His appearing, because they were “stuck in a box”, so to speak in their understanding and conceptualization of who Jesus really was.

Jesus’s ministry was and is the expression of “Out of the Box” church thinking.

- Over and over again, He expressed to the teachers and religious people that what they thought was right religiously, was actually wrong, and what they thought was wrong, was actually right.

They thought they had God figured out.

- They had probed and dissected and analyzed God until they had Him all wrapped up in some neat and tidy little package called Judaism.
- They had teachers who would “toe the line” so to speak and cause the people to believe what their little “boxed in religion” believed

To the point that if anyone ever stepped outside the lines of conformity, they were shunned, and disinherited and even persecuted.

- To leave the box meant heresy.
- To leave the box was sacrilege.
- To leave the box was to leave the way it had always been done.
- To leave the box was to bring upon you the judgment and persecution of the religious order of the day.
- In Jesus case, to leave the box was to put your life in jeopardy even to the point of the cross.

But guess what... In spite of the threat of the cross, Jesus said, “Pick up your cross and follow me”.

Jesus never flinched!

- His ministry was too immense for a box.
- His anointing was too great for a box.

- His zeal was too huge for a box.
- His passion was too vast for a box.

Jesus' ministry did not fit protocol.

It did not fit standard procedure.

And so, the only way they could stop it was to kill Him, but their killing Him still did not stop Him.

- I Thank God, Jesus did not conform.
- I Thank God, Jesus did not imitate what some other preacher down the road was doing.
- I'm so thankful that Jesus was not a clone of some guy on television or big name evangelist somewhere.

He was who He was, and if you didn't like who He was, that was too bad. But it probably meant you would miss out on the miraculous in your life.

- There was nothing Common...
- There was nothing Usual...
- There was nothing Traditional about Jesus.
- And there was nothing Common, Usual or Traditional about the Church His ministry produced.

The same people who sought to kill Jesus were the same people who tried to destroy His church.

- But one scripture I've read tells us "the Gates of Hell would not prevail against the church of the Living God."

That's why His church grew to over 3120 the very first day it was started.

- That's why it grew by the thousands daily thereafter.
- It actually reached all of Asia Minor in the space of just two years.
- That's why Rome eventually adopted it as a national religion because as much as Rome persecuted it, it grew.

- No matter how many Christians they threw into the lions and gladiator pits in the coliseums of Rome, Christianity continued to flourish and multiply there.
- Jesus's church was Outside Of The Box!

The church in the book of Acts did things that no other religion would do.

- It reached out and healed people.
- It fed the hungry
- It clothed the naked.
- It delivered the oppressed.
- It embraced Baptism
- And it desired to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

How many know that we are an Outside The Box Church?!

We're not concerned about what is popular, we want to know what is Biblical.

We're not concerned what this group or that group is saying or doing, our concern is "what does The Book say?" We're asking, "What is the Spirit saying to the church today?!"

- An Outside The Box Church can reach its generation.
- An Outside The Box Church can go places other Churches only dream of.
- An Outside The Box Church can minister to and win people that other churches would judge and avoid.

However, to be Outside The Box means that you're going to take some heat from the "Inside the Box" thinkers.

- But to be Outside the Box means you're not all that concerned about what they are saying anyway.

We're not trying to be disrespectful or condescending, we're just trying to listen to God.

- We're trying to hear what the Spirit is saying to this Church in the community that we are living in.

Here's what I am saying...

- The box is designed to contain something...
- The box is intended to enclose something...
- The box is built to keep certain things in, but the result is it also keeps some things out.

Jesus said, "Go ye unto all the world."

- The sad thing about a Boxed church is that the thing that it keeps out is most often the very thing that God intended to get into it in the first place... and that is a lost and dying world.

If there is one thing that I have noticed about this church, is that it has no problem getting guests and visitors to come to it.

Most often, I hear from the people who visit here say how much they love it.

- They love the music
- They love the people
- They love the preaching
- They love the Spirit that they feel
- They love this church...

Why?

- Because this church is Out Of The Box!
- It has no problem reaching non-churched people and the reason why is because it loves and embraces non-churched people regardless of where they are at in their life.

And I believe the reason is because we love like Jesus loves...

Unconditionally.

- We don't look at what people look like.
- We don't look at where they are or where they've been.

- We genuinely love people without any form of judgment.

One of the most repeated sermons Jesus preached was “Judge Not”,

- If you ever wanted to hear a preacher preach the same sermon over and over again, it would have been Jesus and the topic would have been people judging other people.
- So guess what... We don’t judge.
- We just love people.
- “Red and yellow, black and white, they are precious in His site.”
- And that goes for more than skin color or race.

Hey, we even love church people.

- But I do want to say that if you come here from some other church, you might need to lay down a few – Boxed Church Ideas.

I’ve had people tell me; “Well in the Church I came from they preached such and so...” well isn’t that why you left that church?

- This is not that church!
- This church is out of the Box!
- We are not interested in the things that keep other churches all bound up and unable to grow.

Jesus’s Church is a church that is growing.

- If we are not growing, then something is wrong with us.
- If we are not producing new babes in Christ then we do not love people the way Jesus said to love them.

You see an Outside the Box Church is a church that is willing to do whatever it needs to do to reach its communities with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

- Methods may change
- But the message is still the same.

An Outside The Box Church is not locked into traditional mindsets.

- This is why the book of Acts church that Jesus started was so effective in reaching its world.
- It reached across boundaries that no one wanted or dared to cross for generations.

An Outside The Box church will attract people.

- It will draw people...
- It will appeal to people...

And the reason that it does is because its arms are genuinely open to them.

There are no big “I’s” and little “You’s” in this church.

- We truly care about people!
- We love People!
- We want to help People!
- We want to minister to People!

I’m not interested in preaching week after week to a bunch of trained “Yes men and women”.

- I want to preach to people who sincerely want to be changed by the power of the Gospel and who want to reach their world with the Message of Jesus Christ.

In our text today, we hear about a church that turned its world upside down with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

In two year’s time, the message they proclaimed literally shut down the worship of the Goddess Diana.

The silversmiths who made the silver images that the people worshipped actually got together and tried to abolish the ministry that the early church was doing.

They said, Acts 19:25 ...**Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth.**

26 Moreover ye see and hear, that not only at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that there be no gods, which are made with hands:

27 So that not only this our craft is in danger of being shut down; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth.”

The early church was an Outside the Box Church.

And it reached it generation with the Gospel.

And it not only reached its community, but it also went out and reached the communities around it.

- It was an on-fire Church.
- It was a worshipping church.
- It was a giving Church.
- It was a loving church
- It was a forgiving church
- It was an enabling church
- It was a growing church
- It had no boundaries
- It had no limits
- It had no walls
- And it had no boxes...