

Power to Change Culture
Paul's Ministry Disrupts the Culture Around Him
The Empowered Church Series - Part 35

Acts 19:21-41
November 11-12, 2023

Introduction

- **The Jesus Factor** – 4 key ways¹ that Jesus stirred up things around Him for healing and for change. Jesus' change tended to rattle social dynamics more than anything, but each sphere was slightly different.
- **1.) Confronting Religious Leadership** – Jesus caused a massive stir in Israel by confronting the current Jewish leadership (which was also religious leadership). Whether it was the temple aristocracy (Sadducees) or it was the religious snobbery (Pharisees), He didn't care. He was consistently breaking taboos and forcing everyone to rethink what they had been taught. Most all of Jesus' exasperation and anger was toward these groups and not the average, everyday Jewish people. Regular folks were His favorite people. This is a **religious authority disruption** (and social dynamic).
 - **Ex: Tossing tables in the temple** – we know this famous story. They were making money off people in a manipulative way (exchange rates, offerings/sacrifices, etc.) and Jesus was so frustrated. It was in the main area which would have disrupted those who came for a touch from God. Jesus threw over the money changing tables and scattered everything everywhere. People were super mad.
 - **Ex: Correcting the theology of Pharisees** – the very leaders that prided them on knowing everything about the Bible, Jesus corrected publicly and sometimes in not a very nice way. He would correct them about the sabbath, about tithing, about taxes, about how they were treating people, etc. He even went so far as to turn people away from them (beware the leaven of the Pharisees; come to me you who are sick and tired of carrying the unnecessary burden they put on you; etc.)
- **2.) Casting Demons** – A significant reason that the Son of God came was to 'destroy the works of the devil'. Jesus came as the new King in town and started messing with Satan's status quo. He would cast out demons. He would expose traps, manipulations, and sins. This is a **supernatural authority disruption**.
 - **Ex: Getting kicked out of Gennesaret for soothing a madman** – After one of the greatest demon casting moments of all time (naked demon guy) and putting him back into his right mind to the degree that he wanted to be a disciple of Christ, the city kicked Jesus out because it was all so weird and disruptive.
- **3.) Healing Disease** – We don't normally think of healing as disruptive, but it is. If someone has been paralyzed their whole life, they live off the help of others. There is a well-worn pattern to how they do things. When they get healed, they are able-bodied but that doesn't mean they have any skills or know how to live by themselves. That's why many times Jesus would ask whether or not someone would WANT to be healed.

¹ Jesus caused disruption in the Roman authority structure too as we can see by Herod's reception of the promised child and the political upheaval that happened. I am not sure whether or not that's just how things have to go when a new King comes to town or whether it was purposeful agitation to the secular political structure.

It's disruptive. In addition when He healed one, it caused a stir and a ton more wanted to be healed. He didn't heal them all and it would have caused some **jealousy**. This was a **personal** (and social) **disruption**.

- **Ex: People clamoring for help and tripping over one another** – whether it's healing a paralyzed man next to the pool of Bethesda, people shouting 'have mercy on me', moving on from ministry at Peter's house, etc.
- **4.) Honoring the Poor & Oppressed** – As the fresh "new" King in town, He brought a new way of doing things. The culture raised up the rich and the beautiful. Jesus brought honor to the lowly and explained that God hadn't rejected them, but in fact was caring for them from heaven. Jesus gave them a taste of what it looks like in heaven where they are seen as equals. This is a **social disruption**.
 - **Ex: Giving hope to the outcast, sinners and tax collectors** – Bringing honor to the Prostitute (anointing), shielding the Adulterer (cast the 1st stone), going to Levi's house (tax collector), honoring the widow's mite, etc.
- **Actual Impact** – Does the Christian Church today disrupt things in the world in a positive way? Negative way? Not all disruption is good disruption, right? But what if we did it right? What would that look like?
 - **Church vs. church – Christianity vs. Churchianity**. There's a big difference between what people do that **call themselves Christians and what true believers do**. I am very disappointed in how religious groups that call themselves Christians are acting today. They are **disrupting in so many of the wrong ways and making everything worse**. But I don't consider the majority of those people to be true believers. A lot of them are, which is sad, but across the board there are a lot of cultural Christians that are living a civic religiosity and its **hurting the real Church's reputation and impact**.
 - **What impact would look like today** – I have 6 key impacts I imagine would happen if the Church was running on all cylinders:
 1. **Increase in Salvations** – if the Church had influence with the gospel then more and more people would see the grace of God and be saved. It's as simple as that. **Most people know people who call themselves Christians, but the lives of those people are not sufficient to make much of an impact in their own.**
 2. **Glory to God** – We exist as human beings for two primary reasons: 1.) relationship with God; 2.) Glory to His name. He existed before us and the point in making us was to pour love down into us and for everyone to be caught up in His glory. The more we behold His glory, the more our lives become right. It's not just an ego trip by God, it's that His glory makes us thrive. So **if we were being and doing what we were made to be and do, God would get the glory He so rightfully deserves.**
 3. **Reduction in Destructive Behaviors (emotional & physical restoration)** – there would be a significant reduction in all the **stats of dysfunction: substance abuse, teen pregnancy, abortions, divorce, incarceration, and crime**, etc. Why? Because Christ would be exalted and more people would find **fulfillment for the root cause that drives these behaviors**. A lot of self-destructive behavior comes from a lack of sense of a meaning or self. Christ provides that.

