

## Sermon Notes

# WORSHIP SERVICE -

11.16.2025

## PART 41 - REVIVAL AND RIOT IN EPHESUS

### I. INTRODUCTION

- The ancient city of Ephesus was a city overflowing with temples, spiritual experiences, occult and magical practices, and idolatry.
- It was a city steeped in religious devotion, a stronghold of human wisdom, but spiritually dead and enslaved to idols.
- Into that city Paul stepped in with nothing but the gospel of Jesus Christ and a revival broke out, the economy was shaken, and a riot ignited.
- But the story is not a mere history lesson, it is a mirror.
- Because the same spiritual confusion, the same counterfeit spirituality, the same hostility toward truth, and the same deep hunger for real transformation that marked Ephesus marks our world today.
- And into a world like that, God still sends ordinary Christians with an extraordinary gospel.
- The revival experienced in Ephesus is what we long to see in our own community and surrounding cities.
- This passage calls us to examine our own faith, expose our own idols, evaluate our own courage, and engage in our own gospel work.

### II. GOSPEL TOIL

Acts 19:1-10

And it happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the inland country and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples. 2 And he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they said, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." 3 And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" They said, "Into John's baptism." 4 And Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus." 5 On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying. 7 There were about twelve men in all.

8 And he entered the synagogue and for three months spoke boldly, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God. 9 But when some became stubborn and continued in unbelief, speaking evil of the Way before the congregation, he withdrew from them and took the disciples with him, reasoning

daily in the hall of Tyrannus. 10 This continued for two years, so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.

## JOHN'S DISCIPLES

- Upon arriving, Paul's first encounter is with "some disciples."
- As he engaged them, he noticed that there is something spiritually off with them and that caused him to question them.
- So he asked them two diagnostic questions.
- *"Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"*
- *"Into what they were you baptized?"*
- Their answer revealed everything.
- *"We haven't even heard that there is a Holy Spirit!"*
- They had no idea Pentecost had happened!
- They were still living in Old Covenant anticipation while the New Covenant had already begun.
- They had been baptized with John's baptism which was of repentance and preparation for the coming of the Messiah.
- So Paul proclaimed Jesus and explained that he is the one John had spoken about.
- They believed and were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.
- Paul laid hands on them and they experienced a mini-Pentecost. The Holy Spirit came upon them and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying.
- This is not the universal pattern for how believers receive the Spirit. The typical pattern is repent and believe and you will receive the Holy Spirit.
- We have seen these public manifestations of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit happening at key times to mark a new frontier of gospel expansion.
- What was so significant about this that warranted this Pentecost-like manifestation?
- It's another example of the gospel going to new frontiers and reaching another fringe group, just like the Samaritans, the Ethiopian eunuch, and the Gentiles.
- We're reminded that there is a huge difference between knowing about Jesus and knowing Jesus.
- Paul wrote to the believers in Corinth, "Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. (2 Cor 13:15)
- Is your faith rooted in Christ's finished work or are you trusting in something else?
- Is Christ really in you?

## THE SYNAGOGUE

- As was his custom, Paul begins by taking the gospel to the Jews.
- He labors for three months, reasoning, refuting, persuading from the Scripture that Jesus is the Christ.
- But, no surprise, many of the Jews rejected Jesus.
- Paul withdraws from preaching in the synagogue and takes the believers with him.

## THE HALL OF TYRANNUS

- Paul reasons daily in the hall of Tyrannus for two years.
- In God's providence, Paul utilizes this space for powerful gospel proclamation.
- Since the hall was public, Paul would have had the opportunity to evangelize all sorts of people during those two years.
- And v10 reveals the result: extraordinary expansion of the gospel, *"... all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord."*

- Now this wasn't through Paul alone, it was through the disciples who came to faith in Ephesus and then spread the word throughout Asia.
- All of the churches that are mentioned in Revelation 2 and 3: Smyrna, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Pergamum, Laodicea, were started through the revolutionary evangelistic work that began in Ephesus.
- May the same thing be said of our region. That everyone in Longwood, Lake Mary, Sanford, Altamonte Springs, and beyond has heard the Word of the Lord!
- Let's pray for that! Let's engage in faithful gospel toil for that!

### III. GOSPEL TRIUMPH

Acts 19:11-20

And God was doing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, 12 so that even handkerchiefs or aprons that had touched his skin were carried away to the sick, and their diseases left them and the evil spirits came out of them. 13 Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists undertook to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul proclaims." 14 Seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Sceva were doing this. 15 But the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and Paul I recognize, but who are you?" 16 And the man in whom was the evil spirit leaped on them, mastered all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. 17 And this became known to all the residents of Ephesus, both Jews and Greeks. And fear fell upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was extolled. 18 Also many of those who were now believers came, confessing and divulging their practices. 19 And a number of those who had practiced magic arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted the value of them and found it came to fifty thousand pieces of silver. 20 So the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily.

