

**Outside The Box Series**  
**Outside The Box – Church (lesson 1)**

**Acts 19:1-10 - Paul in Ephesus**

**19** While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples <sup>2</sup>and asked them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?”

They answered, “No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.”

<sup>3</sup>So Paul asked, “Then what baptism did you receive?”

“John’s baptism,” they replied.

<sup>4</sup>Paul said, “John’s baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus.” <sup>5</sup>On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. <sup>6</sup>When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. <sup>7</sup>There were about twelve men in all.

<sup>8</sup>Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God. <sup>9</sup>But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So, Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. <sup>10</sup>This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.

**Outside The Box – Part #1 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 histories 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.***

- ***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**.

**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**.

***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 scripture tells us – Matthew 16:18 - And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.**

**“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 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 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.**

***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, Mark 16:15 - *He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.*

The word "World" here is very significant. Meaning any system found in our world, particular political systems, or such as a circle of friends or any sphere where you live and have influence.

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

Why?

Because this church is Out Of The Box!

- We have no problem reaching non-churched people
- *The reason why is because we love and embrace non-churched people regardless of where they are at in their life.*

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.*

## Matthew 7:1-5 - Judging Others

7 - <sup>1</sup> ***“Do not judge, or you too will be judged. <sup>2</sup> For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.***

<sup>3</sup> “Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? <sup>4</sup> How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? <sup>5</sup> You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.

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

- So, guess what... ***We don’t judge.***
- ***We just love people.***

Hey, we even love church people.

- ***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 did such and such...” 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.

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.***

**CLOSE:**

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**
- 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 years’, 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 got together and tried to abolish the ministry that the early church was doing.***

**Acts 19:23-27** - <sup>23</sup> And about that time there arose a great commotion about the Way. <sup>24</sup> For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Diana, brought no small profit to the craftsmen.



<sup>25</sup> He called them together with the workers of similar occupation, and said: “Men, you know that we have our prosperity by this trade.

<sup>26</sup> Moreover you see and hear that not only at Ephesus, but throughout almost all Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away many people, saying that they are not gods which are made with hands. <sup>27</sup> So not only is this trade of ours in danger of falling into disrepute, but also the temple of the great goddess Diana may be despised, and her magnificence destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worship.”

The early church was *an Outside the Box Church*.

It reached its generation *with the Gospel*.

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...**