4. **Greater Healing and Freedom (emotional & spiritual restoration)** – there would be greater health through healing and greater freedom **through deliverance from the demonic**. Demons would have less victory and people would be less picked on, harassed and put into spiritual bondage.
 5. **Greater Peace and Joy (societal restoration)** – the influence of the Church would bleed out even on those who didn't attend. There would be a **reduction of tension, hatred, animosity, division, etc. our neighborhoods would be restored to safer and more loving environments**. It wouldn't fix everything (sin will always mess things up on this side of heaven), but it would have a big impact for the better.
 6. **Reclaiming the Name** – we could restore our reputation which would allow the **Church of Jesus Christ** to be seen as a **place of welcoming love** and not a place of hate or division.
- **What are they so mad about?** – why anyone would care about Christianity? Doesn't it make everything better? Not for **those who thrive off the dysfunction** of people. It's **threatening to any who disagree with its philosophy and worldview**. Many people believe more in the empowerment of the human individual than the glory of God. Those are **significantly different ways of living and thinking**. We are heading toward two vastly different goals and targets so there will be a lot of clash about how we use our resources, what decisions we make, and what we value.
 - **The Problems with Salt and Light** – We are called to be salt and light and usually we see that as a good thing. But **what if you are trying to hide in the darkness?** The light exposes you for what you are, and you don't like that. What if you are a false preservative and train people to rely on you, when suddenly a Christian starts telling people that God is greater than you and more fulfilling than you? Of course you would get mad.
 - **Agitating for the right things and in the right ways.**

Powerful Christians SHAKE/ROCK the WORLD

- **Protestors at the Harvest Party** – We had protestors at our Harvest Party (**explain – their mean attitude (insulting our people) and their approach (attacking our parents and shaming the children)**). They aren't bad because they disagree with us (**we could be wrong**). They weren't demonstrating a connection to Christ and the Holy Spirit. It was a very small group – **about 3-4 people total, but they were making a lot of noise.**). So, it brings up the question: **what if someone is trying to disrupt and cause problems for the wrong things in the wrong ways?** Westboro Baptist Church (a long time cult-like small group of people who tell the world how much God hates them for their sin and insults people) is a perfect example of **religious wrapping on good old fashioned hate**. **The worst kind of bad guys are those who feel justified being bad**. It's one thing to know you are a bad guy and live with the self-awareness that you are the problem. It's quite another thing to believe that you are the good guys, making positive change, when you are actually an insidious evil. The first group knows they need repentance, the second group is firmly secure in their wickedness through false self-righteousness.

- **Set Up/Context**
 - **Last week** – Paul was involved in a significantly impactful **ministry in Ephesus²**, through supernatural ministry. God was doing incredible and extraordinary miracles through him (impartation on clothing). God was showing out by confronting the demonic and causing a revival among the occultic population.
- **Money Problems**
 - **Paul’s Ministry Impacts the Local Economy**
 - **Ac 19:21–27** – “Now after these events Paul resolved in the Spirit³ to pass through Macedonia [Northern Greece] and Achaia [Southern Greece] 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.⁴”
 - **After these events** – refer to the supernatural ministry and revival taught in last week’s message. **Paul has been ministering in Ephesus for the last about 2 ½ to 3 years.**
 - **Paul resolved to missionary travel** – I don’t think there is enough information to know whether or not it was ‘in his spirit’ or ‘in the Spirit’ as if the Holy Spirit was a part of the process in an overt way. Regardless, Paul was set on moving on.
 - **Pass through Macedonia⁵** – Northern Greece.

² It wasn’t all easy - “Cf. 1 Cor. 15:32; 2 Cor. 1:8–11. It has been thought also that one or more of the frequent imprisonments to which Paul refers in 2 Cor. 11:23 may have been endured in Ephesus; cf. H. Lisco, *Vincula Sanctorum* (Berlin, 1900); A. Deissmann, “Zur ephesinischen Gefangenschaft des Apostels Paulus,” in *Anatolian Studies presented to Sir W. M. Ramsay* (Manchester, 1923), pp. 121–27 (in *Light from the Ancient East*, p. 237, n. 1, Deissmann says he introduced this hypothesis while lecturing at Herborn in 1897); W. Michaelis, *Die Gefangenschaft des Paulus in Ephesus* (Gütersloh, 1925); G. S. Duncan, *St. Paul’s Ephesian Ministry* (London, 1929). Luke’s reticence on Paul’s troubles in Ephesus (apart from the riot of vv. 23–41) has been attributed to his apologetic motive: if these troubles were in any way connected with the proconsul Lucius Junius Silanus (see p. 379, 82), it would probably have been impolitic to mention any incident in which he was involved (so Duncan, *St. Paul’s Ephesian Ministry*, pp. 103–4).” NICNT, FF Bruce.

