

The Riot at Ephesus

Acts 19:21-41

1773

Acts 19 and this passage dealing with the riot runs from verses 21 through verse 41. And it's very much just a narrative. And Lord willing, we'll get at least a good running start and maybe even all the way through. There's not a lot of doctrine here. This is one of those passages that is in stark contrast to our passage tonight in Galatians which is just deep theology. And this is very kind of simple historical narrative dealing with an incident that occurred in the city of Ephesus. And we'll endeavor however to allow the Holy Spirit to teach spiritual truth even through this historical event.

Now the history of Christianity has taught us well many things. But one thing the history of Christianity has taught us is that the church thrives best when it is persecuted. When the church creates issues in the world, it then begins to thrive in the purest sense. The persecuted church confronts the world and grows and has effect. A bold church is an effective church. And a bold church is a persecuted church. So persecution and effectiveness to some degree go together.

I'm always a little bit shaky when churches receive awards from either civil government or state government or national government. Because I always feel there's got to be something wrong. I was noting the other night a particular church that received a great award from the local community for rendering such marvelous service to the community. That would never happen in the book of Acts. Now I'm not saying that we're to be anti-social, or anti-community relations, but there needs to be a sense in which the church is the conscience of the community. Not the comforter of the community.

And in the book of Acts, the church grew when it was persecuted. When the church becomes the friend of the system, then it gets into trouble. When the church begins to play sociological or political games, then it gets into trouble. Now we're going to see something of this repeated lesson in the book of Acts here in the 19th chapter. Now we find ourselves in the city of Ephesus with the Apostle Paul. He has been there for nearly three years. This is his third missionary journey. He was of course originally one of the pastors of the church of Antioch after his conversion and some itinerant ministry near his home.

He arrived at Antioch and along with Barnabas and three other fellows became one of the pastors of the church in Antioch. From that point, God separated him and Barnabas to begin missionary tours. And so he and Barnabas took one, then he and Silas took one and so forth. This is the third of those missionary journeys. And as he arrives at Ephesus, God has already done a marvelous work. We find that the groundwork had been laid by some friends that he had left there namely Aquila and Priscilla. That Apollos, that great orator, that polished man also had laid some groundwork. And now Paul arrives and great things happen.

In Versus one to seven of chapter 19, the church was really born. It was really founded. It was established as 12 disciples of John the Baptist were brought to Jesus Christ. And a nucleus of

believers began. And we saw then in our last several studies that Paul went in verse 8 into the synagogue and he began to teach there for three months. And there were some who were hardened, but there were some who believed. The Jews had been evangelized. As a result of this tremendous teaching that Paul was doing, verse 10 says "that all that dwell in Asia heard the Word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks."

So Ephesus had a church established, it became a beachhead for evangelism that extended to the entire Roman province of Asia Minor. Great things had been accomplished. Now the whole thing can be summed up in the statement of verse 20. "So mightily grew the Word of God and prevailed." Now that was really the key to everything. The Word of God was the dominating force at that point in Ephesus. And believe me this is a historical pattern when there was great blessing in any place it was through the Word of God. You have in Acts 12:24 this statement. "But the Word of God grew and multiplied." You have it back in chapter 6 also in the book of Acts. Again, "where there was great victory," it says in verse 7. "And the Word of God increased and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith. Wherever the word of God dominates results occur."

And there's always going to be flack because the system which is operated by Satan cannot tolerate the unadulterated presentation of the pure word. So that the prevailing of the Word has two results. Progress for the gospel and persecution from Satan, always. Always. And this is the way we ought to expect things to happen. Now as we come to chapter 19 of the book of Acts, we find that this tremendous pattern had happened in Ephesus. First of all there was persecution. We saw it. Satan started out by verse 9 just having people speak evil about Christianity. Then all of a sudden he brought along these exorcists. And they tried to mimic what Paul was doing and confused the issue.

And so forth. And now as we come to this horsing from verse 21 on, "Satan really musters all of his powers and he creates a riot that surges through the entire city of Ephesus. In an effort to counteract the work of the Apostle Paul and the Christians." And so what we're coming to then is a very predictable thing. In the history of the church, the word prevails, progress occurs, that is people get saved and Satan begins to find that he has to oppose. And so we see persecution. Satan always opposes the progress of the Gospel, always.

In Jerusalem for example, Satan sent the opposition of organized religion, didn't he? Judaism. In Damascus, it was the same. In Antioch it was the opposition of personal prejudice and envy. In Lystra, it was the opposition of ignorant paganism. Among the Judaizers, it was the opposition of ceremonial legalism. In Philippi, it was the opposition of angry sorcery. In Thessalonica, it was the opposition of political revolution. In Athens it was the opposition of cultured Hedonism. In Corinth it was the opposite of philosophical skepticism.

And in Ephesus here, it is the opposition basically of a pseudo-religious materialism. And I'll define that as we go. But first of all it was the opposition here in Ephesus of verbal slander, verse 9. "And then of Satanic infiltration." verse 13 where Satan tried to slide into the Christian community and just become one of them. But thirdly and we're going to see this, the real riot comes when sort of a pseudo religious materialism comes to the form.

I suppose we could say in the case of Ephesus that there were three approaches of Satan. Hardness, hypocrisy and hatred. And those were his three particular angles of opposition for the gospel. So whenever the Word prevails, Satan is aggressively set against the Word. And here in

Ephesus we find beginning in verse 21 that the vent of the people, that their anger is based upon their desire for material gain. In other words, Christianity was affecting their business. That's kind of exciting. Christianity was an economic problem in the first place.