#### EXTRAORDINARY MIRACLES

- Vv11-20 chronicles some extraordinary miracles accompanying the gospel.
- Luke calls these miracles extraordinary, they were not normal miracles.
- People were taking pieces of cloths that touched Paul's skin and they were placing these cloths on the sick and demon oppressed and they were being healed and delivered.
- God was demonstrating through these extraordinary miracles His superiority over Ephesus' false idols, magic, and superstition.
- The Lord was getting their attention in order to draw them to himself.
- Miracles like this are not normative in the Christian life. The Christian life is about faith, trust, submitting to God's word, walking in the Spirit, and pursuing godly wisdom.
- God still does miracles today. We can certainly pray for God to do miraculous things, leaving it to his gracious providence and will to do whatever he wants for our good and his glory and to further his purposes.
- But we should never assume God isn't working if we don't see visible miracles.
- The greatest miracle is the new birth—a spiritually dead person made alive!
- We should keep trusting in God and faithfully engaging in gospel work and we will see God raise the dead to life.
- He will change lives as the gospel is proclaimed.

#### JEWISH EXORCISTS HUMILIATED

- The sheer superior power of Jesus's name and authority is then contrasted sharply with the story of the seven Jewish exorcists who want to cash in on the miraculous phenomenon.
  - They tried to use Jesus's name like a magic formula to cast out evil spirits from the oppressed.
  - They were saying, "*I command you by the Jesus that Paul preaches!*"
  - The evil spirit gave a chilling response, "*I know Jesus, and I recognize Paul, but who are you?*"
  - They tried to use Jesus's name like a spell and were easily recognized by the evil spirits for what they were, frauds who didn't belong to Jesus.
  - The man in whom the evil spirits were in beats all of them and they run out of the house naked and bloodied.
- There is a saving, healing, and delivering power in the name of Jesus Christ.
  - But you can't use his name second-hand.
  - Only those who belong to Jesus, who have the Spirit of Christ, have the authority to use his name.

## TRANSFORMATION AND REPENTANCE

- The public humiliation terrified the whole city.
- Fear fell upon them all and Jesus's name was magnified.
- A sweeping revival of repentance and confession and renunciation of wicked practices broke out in Ephesus.
- Those who claimed to be believers and had been continuing in their occult practices confessed and disclosed those evil practices and burned all of their magic books.
- The estimated value was the equivalent of millions of dollars today.
- They didn't give the books away or try to sell them; they destroyed them.
- The Spirit of the Lord had produced a deep change in them and had given them radical new affections.
- It shouldn't shock us that they did this. Salvation is a radical transformation at the heart level.
- It leads to the sanctifying work of the Spirit shaping us into the image of Christ over time.
- When you come to Christ, you have a new affection. That's what these Ephesian believers had experienced.
- Their actions showed that Jesus was more valuable to them than any god, power, false source of trust, or any amount of money.
- True repentance and revival of heart expels every rival love of the heart.
- Is there evidence in your life that Christ is of exceeding value to you?
- What "magic books" (idols, secret sins, ungodly habits) do you need to burn in your life?

## IV. GOSPEL TROUBLE

Acts 19:21-41

Now after these events Paul resolved in the Spirit to pass through Macedonia and Achaia and go to Jerusalem, saying, "After I have been there, I must also see Rome." 22 And having sent into Macedonia two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, he himself stayed in Asia for a while.

23 About that time there arose no little disturbance concerning the Way. 24 For a man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought no little business to the craftsmen. 25 These he gathered together, with the workmen in similar trades, and said, "Men, you know that from

this business we have our wealth. 26 And you see and hear that not only in Ephesus but in almost all of Asia this Paul has persuaded and turned away a great many people, saying that gods made with hands are not gods. 27 And there is danger not only that this trade of ours may come into disrepute but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis may be counted as nothing, and that she may even be deposed from her magnificence, she whom all Asia and the world worship.”

28 When they heard this they were enraged and were crying out, “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!” 29 So the city was filled with the confusion, and they rushed together into the theater, dragging with them Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians who were Paul's companions in travel. 30 But when Paul wished to go in among the crowd, the disciples would not let him. 31 And even some of the Asiarchs, who were friends of his, sent to him and were urging him not to venture into the theater. 32 Now some cried out one thing, some another, for the assembly was in confusion, and most of them did not know why they had come together. 33 Some of the crowd prompted Alexander, whom the Jews had put forward. And Alexander, motioning with his hand, wanted to make a defense to the crowd. 34 But when they recognized that he was a Jew, for about two hours they all cried out with one voice, “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!”