³ “Cf. Rom. 15:24, 28. The expression “Paul planned in the Spirit” most probably denotes a consciousness of guidance by the Holy Spirit; it “seems intended to describe a purpose formed with intense earnestness” (J. H. Kennedy, *The Second and Third Epistles of St. Paul to the Corinthians* [London, 1900], p. 20). Cf. 20:22.” NICNT

⁴ “K. Wernicke, in Pauly-Wissowa’s *Real-encyklopädie* II, cols. 1385–86 (s.v. “Artemis”), enumerates thirty-three places, all over the known world, where Ephesian Artemis was venerated.” NICNT

⁵ “A noted country and kingdom lying north of Greece in ancient times. Today, however, it is the northern part of Greece, having been captured from the Turks who had occupied it previously. The kingdom was founded about 814 B.C. and became famous as the third great world kingdom associated with King Philip of Macedon and Alexander the Great (Dan. 8:5–8, 21). Its capital was Thessalonica, where the proconsul resided.” Complete Word Study Dictionary of the New Testament.

- **Pass through Achaia⁶** – Southern Greece.
- **Go to Jerusalem⁷** – Paul wants to go to Jerusalem, this time, to be there in person when his group brings the struggling Jerusalem church financial support that they had raised along the way for them.
- **Future Plans: I must also see Rome⁸** - Luke records a lot of the intention of Paul wanting to eventually go to Rome, which trustworthy tradition tells us he did. In fact it was outside of Rome that tradition/history tells us, was where he was beheaded for his faith (martyred). He wanted to go there because there was a thriving church that was there and then it went through persecution for a short time and then it thrived again. Paul wasn't interested in staying there, because he was called to set up brand new sites/churches, he just wanted to visit friends there. Many commentaries highlight that Rome was on the way to Paul's desire to eventually get to Spain as a missionary. Little is known of that trip.
- **He sent (2 of his helpers) Timothy and Erastus to Macedonia ahead of him –** why send them out? It doesn't say why he sent them out, but we can guess it's in order to set things up for Paul while he finished things in Ephesus. Paul had already been through those areas, so it was only a matter of getting the most up to date info from the churches they had planted in that area and how they were doing after 3 years in Ephesus.
 - **Who's Timothy?⁹** – Paul's protégé. He got saved during one of Paul's early missionary works (having come from a very religious household – mom Jew,

⁶ "A Roman province in NT times nearly coextensive with the southern part of modern Greece. Augustus divided the whole country into two proconsular provinces, Macedonia to the north, and Achaia to the south. Achaia included Peloponnesus and the city of Corinth, which was its capital and the residence of the proconsul." WSNTDICT

⁷ "Before putting his plans into execution, however, Paul intended to visit his friends in Macedonia and Achaia, and then go to Jerusalem. Luke does not mention the main reason for this visit to Jerusalem, but Paul's own writings make it clear that he wished to be there in person, along with delegates from his Gentile churches, east and west of the Aegean, in order to hand over to the leaders of the Jerusalem church the proceeds of the fund which he had organized in those churches for the relief of the poor in Jerusalem...Cf. 1 Cor. 16:1-4; 2 Cor. 8:1-9:15; Rom. 15:25-28. When 1 Corinthians was written (shortly before Paul's departure from Ephesus, to judge from 1 Cor. 16:8), Paul had not finally decided to visit Jerusalem in person with the bearers of their churches' contributions (1 Cor. 16:4); by the time Romans was written, he had definitely made up his mind to go himself. For the importance which Paul attached to this collection see F. F. Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Free Spirit* (Exeter/Grand Rapids, 1977), pp. 319-24." NICNT

"The church in Jerusalem was poor; and Paul aimed to take a collection from all his Gentile churches as a contribution to it. We find references to this collection in 1 Corinthians 16:1ff., 2 Corinthians 9:1ff. and Romans 15:25-6. Paul pressed on with this scheme for two reasons. First, he wished in the most practical way to emphasize the unity of the Church. He wanted to demonstrate that they belonged to the body of Christ and that when one part of the body suffered all must help. In other words, he wanted to take them away from a merely congregational outlook and to give them a vision of the one universal Church of which they were part. Second, he wanted to teach them practical Christian charity. Doubtless when they heard of the poverty and need of the Christians in Jerusalem they felt sorry. He wanted to teach them that sympathy must be translated into action. These two lessons are as valid today as ever they were." William Barclay Daily Bible Series

⁸ "His settled policy not to build on someone else's foundation (Rom. 15:20) forbade him to consider missionary enterprise in Egypt or Cyrene; in Rome, too, there was already a Christian community. He looked forward, however, to visiting Rome, not with the intention of settling down there but of halting there for some time on his way to Spain. For Spain, the most westerly outpost of Roman civilization, was the new Macedonia which called him to come over and plant the faith among its hitherto unevangelized inhabitants.⁴³ But Rome is the goal of Luke's narrative, and he is more interested in Paul's plan to visit Rome than he is in his Spanish project. Whether or not Paul's Spanish project was ever realized is something which Luke knew by the time he published his work, but something which we do not know. It is probable, too, that Rome played a part in Paul's missionary strategy, which makes Luke's choice of it as the goal of his narrative doubly appropriate. From this point on, then, we follow Paul to Rome until, at the end of Acts, he reaches the imperial city by an unforeseen route and is busily preaching the gospel there when the readers take their leave of him." NICNT

⁹ "Timothy has not been mentioned in the record of Acts since he returned from Macedonia to rejoin Paul in Corinth (18:5). But he was certainly with Paul for part at least of the Ephesian ministry; at some point in the course of that period Paul sent him to Corinth and expected him to return to Ephesus (1 Cor. 4:17; 16:10-11). It is uncertain if that was the trip referred to here...At some point between the writing of 1 Corinthians

dad a Greek). He traveled with Paul a lot and he was used for the most difficult mission/church work. Paul called him, 'my child' (meaning spiritually).

