

CP— 2/11/24

Acts 19:21-41 — “The Riot in Ephesus”

## Outline:

### **I. Paul’s Future Travel Plans (21-22)**

- “resolved in the Spirit”
- Paul’s sights are set on Rome then Spain
- 1 Corinthians 16:1-10
- Great opportunity and many adversaries

### **Introduction to the Riot— “Progress and opposition”**

- **Matthew 5:13-14— “You are the salt of the earth, but if salt lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people’s feet. “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden”**
- *“The greatest miracle that God can do today is to take an unholy man out of an unholy world and make him holy. Then put him back into that unholy world and keep him holy”— Ravenhill*
- Revival marked by repentance is happening in Ephesus
- The gospel is a radical message that causes radical change that can cause radical conflict.
- With 2 things happening, the Word increasing (v.20) and the Church firmly committed to Christ (18-19), the gospel will be counter cultural.
  - Economically
  - Spiritually
  - Socially
  - Politically
- **Acts 17:6- “These men who have turned the world upside down”**
- Not by riots, boycotts, or marches but by being through purity in devotion to the Word the Lord and the Lord of the Word
  - the gospel angered people because it confronts their false-religion, their sin, and their inadequate world view and it exposes the emptiness of their lifestyle.
  - Their source of money, pride, and prestige was threatened and they responded in anger

In Ephesus sat the temple of Artemis or Diana

- The worship of Artemis was widespread throughout the Roman Empire with some 33 shrines throughout the empire. Most popular cult of all
- In Ephesus sat one of the 7 wonders of the world, the temple of Artemis
- *“it was indeed a hub of Ephesian economic life. It was an impressive building, some 165 feet by 345 feet in dimension and built on a platform 240 by 420 feet. The entire edifice was elaborately adorned and brilliant colors and gold leaf. The altar area was 20 feet square and contained a massive image of the goddess with a veiled head, with animals and birds decorating her head and lower body and numbers breasts from her waist to her neck. The animals and breasts were symbolic of her status as the ancient Asian Mother Goddess, the goddess of nature who was believed to protect and preserve the fruitfulness of all living things.”— John Polhill*
- Pilgrims would flock to the temple every spring for a festival for Artemis
- The big economic boom was the “souvenir idols” one could buy in Ephesus, get it blessed in the temple, and take it back home and place it in their home for protection and provision.

In Ephesus, God was building another temple that stood in stark contrast to the temple of Artemis.

- God was building a temple of people who had trusted in Jesus
- ***Ephesians 2:19-22— “So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.”***
  - This new temple, not built by hands but by the Spirit of God stood in direct contrast the the temple in Ephesus.
  - One had life, one was lifeless
  - One delivered on it's promise, and sold a bag of false hope
  - One kept people in bondage to the system
  - One set people free to a hope that couldn't be bought, earned, and manufactured

## **II. The Start of the Riot (23-27)**

- Demetrius, leader of a guild of craftsman who made their living on the worship of Artemis
- We see greed masked with a pseudo-religious and patriotism front
- The gospel threatened his pocket book (24-26)
- The gospel threatened his pride (27a)
- The gospel threatened his idols (27b)
- The gospel threatened his patriotism (27c)
- **People allow the desire for temporary wealth keep them from escaping eternal judgment.**
- **Don't let greed keep you from God**
- **This is what caused the “no great disturbance”**

## **III. The Nature of the Riot (28-34)**

- Anger (28)
- Confusion (29-32)
- Closed-mindedness (33-34)
- Blind leading the blind
- This is the cultural climate that we live in
- We live in a world that loves darkness and hates the light. The only reason we don't is because the work the God has done in our lives.
- But what you see here in Ephesus is still true today...
- Apart from the light of Christ shining into the darkness of the human heart, the world responds in anger, blind loyalty, and closed-mindedness.
- That's why are greatest testimony is not to just yell, “you're wrong”
- But to do as Paul did, “reasoning and persuading”
  - That's the hard thing to do
  - To show people the way not just yell at people
  - Kingdom advancement is not the result of weapons, force, or violence
  - But keeping exalting Christ in a idol filled world

#### **IV. The Ending of the Riot (35-41)**

- town clerk— city liaison for the Roman province
- “Ephesus hasn’t lost its place in the world”
- “These men are not sacrilegious not blasphemous”
- “no cause to justify this commotion”
- This speaks a lot and I want to give it a try
- Paul didn’t come in guns ablazing and attacking everything they did or thought of wrong
- He came in a preached the pure Word of the Lord and pointed to Jesus as the Christ
- Many believed and traded their idols for the one True God...
- The gospel being preached and the church being purified is what caused this commotion.
- We win people not by just pointing out what we disagree with about their life, but by exalting Jesus and living the way He has called and enables us to live.

#### **Application:**

- Commit to the Word of the Lord and the Lord of the Word
- May resistance we face be a result of the gospel not a result of our own agendas and prejudices
- Keep exalting Christ as your supreme treasure
- Praise God that He has rescued you from the emptiness of greed, pride, and idols.

#### **Small Group Discussion:**

1. How did the Holy Spirit speak to you in the Bible passage and the sermon Sunday? What stood out to you? What do you have questions about?
2. How does Acts 19 help develop our thoughts on spiritual awakening and how we impact our town/city with the gospel?
3. What does Paul’s decision to go to Jerusalem teach about loving the church and loving the poor?
4. What is Demetrius issue with Paul’s message? How did the gospel threaten him? How does the gospel shine life on our greed, pride, idols, and allegiances? How did the Holy Spirit speak to in regards to those areas in your life currently? Pray for one another that we will be like the believers in verse 18-19.
5. How does the mob illustrate the world that we are called to reach? What are we to do in a world that is angry, confused, and closed-minded to the things of God?
6. Spend some time in prayer that God would use each one of us this week to have a conversation with someone about Jesus.