And this is nothing new. Christianity and economics have mixed a lot. Simon mixed Christianity with economics; he wanted to buy the power of the Holy Spirit. So it's nothing new. Remember the medium girl in Acts 16 and "Paul cast a demon out of her" and why did her owners get upset? Because they were making a living off her. So again, Christianity upset somebody's economics. It should.

There are some ways that people make livings that Christianity should upset. That's part of it. Alright, let's, before we get into the riot, look at verse 21. Because Verses 21 and 22 are kind of a little note on Paul and the riot doesn't start until verse 23. So we'll have a little bit of peace before we hit the maelstrom that comes in 23. Verse 21. "After these things were ended, that is after the triumph over magic." Remember all the people came and burned the magic books and everything. "And after the Gospel was firmly established, Paul purposed in the spirit, in his spirit, in his own mind literally. When he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia to go to Jerusalem, saying 'after I have been there, I must also see Rome.'"

Now Paul always was making plans. Paul was a master strategist. Here he says now I'm going to go through Macedonia and Achaia, then I'm going to Jerusalem and after that I must also see Rome. Paul sets this firmly in his mind. After he sees the church at Ephesus is established, after he sees that these people bring all their magical books and burn them. He has been there for nearly three years teaching. He knows they know enough. There are elders there of quality enough to lead the church. The Christians are grown up, they're mature. The work has matured. Churches have been established throughout Asia Minor. We mentioned last time that we think that at least all seven churches have the book of Revelation possibly could have been founded during this three year period while Paul was in Ephesus.

And so there's a great work, the whole province has heard of the Gospel. There are people established in churches and other places. Everything is great and it's in good shape and he says; "Now I think I can leave." Two and half years or so has passed. And he says, "I'm going to go to Macedonia and Achaia, then back to Jerusalem" because Macedonia and Achaia would be west from there. Back across that little sea, back west again. Then he would have to go east to Jerusalem, then back west again to Rome.

This is his plan. You say, well what's he want to do all that for? Why does he want to go to Macedonia and Achaia? Well let's start there. That's a most interesting point. Why does he want to go in verse 21 to Macedonia and Achaia? Why does he want to go west? He's just been there. He established all those churches there, like Corinth and Philippi and Thessalonica and Berea. That's over there, why go back there? Well here's the reason. He wanted to go there and then to Jerusalem.

The church of Jerusalem was very poor. And Paul wanted to take a love offering from his churches as a gift to the church at Jerusalem. The reason he wanted to go to Macedonia and Achaia was to collect his offering. And I think that's kind of an exciting reason, really if you want to know. In several places in Corinthians he alludes to this offering just to maybe I can point out one or two of them. Chapter 9, verse 1 "is touching the administering to the saints that is superfluous for me to write you

for I know the readiness of your mind for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia and Achaia."

In other words, here he makes reference to Macedonia and Achaia. He goes on to talk about their giving all the way down in this. They didn't even give sparingly and so forth and so forth. He makes a note of this particular thing of their gift elsewhere in Corinthians as well. At the end of the book of Romans, I think its verse, let's see, 25 and 26 of chapter 15. "But now I go under Jerusalem to minister under the saints for it has pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints who are at Jerusalem."

So Paul went to Macedonia and Achaia to gather an offering and then to take it to the poor saints in Jerusalem. And you say, well why did he want to do that? Well one, because they had a need. And I think it's important for us to recognize that Paul was teaching the lesson of the unity of the body. That a church in one place is greatly responsible for a body of believers in another place. They were one body and Paul was emphasizing the unity of the church. And I think secondly Paul wanted to teach the practical lessons of love. That love gets right down to the simplicity of giving your money for the sake of somebody else. That's the most practical lesson of love, giving, self-sacrifice.

So Paul did do that. We don't know all of the details here in Acts, but he did go to Macedonia and Achaia, he collected the offering, finally over in chapter 21, verse 17 I think it is he arrives in Jerusalem. So he did do that. His plan did come to fruition. The Lord allowed that plan to take place. Now back to verse 21. He says, "After that, I must also see Rome." Now just keep this in mind. Paul was a strategist and he wanted to reach as far as he could reach with the gospel. And Paul's plan was this. To plant the gospel in key cities on a line from Antioch to Rome.

And if you follow the ministry of Paul, he just stops all the way along at key points on the great road from Antioch to Rome. And he's planting the churches in the key centers. And from there they spread to the province. If Paul could knock off the capital of the province, he felt he had a running start on the province. And so he wants to go one step further to reach Rome. And incidentally that wasn't the end of it either as you'll see in a minute. Now after he had planted the church in Ephesus, he realized that the line of witness would then begin to spread from Ephesus. And so he would go to Rome, plant the witness there, there was already a church there, but perhaps he could enhance the witness. And then it would begin to spread.

And then as all these centers began to spread, they would sort of cross-pollinate and the whole area would be saturated with the Gospel. And he believed in the process of reproduction of evangelism by reproduction. Where you would win some people to Christ, establish a church, that church would grow, send out others to establish other churches and by multiplication you would conquer an area. Not by the superficial sweep and so this was his plan. Now when he got to Rome, that was only a step on the way to somewhere else.