- **Who's Erastus?**¹⁰ – this is not likely the guy from Corinth that we met in an earlier story. This was a common name. We know nothing more about this man.
- **Paul stayed in Asia for a while** – where in Asia specifically? This is an odd way to refer to him **remaining in Ephesus** for a short time before he went off on his travels that he just mentioned.
- **Meanwhile** – during that time. What time period are we in history?¹¹ Paul's stay in Ephesus was from AD 53-55. This means we are either at the end of AD55 or early AD56.
 - **Christianity is causing problems (The WAY is causing a big disturbance)** – is this a good thing or bad thing? First of all, 'the WAY' was the early way of describing Christianity. It meant the 'way or lifestyle of Jesus Christ.' It was spreading and causing a big disturbance. Whether that was a good thing or bad thing depended on your perspective and who you ask. To the Christian Church it was great. To the local secular society it was irritating.
 - **Demetrius the Silversmith gathers a mob** – that doesn't sound good. Why? His business was being impacted.
 - **Made silver shrines for Artemis** – what does this mean? Who is Artemis? What's a silver shrine? We'll talk about Artemis below but for now we just need to know that this was the main goddess of Ephesus. She was also known as Diane. The temple built to her was one of the seven wonders of the world. The silver shrines were one form of small trinkets that would be sold to travelers to carry an honor piece back home, as well as local customers. A portion of the money was sent back to the Artemis cult temple for the use of the name (like a contract).

and the third visit paid by Paul to Corinth (2 Cor. 12:14; 13:1), probably the visit implied in 20:2–3 below, Paul paid his "painful visit" to Corinth (2 Cor. 2:1)." NICNT

"Timotheus or Timothy, meaning honoring God; an evangelist and pupil of St. Paul. He was a Lycaonian, a native of either Derbe or Lystra. His father was a Greek Gentile. His mother Eunice was a Jewess of distinguished piety as was also his grandmother Lois (2 Tim. 1:5), and by them he was educated early in the Holy Scriptures of the OT (2 Tim. 3:15). Paul found him in one of the cities named above, and, being informed of his good standing among the Christians there, selected him as an assistant in his labors. To avoid the complicity of the Jews, he had Timothy undergo the rite of circumcision (Act. 16:1–3). He afterward became the companion of Paul, and it is evident from Paul's epistles that he held him in high esteem. Timothy was left in charge of the church at Ephesus, and that probably when he was quite young, about thirty–five years old (1 Tim. 4:12). Paul wrote two epistles to Timothy, which, along with the one to Titus, are commonly known as the Pastoral Epistles because they predominantly contain directions regarding church work. The first is supposed to have been written about A.D. 64 and contains special instructions concerning the qualifications and duties of different church officers and other persons, and the most affectionate and poignant exhortations to faithfulness. The second epistle was written a year or two later when Paul was in constant expectation of martyrdom (2 Tim. 4:6–8) and contains the fatherly counsel of Paul to his son in the Lord. It consists of a variety of injunctions to, and duties of, Christians under trials and temptations and concludes with expressions of a full and triumphant faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and in all the glorious promises made to His true followers. Timothy was chosen by Paul to be his companion in his journeys and labors in preaching the gospel (Acts 16:1, 3). He appears to have been with Paul at Rome (Heb. 13:23), but his later history is unknown." WSNTDICT

¹⁰ "It is unlikely that the Erastus mentioned here is identical with Erastus the city treasurer of Corinth, to whom Paul refers in Rom. 16:23...The Erastus of Rom. 16:23 is probably the man named on a Latin limestone pavement inscription discovered in Corinth by American archaeologists in 1929: "Erastus, in gratitude for his aedileship, laid this pavement at his own expense" (cf. J. H. Kent, *Corinth VIII/3: The Inscriptions 1926–1950* [Princeton, 1966], p. 99)." NICNT