35 And when the town clerk had quieted the crowd, he said, “Men of Ephesus, who is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is temple keeper of the great Artemis, and of the sacred stone that fell from the sky? 36 Seeing then that these things cannot be denied, you ought to be quiet and do nothing rash. 37 For you have brought these men here who are neither sacrilegious nor blasphemers of our goddess. 38 If therefore Demetrius and the craftsmen with him have a complaint against anyone, the courts are open, and there are proconsuls. Let them bring charges against one another. 39 But if you seek anything further, it shall be settled in the regular assembly. 40 For we really are in danger of being charged with rioting today, since there is no cause that we can give to justify this commotion.” 41 And when he had said these things, he dismissed the assembly.

## THE ECONOMY OF SIN THREATENED

- The last recorded event during Paul’s stay in Ephesus is a city-wide riot.
- When the darkness is challenged, there will be push back, and that’s what happened in Ephesus.
- Jesus is exalted, idols are demolished, and that had a profound impact on the local economy.
- The gospel impacts the economy of sin, and when the economy of sin is disrupted, we can expect hostility.
- Luke states that “no small disturbance” arose concerning the Way.
- Demetrius, a silversmith, stirred up the other craftsmen because Paul’s preaching was bad for business.
- Their livelihood was threatened. All because of Paul and his message that handmade gods are no gods at all!
- Now you have to understand that the Temple of Artemis was not just a religious site; it was the hub of Ephesian economic life.
- Demetrius masked his financial concern with religious patriotism.

## RIOT AND CONFUSION

- What do people do when their idols are threatened and they don’t turn to Jesus in repentance? They get really angry.
- In Ephesus, a mob formed. The city was thrown into confusion.
- This is what happens when the gospel confronts idolatry, it is always spiritual warfare.

- The rioters seized some of Paul's companions and dragged them into the amphitheater.
- Paul attempted to enter the theater but he was urged not to.
- V32 is a great description of the chaotic scene, "*Now some cried one thing, some another, for the assembly was in confusion, and most of the them did not know why they had come together.*"
- The Jews wanted to distance themselves from the Christians and they put forward Alexander who was shouted down by the angry mob.
- That's what the world tries to do to us, shout us down and drown out our voices, but we must never cower or be intimidated by the world.
- We have to remember that often the primary opposition to the gospel is not simply a moral disagreement, but the threat to someone's idolatry, power, or financial livelihood.
- When you take a stand for truth, you may find yourself in conflict with the Demetrius of your workplace or profession, whose fortunes are tied to unrighteousness.
- It should never surprise us when our witness for Christ creates warfare against Christ and his people.

## SOVEREIGN PROTECTION

- But here we see the sovereign hand of God bursting through the chaos and confusion.
- Paul is providentially kept safe by his friends, some of which are high-ranking officials who plead with him to avoid the mob scene.
- A Gentile official, the town clerk, intervenes and calms the rioters.
- God once again used a pagan magistrate to protect his servant and his church.
- Our King is sovereign over all mobs, governments, and nations. He is Lord over all!
- He can use a civic official, he can use the laws of nations, he can use the natural order, he can turn the hearts of men to accomplish his eternal purposes.
- We never need to fear or panic.
- We must stand firm, boldly proclaim the gospel, and trust our Lord.

## CONCLUSION

- The story of Ephesus ends with idols collapsing, demons fleeing, a city in chaos, and Christ triumphing.
- The kingdom of God does not advance by weapons, force, or violence, but through the preached Word and transformed lives.
- The kingdom advances through faithful, Spirit-empowered gospel witnesses.
- Lift up the name of Jesus in your home.
- Lift up the name of Jesus in your workplace.
- Lift up the name of Jesus everywhere God sends you.
- Let's keep lifting the name of Jesus in our city.
- Let the idols of our city and the powers of darkness feel the pressure of a church fully alive, reverberating with the Spirit's presence and power.
- Let our region hear the Word of the Lord!
- The city of Ephesus, the great center of superstition, idolatry, and wealth, eventually fell.
- But the gospel that shook Ephesus is still shaking the world.
- And it can shake our city too.
- Let's labor boldly, stand firmly, proclaim courageously, for Christ is Lord over all and his kingdom is unstoppable!

## **APPLICATION AND REFLECTION**

In light of today's message....

- What did I learn about the gospel?
- How can I apply what I learned about the gospel to my life?
- With whom can I share the gospel this week?