You say where was he going from there? Well in Romans 15:24 he says, "Whenever I take my journey into Spain," and then it says here in the authorized, not in the best manuscripts, "I will come to you." Next line "for I trust to see you in my journey." In other words, he writes the Romans and says, I'm coming to stop off on my way to Spain. Say why is he going to Spain? Simple, it was there. Why do they climb a mountain? It's there. People need to hear about the Lord. And Spain was a great place. I mean there was some great men there. Rome had moved in and conquered Spain as it was. Seneca was there, the great mind of the Romans, and Paul could see that conquering Spain would be fantastic. And that was just another line from Rome.

So he could go all the way from Jerusalem, Antioch and straight out as far as he could go to reach Spain with the Gospel. This was in his mind to do. He was a strategist planning his conquests. He writes to the Romans in chapter 1 verse 13 of Romans. "I would not have you ignorant brother in the off times I purpose to come unto you but was prevented thus far that I might have some fruit among you even as among other Gentiles. I am better to the Greeks, to the Barbarians, to the wise, to the unwise so much as in me as I am ready to preach the Gospel to you that are at Rome also."

So he wanted to go to Rome. After he had taken care of the needs of the saints in Jerusalem. Incidentally there's a great break kind of and keep it in your mind. Right here in the book of Acts. Because from here on, the whole goal in the mind of Paul is Rome. And finally at the end of Acts, he gets there. But he doesn't get there in the way that he thought he would get there. But he gets there. From here on out, his sights are set on Rome. And he's going to make it. And man is it an exciting trip getting there.

Verse 22. "So he sent into Macedonia two" these are advanced men. He's going to Macedonia. So he sends in two of those administered unto him. Timothy and Erastus. We all know who Timothy is. He had been at Corinth. He had come back to Ephesus and now Paul sends him to Macedonia to let him know he's coming. Pave the way, get things set up for him. And Erastus and we don't know who he is. Maybe the same one as mentioned in Romans 16:23 but that was a fairly common name. So we really don't know.

But he himself stayed in Asia for a season. So he stayed. He sent these two advanced guys out to get things ready for his coming to Macedonia to make the collection and do some preaching. But he stayed. You say well why did he stay? Well I think it's clear why he stayed. He wrote the Corinthians. And he said this, 1 Corinthians 16:8. "I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost." Why? "For a great door and effectual has opened unto me. And there are many adversaries." Now if Timothy come, see that he may be with you without fear. So he was writing to Corinth and saying from Ephesus, he wrote this. "I'm going to send Timothy, you receive him. I'm staying because a great door and effectual has opened unto me and there are many adversaries."

So he wasn't done yet there. He realized God had some more for him to do. So he had a great door and he also had many adversaries. Well the adversary comes to the fore, beginning then in verse 23 as we see the riot. Now in your outline you'll see we pulled out three simple thoughts here. The causes of the riot, the characteristics of the riot and the calming of the riots. The causes, the characteristics and the calming of the riots. Now let me just say this. The real cause of the riots was Satan's antagonism to the prevailing of the Word. Okay? That's just the general truth that's sort of pervades everything. verse 20.

"For the Word grew and prevailed and Satan got uptight and started this riot." That's the real behind the scenes reason for the riot. But as we look at these verses, there were some sort of superficial reasons, some superficial causes that actually brought this thing to pass. Look at verse 23. And here we'll start with the causes of the riot. "At the same time," this is when Paul is staying in Asia Minor or Ephesus, "there arose no small stir about that Way." And what have we said about the term "the Way" or "that Way?" That was a reference to what? Christianity.

Jesus had said, "I am the Way." And Peter had said, "neither is there salvation any other, there's

none other name under heaven." So Christianity got the name of the Way. And so here there was no small stir over Christianity. They were really uptight about the Christian message. And things have moved. I mean Paul had been preaching, people had been getting converted, the church was growing, the whole of Asia Minor was just dominated by the message of the Gospel. It was like having an early Jerusalem, when the leaders came and said, "You have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine." And they got all uptight and started to persecute him.

Well they had filled Asia Minor with their doctrine. The gospel was sweeping over Asia Minor. God was doing some exciting things and the people got upset. Satan stirring them up. It's kind of exciting to see that that's what the Gospel should always do. The church should always create no small stir. Whenever I hear that there's some flack flying around about the church of Jesus Christ somewhere I get excited about that. Because we should be the adject into the community if our adjection is in the area of godliness.

Now this riot incidentally will provide for you any of you that are studying sociology and mob psychology. It will provide for you some great insights into the typical approach of mob psychology. As well as giving you some insight into how Satan operates. So the basic cause of the riot then was Christianity's tremendous spread. And the mighty use of the Word of God. But there were some specific causes. Let's look at verse 24 and meet a man by the name of Demetrius. That's a very common name. There's another Demetrius or so in the Bible. We don't know if it's the same as this one.

"For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith who made silver shrines for Artemus" or Diana if you will, the Greek is Artemus "brought no small gain into the craftsman." Now here we meet this guy Demetrius. Now very likely Demetrius is a big wheel in the guild of silversmiths. Many of you have studied any kind of world history or ancient history you know that there were such things as guilds in Europe. Where people who were artisans of the same craft would ban together just like unions today, perhaps less sophisticated, but just as powerful in the community at which they existed.

And so all of these people would ban together for common profit. It maybe that Demetrius was the head of the guild of silversmiths or maybe he was just a leader by very nature. But nevertheless, he kind of steps to the front. He was the guy who made silver shrines for Artemus and brought no small gain unto the craftsmen. In otherwords, probably what he did was contract out the rest of these silversmiths to make these shrines. Now this was big business, believe me. His name appears also as I mentioned other places 3 John I think it's verse 12, but we have no idea whether it was the same one. If it was the same one, he was later converted, which is certainly possible; we're not denying that.