¹¹ <https://www.blueletterbible.org/study/paul/timeline.cfm>

- **Business generator for craftsmen** – Demetrius was connected with other craftsman and their businesses overlapped.
- **Gathered a group of fellow businessmen** – people in the same industry that were being effected like he was financially. He is a connector and leader in all of this, because he’s had enough, and he has the influence to gather a group.
- **His mob message (rallying the troops)** – he was pretty good at manipulating them into a mob but to be honest they were already irritated so it didn’t take much.
 - **Let’s start with money¹²**...this is how we get rich, right? – so no matter what I say or what you agree with, this guy has got to go, right? You can see that he taps into their passion place (money) and can easily steer them from there.
 - **Paul’s having too big of an impact** – this guy knows the name Paul, well. He says it’s not just in our city (Ephesus) but almost all of Asia. That’s amazing that his reputation and his impact reputation had gone out that far.
 - **Paul’s teaching idols aren’t gods** – Paul’s teaching wasn’t directly against these guys as tradesmen or craftsmen (Paul was a leather craftsman himself). It was that **WHAT they were making/doing was supporting a religious structure that Paul was dismantling**. That caused the problem. **Paul didn’t go after them, they were just collateral damage**. If the idols aren’t gods then people don’t want to buy them anymore. If the people don’t buy them any more then the silversmiths lose business.¹³
 - **The Dismantle Method** – I am a HUGE fan of the ‘dismantle method’. If you don’t know what that is, it’s because I just made it up. But it’s what Jesus and Paul did so brilliantly. They went for the deepest problems, the root causes, and in doing so it **dismantled the foundation on which so many harmful things relied**. For example, Paul didn’t go after slavery directly but focused on elevating honor in the image of God in people. The natural result was the **removal of slavery**. Jesus didn’t go after a **political revolution**, but when he focused on the heart and focused on turning their eyes toward Him as God, it was a natural outpouring. **The reason this is so healthy and beautiful is that it’s**

¹² “The silversmiths of Ephesus regarded their guild as being under the special patronage of Artemis, in whose honor so many of their wares were manufactured. Among these wares were miniature silver niches, containing an image of the goddess, which her votaries bought to dedicate in the temple...We know of such miniature shrines of terra-cotta, but no silver ones are known to have survived. A Greek and Latin inscription found in the theater of Ephesus (*BMI* III.481 = *Insch.Eph.* I.27) records how a Roman official, Gaius Vibius Salutaris, presented a silver image of Artemis and other statues to be set up in the theater during meetings of the civic assembly (see R. Heberdey and others, *Das Theater = Forschungen in Ephesos*, II [Vienna, 1912], pp. 147–49; A. Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, pp. 112–13). See nn. 69, 72 below. E. L. Hicks, “Demetrius the Silversmith: An Ephesian Study,” pp. 401–22, pointed out that “shrine-maker” (νεωριτοῦς) was a designation of a member of the temple vestry (comprising probably twelve men).” NICNT

¹³ “Compare the indignation of the owners of the fortune-telling slave girl in 16:16–21; also the report of the younger Pliny (*Epistles* 10.96.10) that the sale of fodder for sacrificial animals had fallen off in Bithynia about A.D. 112 because of the spread of Christianity in the province.” NICNT

going after the right things and letting God sort out what needs to be broken apart.

- **An Honest Conversation about Abortion** – I have been criticized through the years about not speaking more openly about abortion. Usually those people aren't interested in what I have to say, they just want me to do what they do. But if they would listen here's my answer. There are two reasons I don't speak about it more: 1.) **It's been politicized and I can't talk about it with nuance.** No one will allow me to talk about details, about circumstances, about the intricacies. The pulpit is a rough place to talk about complicated nuanced subjects that are controversial. I end up causing more confusion and fire than not. It's not healthy. 2.) **Abortion involves two classes of people I love deeply: Women & Children.** I am called to defend both of them by God. Unless someone is willing to listen to my deeper explanations, I am forced to choose between the two and I won't allow that narrative to be controlled in my space. Therefore, I choose to talk about it in arenas where civil discussion with space is allowed. Too often when abortion is condemned, many women feel condemned and are left in danger. When abortion is explained, many babies are dishonored and endangered. Yet, both need to be dealt with. Therefore **I'm going to support 'dismantling methods' more than overt attacks.** I do not like picket signs of dead children and bullhorns that demoralize women. I DO, however love all movements that talk about the preciousness of life and the value of babies for the purpose of dismantling abortion culture. I love education but not manipulation. I believe there can be significant advancement in this cause if we love, educate, support, and press politically in the right and healthy ways. The other ways simply cause more problems.
- **It's not just money it's honor to Artemis in danger** – this is where Demetrius shifts over to grab another core group...the religious adherents. Again, people are most easily moved if you can pinpoint their passion places. **Religion and money are two of the biggies.** Demetrius may have honestly believed in Artemis, or he may have been using that religion as a way to get what he wanted (no more Paul). Regardless **he invokes FEAR** (great motivator in the short term) that the most popular goddess (demon) in Ephesus may be dishonored and devalued. Remember, her temple is one of the seven wonders of the world at that time, so it was a HUGE deal.