Now this was a fairly common trade. And it's interesting that in many of the archaeological discoveries around Ephesus, there is evidence of such a trade as silversmith. The only interesting thing is that we can't find any of these shrines made in silver. We can find them made of terracotta; you know that's clay, earthen stuff. We can find them made out of other types of things. But we can't find any silver ones. And what historians have concluded is the fact that when conquering people came in through the centuries and found anything in silver, they melted it down because of its value. And so all of the silver artifacts are long gone.

But we do have evidence that such a silversmith guilds did exist or unions. Now he was probably a wealthy and an influential man. The temple of Diana was big business, a monstrous place, 420 feet

by 250 feet. A huge place. And hundreds of people preached to eunuchs, temple worshippers, priestesses, prostitutes, the whole thing, all worshipping up there. And this temple also was a treasure house for gold and silver. So it was a very, very, very, wealthy place. A very famous place, people from all over the world came there. In fact there were a whole multiple of pillars. And these pillars were donated by princes and rulers from all over the world.

So it was a very, very famous place. And periodically during the year it had a string of pilgrims making an influx into the city. So tourist traffic in the worship of Artemus was really big business. And the silversmiths made their living by selling these little shrines to the tourists. And to the people making pilgrimages to the city of Ephesus to worship at the shrine of Artemus. Now the best we can tell was that these were little models of the temple or else little statues of Artemus. Now this was an interesting thing.

The fact that in history past, clear back into the Old Testament, people always had household gods. You could look up all kinds of Old Testament passages that would talk about that. Well it was so in the day of Paul. Those people who worship these various gods got little miniatures of these gods and they sometimes put them in their house, sometimes they stuck them on their chariots. People still do that. Still see people with little gods, little idols stuck on their dashboards. So that's nothing new. They did that even in a time of the New Testament. And so these silversmiths were really in big business. Because Ephesus had at a period in the month of May a thing called the Artimesian games, where people from all over the known world converged on the city of Ephesus.

And some historians believe that that time of the year and that those Artimisians games were going on right at the time of this riot. So that this would be a time when the masses of people were swarming the city of Ephesus and these people were making their living at the very highest level of the year off their silver shrines and silver statues of the goddess Artemus. And all these people would be buying their household gods. The Romans called them pinates.

And these were typical household gods. Read Genesis 31:19 or 1 Samuel 19:13. Jose at 3, 4 and you'll read about such gods even in the Old Testament. Verse 25. "So Demetrius called together all these guys who were making a money off of making shrines." Verse 25 he "called them together with the workman of like occupation and said, 'sirs you know that by this craft we have our wealth.'" He says, "Guys, we make our living off of making these little shrines."

And as I said, this was probably according to some chronologists, the month of May and it was a big time and this was really the place that was filled with worshippers and this was the time of making big money. And what happened was the gospel had hit him right in the money bag. The gospel was fouling up their business. Because people were accepting the truth of Christ and turning from idols. Bad business. You know you ever thought wouldn't it be exciting if the church if Grace Community Church had such an affect on this community that we put all that kind of illicit stuff out of business?

Can you imagine all of the bars and all of that kind of stuff protesting that we were messing up their business by winning people to Christ. Alleluia. Well that's exactly what was happening here. It was becoming an economic problem because Christianity was having such a tremendous spread of power in Ephesus and surrounding areas. So the Gospel hit him in the money bag. Verse 26. "Moreover you see and hear that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia." This is Demetrius talking. "This Paul" you could get a little disdain in that. "Hath persuaded and turned away many people. Saying that they are no gods which are made with hands."

Can you believe the depth of Paganism that believes that you take a pile of silver and form it into a God? He says, "do you realize that all over Asia Minor, Paul has made people to believe that these gods were making art legit? Do you know what that's doing to our business?" The Christian preachers were denying the existence of gods made with hands. And many people were persuaded they were right. So Demetrius confessed that the apostolic preaching was successful. What a testimony. Do you know one of the reasons God put this whole account in here? I had to ask myself that.

Why does God take up all this 20 verses to tell us about a riot? One of the reasons is because it's exciting to see the successes of Christianity put in the mouths of the pagans, do you see? It isn't just us that's claiming God's power. The pagans are admitting it. Do you see how important that kind of apologetic is? It's one reason why it's here. And another thing, the reason the spirit puts it here is because the rioters are so frustrated because there's nothing they can really do because there's no one to blame and there's nothing evil that Christians have done.

So again, God lets the pagans state the case that Christianity is successful, God is turning people from idols and secondly there's nothing you can criticize him for. That's why the whole account's here. And as you'll see in a minute, they all get together and riot like crazy, but they don't know what to do. You know it's exciting to see the success of Christianity. You say how did it come about? What brought the success? I'll tell you. What brought the success first of all was one man totally committed to Jesus Christ. Do you believe that one man totally committed to Jesus Christ can make a difference in a province? In a state, in a country?

This man did. Paul. One man committed to Jesus Christ came into one city and turned a province on its ear. One man. But you know what that one man spent his time doing? Night and day, praying and teaching with tears the Word of God. And what an effect he had. So it was first of all the success that came by the presence of one man dedicated. But secondly it was the success that came by the presence of a purified church. You know when those people who believe, Verses 17 to 19 of chapter 19. "When they believe, they who believe" verse 18 says, "confessed and showed their deed or revealed their secrets and burned their magic books." And so forth and so on. And when the church got purified, man things began to happen. It's in response to the purity of the church that verse 20 is written.