- **The actual Artemis impact¹⁴** - Artemis is a long-standing mythology character of Greek and Roman empire days (daughter of Zeus & twin sister of Apollo. Through the years she has gone through significant retcons (changing appearances and storylines). Initially she was seen as a playful nature loving and protecting woman who would dance lasciviously with the nymphs and fairies. Later she began to be associated more with fertility than nature and started being represented by a crowned woman with a fancy dress and her chest was covered by many bulbs. There is great debate about what the bulbs are. Either they seem to be many breasts, or they are bull testicles.¹⁵ But what everyone agrees on is that they represent lots of fertility. The city of Ephesus took a special interest in her and even claimed that she was born there. Normally she was seen as a less important or demi-god, but Ephesus (Asia Minor) thought she was the best. The temple in Ephesus was burned down in 356BC the same night of the birth of Alexander the Great. The myth was that Artemis couldn't protect her city and temple because she was busy with Alexander's birth. As a gift back, Alexander rebuilt the temple even better and it was one of the seven wonders of the world (multiple times larger than Athens Parthenon).
- **Blind Rage**
 - **The Townspeople Get Caught Up in the Fury**
 - **Ac 19:28–34** – *“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,¹⁶ dragging with them Gaius and Aristarchus,*

¹⁴ “The cult of Ephesian Artemis was of earlier date than the Greek settlement at Ephesus; the name Artemis is non-Greek. Artemis was traditionally venerated as the protector of wild creatures. This association with wild creatures survives, in an altered form, in her worship on the Greek mainland as the “queen and huntress, chaste and fair” of Ben Jonson’s poem; Ephesian Artemis, on the other hand, seems to have acquired some of the features of the great mother-goddess venerated from time immemorial in Asia Minor. Her temple, replacing an earlier one which was destroyed by fire in 356 B.C. (The earlier temple was burned down (on the night when Alexander the Great was born, it was said) by a young man named Herostratus, who said he did it so that his name might be remembered. On the temple of New Testament times see Strabo, *Geog.* 14.1.22–23; Pliny *Nat. Hist.* 16.213; 36.95–97, 179.), was reckoned one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. It covered an area four times as large as that of the Parthenon in Athens; it was supported by 127 pillars, each of them sixty feet high, and was adorned by Praxiteles and other great sculptors of antiquity.⁶¹ It stood about a mile and a half northeast of the city which Paul knew. All knowledge of its whereabouts had been forgotten for centuries, when its foundations were discovered on the last day of 1869. The great altar, west of the main building, was discovered in 1965.” NICNT

“735. Ἄρτεμις, *Ártemis*; gen. *Artémidos* or *Artémios*, fem. proper noun. Artemis, the Greek name of Diana, the goddess of hunting. She was the twin sister of Apollo. Her temple at Ephesus was one of the seven wonders of the world. She was worshiped as the “virgin goddess” and was considered as a mother goddess of Asia Minor. Her temple was supported on one hundred massive columns. Tradition claims that her image fell there from the sky (Acts 19:35) and is thought to refer to a meteorite. Her statues today present her with many breasts.” WSNTDICT <https://www.livius.org/articles/religion/artemis-of-ephesus>; <https://www.ephesusturkey.com/ephesus-information/gods-and-goddesses-of-ephesus/artemis/>;

¹⁵ some see eggs or gourds.

¹⁶ “The theater of Ephesus, cut out of the western slope of Mount Pion (modern Panayırdağ), could accommodate nearly 25,000 people. It was the regular meeting place of the civic assembly, which was held three times a month; on this occasion the demonstrating populace appears to have constituted itself as a meeting of the assembly, but a highly irregular one...According to Chrysostom (*Homilies on Acts* 42.2), the regular assembly met three times a month. “Even this excited mob still retained some idea of method in conducting business. It was quite in the old Greek style that they should at once constitute themselves into a meeting of the Ephesian People, and proceed to discuss business and pass

Macedonians¹⁷ 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 [Roman leaders],¹⁸ 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.¹⁹ 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!"

- **Primary group success (on fire)** – Demetrius succeeded. He got the tradesmen group (which was likely sizeable) all fired up (“they were enraged”). **They were more than convinced that they were in danger and so it was time to fight.** In their opinion Paul was endangering their families (livelihood) and religion (angering the gods).
 - **They went verbal/public** – They began to cry out loudly, ‘great is Artemis of the Ephesians’. This was to fire other people up and get them involved. If it’s just a personal thing there’s no reason to yell.
- **The Mob grows** – when they went public they got **everyone else all stirred up.** The city was in confusion. They were being told in no uncertain terms they were in danger. They were caught up in the hysteria and gathered together in the normal place of gathering, the local theater (would house more people for large gatherings).
 - **They grabbed Gaius²⁰** – Macedonian partner of Paul – Paul’s host at Corinth. We met this guy earlier.
 - **They grabbed Aristarchus²¹** – Macedonian partner of Paul – a native of Thessalonica, but we don’t know more about him.
 - **Forced them into the theater to answer for what Paul and their ministry was doing** – The crowd really wanted Paul but they couldn’t find him (he was out of the area at the time). They took the next best thing, Paul’s companions and fellow workers.

resolutions.... But this meeting was not conducted by persons used to business and possessing authority with the crowd” (Ramsay, *Letters to the Seven Churches*, pp. 224–25). Cf. the inscription mentioned in 63 above.” NICNT

¹⁷ “Some minuscules (36 307 431 453 and a few others) read the singular “a man of Macedonia” (Μακεδόνα) instead of the plural (Μακεδόνας), possibly under the influence of 20:4, where Gaius is said to be a man of Derbe (see p. 380, 4). But it may not have been the same Gaius; the name was very common in the Roman world. If the singular be the true reading here, then the plural has arisen through dittography of the initial letter of the following word συνεκδήμιους (“traveling companions”); if the plural is original, the singular is due to haplography. Aristarchus was “a Macedonian from Thessalonica” (27:2; cf. 20:4).” NICNT

¹⁸ Merriam-Webster Dictionary definition of asiarch – “one of a group of civil and priestly officials in the Roman province of Asia who presided over the public games and religious rites.”