"So mightily grew the Word of God and prevailed." The success of the gospel was dependent upon one dedicated man and a purified church. And that's why we sang this morning, Purify My Heart. Because therein lies the key to success. The victories were victories of a positive ministry, I love this. They didn't go around blasting Artemus. They didn't have marches against the Temple of Artemus. They didn't carry posters around down with Artemus of the Ephesians. They didn't land blast that, all they did was preach a positive message and the negative took care of itself.

That's all. People who become temples of the Holy Spirit don't need temples of Artemus. There was no demonstration against idolatry, there was just salvation and the new forced out the old. I read a little deal that was kind of interesting the other day. I don't often read stuff like this. But I got to reading about a scrub oak tree. And I read about a scrub oak tree for some strange reason. Now I know why. During the wintertime all the trees lose their leaves except the scrub oak. And it has these crummy little leaves and the wind blows like mad and it keeps blowing through autumn and it blows through winter and this scrub oak still has its leaves.

The scrub oak loses its leaves in springtime. You know how? Because new leaves push off the old ones. I thought boy, that is really an act illustration of what happened here in Ephesus. It wasn't some great big tempest that blew off the worship of Diana; it wasn't some attack on that. It was the growth of new life in the church that just automatically pushed out the old see. And the issue took care of itself.

And that which the outside tempest could never accomplish, inside life did. People if you want to change the community for Jesus Christ, don't protest against a community. Just live a holy life and start leading people to Jesus Christ. And the end result is the community won't be able to handle you. Always thought about this particular pastor who used to march on the city hall all the time. What a waste. You get a whole bunch of people to march on the city hall for what reason? Where everybody say, oh, there's that nut marching down to city hall again.

The power of a new life if you got time to march in the city hall, use that time to win some people to Christ. And one by one you begin to affect your community. So we're not interested in marching anywhere. We're just interested in winning people to Jesus Christ and pushing off the old by the new life that comes. God help us to create issues, not by creating issues, but by being what we are.

Verse 27. And here we come to the specific causes. He really gets very, very clear now about what his gripe is. "So that not only this our craft is in danger to be said it not." Stop there. First problem we've got men, we're getting it in the pocketbook. This is the materialistic cause. Demetrius appeals to their pocketbooks. He says in verse 25 "we make our wealth by this craft." In other words, we make our livelihood; we earn our living by this.

He's saying we can't tolerate Christianity because receipts are off. But can you believe the crassness of the human mind. Eternal souls are at stake and they're worried about their moneybag. The sickness of the human soul. I always think of the same scripture and you probably already thought of it and you beat me to it. Listen to Mark 8:36. "For what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world lose his own soul or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world, lose his own soul? Profit him anything. Doesn't profit him anything. But here was the world getting uptight because they were losing out on the receipts. Luke 16:13, the Bible says, "you can't serve God and money." And many a man believe me beloved, many a man is in hell because he loved money more than he loved God. And I can name one. Judas.

Judas. Matthew 26:15 says about Judas these words. Sad words but truer of many more than just Judas. And he said unto them, "what will you give me and I will deliver him unto you and a bargain with him for 30 pieces of silver. And from that time he sought to betray Him." Yes, hell is filled with people who love money more than they love God. And so he appeals to their pocketbooks. Secondly he appeals to their piety. And this is sort of temper their crassness. Verse 27. "But also" he says, "that the temple of the great Goddess Artemus should be despised." Stop right there.

Now he starts appealing to their piety. For the real issue was the first one. Here comes the pseudo religious thing. Our god is being defamed. And I suppose that made him feel a little less crass for their reaction to Christianity. They could at least feel a sort of a religious issue. And they needed to

defend their goddess. And I'm telling you that was some temple. It was a big deal. 220 years in building, finishing off everything, it was unbelievable place. Constantly being embellished one of the seven wonders of the world. This was their goddess. And they're saying our goddess is being defamed. These Christians are challenging the majesty of Artemus.

So he appeals to their pocketbook and their piety and thirdly he appeals to their patriotism. Verse 27, he says this. "And her magnificence should be destroyed whom all Asia and the world worshipith." This interesting comment. The goddess that was there, was venerated by the world. The whole civilized world within certain reasonable bounds was knowledgeable about Artemus. It had been built by the gifts from many rulers and the worldwide influence.

And so what he's saying Demetrius is saying this is a question of our own reputation in the world. Ephesus stands in the world in the place it stands because of this temple. This is our claim to fame. This is us before the world. Ephesus is Artemus. And if you believe in Ephesus, then you've got to stand for Artemus. In other words, the world is going to look down on us if something happens to our goddess, we'll have lost our stature in the world. So he appeals to patriotism, reputation. A good patriot wouldn't want to see the religion that had made the city fall aside.

So their trade was in danger, their religion was in danger and their reputation in the world was in danger. Oh I like that. Christianity hit them economically, religiously and politically and socially. Isn't that tremendous? Boy that's what Christianity ought to do. It ought to affect the system economically, it ought to throw some kinds of businesses right out. Just by the power that it generates in changing lives. And it ought to affect things religiously. It ought to just destroy false religion. And it ought to affect things politically and socially.

Oh I just pray Lord that we can have so affect our state, our city, our country as this church did. Well the speech caused a riot. So there are the causes. Let's look at the characteristics of the riot. Verse 28. "And when they heard these things" you know the first thing about mob psychology. You've got to have a catalyst, right? You've got to have a Demetrius. Got to have some guy that gets up there and whips everybody into a frenzy. And so Demetrius was the tool.

And verse 28, "And when they heard these sayings, they were full of wrath." This is really kind of funny. Luke has a terrific sense of humor. You'll see it here. "They were so mad they cried out great is Artemus of the Ephesians." They just started yelling. "Fired on by the incendiary speech, they ran into the open street and started invoking their goddess." The literal Greek here is "great Artemus of the Ephesians." They started yelling to their God, do something.

They were mad, that's the first characteristic friends, the first characteristic of the riot is anger. And incidentally that's typical of a rioting mob. They're mad. They're angry. You know you may have seen some riots where you get just as injured by being a part of the riot as being the object thereafter. Because it's indiscriminate. It's just anger run wild. So they were angry. Typical of a riot. Then the world does get angry with Christianity. So you need to expect that.

You want to make some people angry, who need to be made angry over Christianity. Think of Acts 7:54. Remember Stephen? Preached a wonderful message from my standpoint. Loved it. From the standpoint of the unbelieving people in town, they hated it. It says when they heard these things they were cut to the heart and they gnashed on him with their teeth. They ground their teeth at him. They

were so mad. And they grabbed stones and killed him.

It happened again in the 16th chapter of Acts. The frustration of sinners when confronted with a gospel the multitude rose up Acts 16:22, "together against them and the magistrates tore off their clothes and commanded to beat them." Did you see this? They just started ripping their clothes, they were furious. And they started yelling at the lecturers, "beat them, beat them." They laid many stripes on them, they threw them in a jail and slapped them in stocks.

And the world gets mad. Gets angry with Christianity. Sometimes people say I was so worried because I shared Christ and they got upset. Good. It's very good. As long as they got upset about Christ and not about you. In Acts 21:27, "when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews were of Asia when they saw him in the temple stirred up all the people and laid hands on him." It wasn't to ordain him, believe me.

Verse 28 said, "crying out men of Israel, help. Get them. This is the man that teaches all men everywhere against the people and the law and this place and has brought Greeks into the temple that polluted the holy place." And they were mad boy. And verse 31 says, "they went about to kill him." No Christianity makes people mad. Because people don't like to be confronted with the sinfulness of their sin. And they don't like to have to face the fact that their entire way of life and their entire system is wrong.

And so in their fury, they start screaming the name of their goddess. That will remind you of the first kings where those guys were trying to get to Baal and they started hollering up to Baal and cutting themselves and tearing their clothes and saying, Baal, maybe he's on a vacation. Oh, you better yell a little louder. I think he's sleeping. See. Jeremiah 50:38 is an interesting verse. It says, "They are mad over their idols." These people just lost their cool, they were in a frenzy screaming, rioting, yelling the name of their goddess. You know that's what happened, that kind of anger is what happened at the death of Christ. That the people were so infuriated because they started screaming and yelling. "Crucify Him; crucify Him, away with Him, away with Him." And they turned into the frenzied mob. And the truth only angered them. Paul had tried every way that he could to get the truth across or at least allow them to concede something.

No. So the first characteristic of a mob is anger. The second one is confusion. And I want you to see this. This is interesting. Verse 29. So there they all are screaming their heads off, "Great Artemus of the Ephesians." And the whole city was filled with confusion. That's the second characteristic of a mob. They don't know what to do. Melee, chaos, disorder. So in their confusion, they grab two guys by the name of Gaius and Aristarchus. Men of Macedonia Paul's fellow travelers and rushed with one according to theater.

Well this theater was an interesting thing. That still exists today in Ephesus. The ruins of it still exist and it could hold anywhere from 25 to 30,000 people. So it was quite a place. It was hued out of the side of a hill. We don't know much about Gaius, he could be the same, well he is the same one mentioned in chapter 20, verse 4. Gaius of Derbe. We don't know because there are several of that name in Scripture. We don't know which ones they are. So we don't know whether we know much about him or not. But Aristarchus who was a man of Macedonia, incidentally the best manuscripts would make men of Macedonia man of Macedonia, referring to Aristarchus.

Since Gaius has said in chapter 20, verse 4 to be from Derbe and Derbe was where? In Galatia. So Macedonia would be the assignment given to Aristarchus. He was a native of Thessalonica, he was a converted Jew. And he shared many things with Paul. In fact he was in prison in Rome with Paul. So he was really a beloved companion. So they grabbed these two guys, soon ___ fellow travelers, fellow companions and they haul them off into the theater.

And this beautiful place excavated now and visible would have been able to hold easily 30,000 people. And that's a low estimate. So there is the frenzied mob filling the theater and they got these two guys standing in the middle of them. Now watch verse 30. "When Paul would have entered in under the people, the disciples permitted him not." I like his courage, don't you? Paul's first reaction was I'm going over to that theater. And that's good.

John Wesley who is very experienced with angry mobs advised his early Methodist associates with this statement. "Always look a mob in the face." Now that was Paul's thought. So Paul figured, well I'll go down there, I'll just stand there and I'll take care of that mob. Well he had, he'd seen so many victories in the power of God that he wasn't afraid of anything. Nothing. But some Christians restrained him. You say, well why did they do that? Well his life was in danger. You say, well couldn't God take care of that? Yes, but I think there's an interesting principle here. And I don't know all the ramifications of this, but I thought of this.