¹⁹ “There was total disorder, for the majority of the crowd had no clear idea of why they were there—a remark which reveals Luke’s Greek sense of humor.” NICNT

²⁰ “**1050. Γάιος Gáios**; gen. *Gaíou*, masc. proper noun. Gaius, a Macedonian (Acts 19:29) who was Paul’s host at Corinth when the Epistle to the Romans was written (Rom. 16:23) and was baptized with his household by Paul (1 Cor. 1:14). He accompanied Paul to Ephesus and was seized by the mob (Acts 19:29). The association of his name with that of *Aristarchos* (708) seems to identify him with the Gaius of Derbe (1191) (Acts 20:4). The Apostle John addresses his third Epistle to someone by that name, but we do not know whether it is the same person or not.” WSNTDICT

²¹ “**708. Ἀρίσταρχος Aristarchos**; gen. *Aristárchou*, masc. proper noun. Aristarchus, a native of Thessalonica who became the companion of Paul. He was seized in the tumult at Ephesus and was afterwards carried with Paul as a prisoner to Rome (Acts 19:29; 20:4; 27:2; Col. 4:10; Phile. 1:24).” WSNTDICT

- **Paul tries to enter the fray to defend his brothers** – Paul didn’t want them to suffer alone. He knew that he was the primary agitator and leader so he wanted to handle the issue himself instead of letting someone else suffer on his behalf.
- **The brothers stop Paul from getting involved** – the rest of the Christians and leadership denied him from going into this mess. They knew that it was too dangerous for the main guy to go in there. They likely knew that it was going to quiet down (maybe this is how Ephesians acted normally in situations like these) and they didn’t see any true benefit of Paul to go in there. OR, maybe they were just afraid and didn’t want the Christian movement to stop (or be reduced) by losing one of their key leaders to death.
- **Even Paul’s Asiarch²² friends told him no** – EVERYONE thought him going in there was a bad idea. I don’t know how they all found out so fast when this is a erupting situation, but perhaps they were simply present in the mess (although it does say they ‘sent to him’ a message to not get involved. How did they have time to send a message in writing and him to get it?).
- **It’s a mess in the theater** – it was a literal mob (**‘most didn’t know why they were there’**), and everyone was shouting something different. It was chaos (**‘the assembly was in confusion’**) and it was **LOUD**.
- **Alexander tries to talk but is shouted down** – it says that the local Jews tried to have one of their leaders, a guy named Alexander, speak up and try to bring some order and meaning to this mob scene (**‘he wanted to make a defense’**). But of course it doesn’t work. No one is interested in reason here, they are just mad and scared. They want to vent and take it out on someone.
- **Why the Jews stepped up²³** - The Jewish leaders may not have liked Paul nor wanted Christianity around, but they also knew that he was a Jew and they were going to get blamed by relation. Anti-Jewish sentiment was high in the Roman Empire and the Jews of Ephesus were very clear that they didn’t like the whole Artemis worship and wanted its demise. So, they needed to step up and try to quiet this down or it would **blow back on them**.

²² “The Asiarchs also, leading citizens of Ephesus, sent him a message to dissuade him from running such a risk to his life. The title Asiarchs was given to leading citizens of those cities in the province which were linked in a league, more particularly to those who were currently holding high office in the league, or had formerly done so. (It was apparently from their ranks that the annually elected high priest of the imperial cult in the province was drawn.) That such men were friendly to Paul suggests that imperial policy at this time was not hostile to Christianity, and that the more educated classes did not share the antipathy to Paul felt by the more superstitious rank and file.” NICNT

²³ “One group of residents in Ephesus had special cause for anxiety at this turn of events. This was the Jewish community. True, the prime occasion of the riot was Paul’s mission, but Paul was a Jew, and Jews were known to be disbelievers in Artemis and all other pagan divinities. Those members of the populace who were insufficiently informed about the cause of the demonstration were likely to indulge in general anti-Jewish agitation when they learned that the honor of the great goddess was in peril.” NICNT