Sometimes reason is better than foolish faith. Right? I mean the old story, well God's going to protect me anyways, so I'll lay down in the fast lane of the freeway. See. Now there's a certain sense in which you got to use your head. Let me put it this way. It is faith, it is faith to be in danger and believe God will deliver you. It is presumption to put yourself in danger and then expect God to deliver you. If the danger comes around you, believe God will take care of you. But there's no sense in being stupid about it.

And that's presuming on God. That's what Satan tried to get Jesus to do. He said, dive off the temple, right? And the Bible said, the angels will lift you up. He says, wait a minute, that would be to tempt God. "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Why? That would be presumed on God. It's one thing to be in danger and believe God will get you out, it's something else to presume on God and go jumping into danger.

And so the other Christians use their heads and said, No Paul, there's no sense in going over there. You're going to get it. They'll kill you. So the disciples restrained him, verse 30. Well verse 31. The same message came from another source. Certain of the chief of Asia, Asiarchs they were called who were his friends. Apparently Paul had made some friends of the Asiarchs and that would be because he was a Roman citizen. Sent unto him besieging him that he would not venture into the theaters. So here came these political wheels, the Asiarchs, just a word about them.

Each province had assigned guys from the Roman government. In other words, the province was the Roman province and so the Romans would send in some guys to kind of run the province. They had really two responsibilities. They were to promote the worship of Rome or allegiance to Rome and the worship of the emperor. They were Roman PR men. They were to get those people to subscribe to Rome and worship the emperor. Now they were named by whatever province they were in. If they were in Galatia, they were called Galatarchs. If they were in Syria, they were called Syriarchs. If they were in Macedonia, they were called Macedoniarchs. If they were in Asia, they were called Asiarchs. And so that's what it says there when it says Chief of Asia.

They were the Asiarchs. These were guys that were assigned to Asia Minor to keep the peace to make sure the people kept their allegiance to Rome and worshipped the emperor. Now emperor worship was a very broad and general thing. These guys also presided over the games. And that's one of the reasons we believe that this was the month of May and the Artimisian games were going on because they were all there in Ephesus.

And they would normally probably be stationed all around Asia Minor. They were all there. And they knew that this was a possible volatile situation. And in order to keep the peace and keep everything calm and intact, they said, Paul don't go in there. And apparently they had had some dealings with Paul before. They were his friend. That doesn't mean they were bosom buddies, but they were acquaintances. They knew Paul personally. And so because Paul was a Roman citizen, they desired to protect him.

He was a Roman citizen and this was basically a kind of a pagan area though it was now ruled by Rome. And so they were protecting Paul on the basis probably of his Roman citizenship. And they sure didn't want more trouble. They saw what was going on with the mob and they just wanted to let it all die down. And if Paul went in there, they'd really have something going.

Alright, so they besought him not to. So they got the word from the Christians and the non-Christians not to go. That seems to me then it's pretty evident that God was behind that. Verse 32. "Some therefore cried one thing and some another." Now is that a mob? Everybody yelling their whole heads off and saying what they want. "For the assembly was in confusion." And here's Luke's sense of humor. "And the greater part knew not for what reason they would come together." They had no idea what was even going on.

They're all screaming, oh, I guess we all yell, oh great, Artemus of the Ephesians. Is that what we're supposed to be doing? And they're all yelling and everybody's screaming and it's a confused thing and nobody is even aware of what's going on. They don't even know what they're doing. Typical, typical mob. Interesting thing, the word cried there is in the imperfect tense. It indicates a continuous confusion. This confusion went on and on and they had no idea what they were doing. A typical riot scene.

You know can you imagine what a mob did in those days? I thought about that as I was reading this. I thought what do you do if you were in a mob? You don't have any matches. So you can't burn anything. And there's no windows. So you can't break anything. So you just stand in the theater and keep screaming. Being in a mob in those days would really be, there's no cars, so you can't overturn them.

I mean and there's no pen so you can't write on the walls. What are you going to do? There's no spray cans, you're, all you can do is stand there and scream. So they just stood around getting frustrated. You say, well that would get old. Well it did get old. So a mob has two characteristics. Anger and confusion. The third one is closed mindedness. Have you ever noticed that about a mob? Closed mindedness.

Look at verse 33. "And they drew Alexander out of the multitude." Alexander who we don't know, but Alexander somebody. The Jews putting him forward. "The Jews shoved up Alexander." Probably on

the stage in the theater. "And Alexander beckoned with a hand and would have made his defense under the people. But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice for about the space of two hours cried 'great Artemus of the Ephesians.'" They didn't want to hear one word out of the mouth of Alexander.

So they just started screaming and they kept it up for two hours. Can you imagine the frustration just standing there screaming for two hours? Now we don't know who Alexander was. He may have been a Christian Jew. And the Jews may have shoved him forward. See the Jews knew they were under pressure. Because everybody assumed that Christianity was a sect of Judaism, right? And so they were afraid. So maybe they shoved this Christian Jew Alexander up there so they were going to lay the blame on this Christian Jew and try to say it isn't Jews, it's Christian Jews that are messing up the place.

Or maybe he was a Jew. Not a Christian. Who just was pushed up there to tell everybody that the Jews had nothing to do with this. We don't know whether he was a Christian Jew or a non-Christian Jew he was apparently put up there by the Jews to defend them somehow. But nobody would listen to him. So immediately when he started opening his mouth, they started screaming for two hours. Completely out of control. Well if you let him go for two hours, it's a pretty good chance of kind of running out of gas. Right?