- **What do we know about Alexander?**²⁴ – we don't know anything else about this guy. Clearly he was a local Jewish leader that could speak clearly. He was going to try to calm this thing and distance his group from Paul but couldn't even get started. The Ephesians knew that he was a Jew and anti-Artemis so they shouted him down.
- **The mob yelled and chanted for 2 hours** – this is so long! I would have been bored after about 15 minutes of the rant and went home. But 2 hours? Holy cow. Is it demonically inspired to keep them going or is this simply human reaction? The Bible doesn't say.
- **How mobs and riots work** – In our lifetimes (and historically) we have seen a lot of riots and mobs happen. With modern technology we see things on film and get to analyze behavior, whereas in the past it was something to experience and you were so caught up in it you only saw what was right in front of you. But what's interesting about riots and mobs is that they **always involved mixed motives**. This is the case with any large, impassioned group of people. **In any given protest, there are people who know what's really happening and those that don't. In any riot there are those who are angry about the specific issue and those who are piling on and angry about other things. In any physical altercation or activity there are people strategically trying to get things done and a ton more that are taking advantage of the situation for their own selfish benefit.** The problem with that is that those who are against the movement in the first place always get to point to the selfish, unattached ones and explain why the movement is bogus. Meanwhile the group that wanted to protest in the first place, or even riot in the first place, had no intention of causing extra harm²⁵ or selfish gain. They want their ideas heard and not ignored. In the end it's a mess and very little gets accomplished. In other words, **the bad guys muddy the message.**
- **Ice on the Fire**
 - **The Town Clerk Restores Order**
 - **Ac 19:35–41** – *“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?”²⁶*

²⁴ “The Jews of Ephesus judged it necessary to dissociate themselves openly from Paul and the other missionaries, so they put forward Alexander, one of their number, to make it plain to the crowd that they had nothing to do with the present trouble—that they were as much opposed to Paul, indeed, as the demonstrators were. But when Alexander got up to speak, the people were in no mood to listen to him. All that they cared about was that he was a Jew, and therefore no worshiper of Artemis; some of them may even have thought that he was the cause of the trouble, seeing that he appeared so eager to make a speech for the defense. When he beckoned for silence and attention, therefore, they howled him down, and for the next two hours they kept up the cry: “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!” NICNT

²⁵ Some protest and riot movements are actually focused on causing some property damage for the purpose of getting attention. They have been ignored on every front and the only way they can get their point across is to hit someone in their money. It also grabs camera attention, so the message gets a bigger watch. So, it's not that all protest groups are peaceful, it's that they are more strategic and it's not a personal cash grab.

²⁶ “There were several images in antiquity which were reputed to have fallen from the sky. Originally the term was used of meteorites, but was later extended to include sacred objects of other origin or material.)... Gk. διοικητής (cf. KJV “the image which fell down from Jupiter”).” NICNT

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 town clerk steps in and quiets the crowd**
 - **Who's this guy²⁷** – and why does he matter and have authority? He's the **civic leader of the city** (and also in charge of assemblies) and he's the **liaison between Ephesus and the Roman Empire authorities**. He's the one who's job is on the line if this doesn't get calmed down.
 - **His calming message strategy** – He was trying to get something done and not just calm people. He had a strategy. He needed to get them calmed to listen and then he needed to rebuke them and get them to go home and handle this in a more appropriate manner.
 - **We all know Artemis is a big deal** – his first point is that everyone in the world knows about the Wonder of the World, the temple of Artemis and that the Ephesian people are the keepers of that temple. His point is that **we don't need to overly freak out** ('you ought to be quiet and do nothing rash') **to defend our reputation**. Everyone knows who we are and what we do.
 - **The 'sacred stone that fell from the sky'** – what's this? There are a couple of world locations that became religious shrines/temples due to falling **meteorites**. It's likely this is what happened here.
 - **The guys haven't attacked Artemis directly** – as much as you want to hate them and talk about their impact on your religion, they have not attacked our goddess directly. They are neither **sacrilegious** ('violating or misusing something sacred') nor **blasphemers** (**exhibiting great disrespect, contempt or insult to something sacred**) against Artemis. So, all of your passion about defending her personally is out of line and **unnecessary**.
 - **Demetrius & Co need to handle this properly in the court system** – if they have a legitimate complaint about losing wages, they need to be responsible and use the legal system we have given them. This mob thing isn't working and I'm not going to allow it. You have a way to handle things like this and you need to use it.
 - **Anything bigger needs a proper assembly** – people, you know there are rules about how we can handle societal issues. We need a legit

²⁷ "the town clerk, the executive officer of the civic assembly, who took part in drafting the decrees to be laid before it, and had them engraved when they were passed. He acted also as liaison officer between the civic government and the Roman provincial administration, which had its headquarters in Ephesus. The Roman authorities would hold him responsible for the riotous assembly, and might impose severe penalties on the city. He therefore did his best to calm the assembly, and when at last he succeeded, he addressed them." NICNT

assembly that is handle well. This out of control stuff is going to get us in trouble.

- **We are in danger of rioting today** – this is really important language and something that the casual reader wouldn't understand. **The Roman Empire was stretched very thin** trying to dominate the known world. **They couldn't hold it all with military, so they needed to handle it with politics.** They needed to put their might behind the areas that were most dangerous. Therefore **all the other places needed to keep mellow and not take Rome's resources or attention.** This meant that every Roman city needed leaders who could keep the peace and not be a problem. If there was a riot, especially one that was unjustified, they were in serious danger of Rome coming in ticked off and crushing the leadership and putting penalties on the city. They had one real rule: Don't be a problem for Rome. And we can't justify this nonsense, the clerk adds.
- **Shut it down** – everyone needs to shut it down now and go home. Don't blow this or there will be severe consequences.

Conclusion

- **What GOOD disruption are you creating for the Enemy, that MATTERS?**