So the third point we come to is the calming of the riot. There was one sharp guy there who handled the situation. Verse 35 and we'll go through this quickly. "And when the town clerk" which is probably not a good designation for this guy, he was the chief citizen of the town, he was the chairman of the town assembly, the town council, he was the secretary of the town council. He was the guy who called the convening of the town meetings which occurred three times a month. He was the very important citizen. He finally quieted the people after two hours of standing in the middle of that place screaming their heads off.

It wouldn't have been too difficult. He said, "You men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not that the city of Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana?" And that the image which fell down from Jupiter. See this big, black, ugly image of Diana that they assumed had fallen from Jupiter; it probably was some sort of a meteorite. But nevertheless, the tradition had said it came down from Jupiter. And he says, don't you realize that there is in this city the worship of the great goddess Diana who came from heaven?

Now he's smart man. He knows that the Romans are going to hold him responsible for all the trouble. Because he's in charge of the town. He's like the mayor. And he knows that the Romans could impose a fine on that city or the Romans could take away their right to free government because they were a free city like Athens was. And they could really be in trouble. So he jumps up and he says, "don't you all know that this city is the worshipper" literally in the Greek, the temple warden of the great goddess Artemus.

And look at verse 36. Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against. In other words, if Artemus came from heaven from Jupiter, and if we are the great temple warden of this great goddess, then nothing can be done against them. You ought to be quiet and do nothing rashly. Why nothing can affect our great goddess, a whole lot of these little preachers roaming around and be like shooting a peashooter at the empire state building. This is big time stuff. They're not going to affect us. So he fires out a whole lot of nice glossy platitudes about the greatness of their god. And that

nothing could ever change that.

The goddess power was undeniable and secure. Relax he says, calm down. Verse 37. "For you have brought here these men who are neither robbers of temples, they have implundered the shrine of Diana or Artemus." And they're not blasphemers of your goddess. They haven't blasphemed your goddess. Isn't that a beautiful thing? You know the Holy Spirit put this whole story in here for no other reason than just to have a pagan say verse 37.

That Christians don't steal and don't blaspheme other gods in this case. These Christians were like Jesus said they were, as wise as serpents and as what? Harmless as doves. What a testimony in the mouth of a pagan. These Christians do not rob temples; they do not blaspheme our goddess. They do not commit sacrilege. They do not commit thievery. And so the pagans give a testimony to Christian's quality of life character. So here he says nothing's going to happen why these people can't affect our great goddess, they haven't done anything to hurt us? Verse 38. "Wherefore if Demetrius and the craftsmen who are with him have a matter against any man, the law is open, court's in session, there are deputies, there are judges, let them accuse one another." In other words, if it's a legal issue, take it to court.

If it's a legal issue, take it to court. Due process of law. Verse 39. "But if you inquire anything concerning other matters." In other words, if it isn't legal, if it's a social matter, "it shall be determined in a lawful assembly." And as I said, the city assembled three times a month. And so the town clerk says, "Look, if it's a social issue, let's bring it to the assembly when the assembly convenes. Not a riot." You say, well why was he so concerned about the riot? Verse 40. "For we are in danger to be called and questioned for this day's uproar."

There being no cause for which we may give an account of this concourse. Now you know what that is again. That's a statement of a pagan that the Christians have done nothing against the government. Isn't that great? Because Romans 13 says, "Christians are to be subject to the" what? "The powers that be that are ordained of God." And so he says, look, we're going to be in trouble. We're in danger to be called and questioned by Rome because we have no reason for this riot.

Verse 41. "When he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly." After several hours of mass confusion, mob hysterics, everybody went home. Listen people. The gospel provokes the world. And it's exciting to see that provocation take place. Now I think the town politician was a good guy politically, he was a sharp guy. Let me close with this very important point. Don't miss it. But listen. The town clerk did a great favor for the Ephesians. He did no favor for the church. Say what do you mean? He stopped the riot. Yes, you know what he did. He agreed and confirmed the superstition of the people, didn't he?

He took Christianity under his patronage. He said, they haven't done anything. What have they done against us? Let's let them be. Listen, the moment the church passed under the protection of the town clerk, they were in more danger than they were when the riot was going on. Did you hear that? The church always is in more danger when it is protected by the system than it is when it has to fight for its existence. Always. The last glimpse of the Ephesian church listen to it with the great pastors they had. Paul and Timothy. Just to name two. The last glimpse of the Ephesian church and the Bible is in these words. "I have this against thee. Thou didst leave thy first love."

And this is what the Lord said. Remember therefore from where thou art fallen and repent and do the first works or else I'll come unto thee quickly and remove thy lampstand out of its place except thou repent. Jesus said, I'm going to come and I'm going to wipe that church out. You know what happened? You go to Ephesus today and you know what you'll find? A squalid, Mohammedan village near where Ephesus was that doesn't name one single Christian in its population. The church always thrives; a riot is no threat to the church. Patronage is. The church always should be the conscience of the community. Whenever we are patronized by the system, we die.

Let's pray. Father, we thank You for the time spent this morning in the Word. We thank You for the knowledge that we have been given concerning these principles and truths that apply to the church. God give us the courage of our convictions, the boldness that the early church had. And the desire above all things to live godly lives in the midst of an ungodly world. And note that whoever would live godly in this present age, shall suffer persecution but may we remember that where the church is persecuted, the church prevails.

We thank You Father for the thrill and the joy of being a part of what you want to do in this world. May we be bold enough to make our lives a rebuke to the system. To make this church stand out that they may affect our world economically, religiously, politically and socially for the glory of Christ. Not by attacking those things, but by being what we are and may our new life push out the old. Give You the praise in Jesus' name, Amen.

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