

The Ephesian Riot
Acts #22 | 19:1-41
February 28, 2021

Pre-Sermon Remarks

- Paul beginning his third and final missionary journey, will take us to his imprisonment
 - PICTURE

PRAYER

Introduction

Stages of life, what was your first big purchase?

- Kid: Lego castle that was like \$40
- Teen: my own snowboard, first car
- As you get older, the purchases become less wonderful. Sure you could purchase your first house. But then, you also get the joy that I did two years ago of purchasing a new roof.

Money is a big deal, therefore money is a big deal in the bible.

- Today's passage shows us just how much money drives our

Big idea: Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Messianic Baptism

¹ While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul traveled through the interior regions and came to Ephesus. He found some disciples ² and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" "No," they told him, "we haven't even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." ³ "Into what then were you baptized?" he asked them. "Into John's baptism," they replied.

- Follow up from last week: what was Apollos' theological deficiency? Baptism
- Here Paul is clearly explaining what Priscilla and Aquila taught Apollos

⁴ Paul said, "John baptized with a baptism of repentance, telling the people that they should believe in the one who would come after him, that is, in Jesus." ⁵ When they heard this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus.

- GET BAPTIZED ON RESURRECTION SUNDAY!

⁶ And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began to speak in tongues and to prophesy. ⁷ Now there were about twelve men in all.

- Tongues: the gospel is for all nations
- Prophecy: each person can know God and speak his truth

Powerful Ministry

⁸ Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly over a period of three months, arguing and persuading them about the kingdom of God. ⁹ But when some became hardened and would not believe, slandering the Way in front of the crowd, he withdrew from them, taking the disciples, and conducted discussions every day in the lecture hall of Tyrannus.

- Some will become softened by the news of Jesus, others will become hardened

- “The same sun that melts the wax hardens the clay” | It’s about the heart
- Again, moving from Jew to Gentile audiences | This must have been so confusing for Paul
 - Lecture hall: *scholé σχολή* | where we get our word *school*
 - Tyrannus: name means “tyrant,” common name, not sure who exactly

¹⁰This went on for two years, so that all the residents of Asia, both Jews and Greeks, heard the word of the Lord.

- Now even longer stay than in Corinth (18 mo)!

¹¹God was performing extraordinary miracles by Paul’s hands, ¹²so that even facecloths or aprons that had touched his skin were brought to the sick, and the diseases left them, and the evil spirits came out of them.

- We are so skeptical, but this kind of thing can and does happen
- 2 Cor. 12:12 Paul calls these “the signs of a true apostle” | verification of the message
- Analogy: purchase, two factor authentication text, which number is more important?

False Power

¹³Now some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists also attempted to pronounce the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, “I command you by the Jesus that Paul preaches!” ¹⁴Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish high priest, were doing this. ¹⁵The evil spirit answered them, “I know Jesus, and I recognize Paul—but who are you?” ¹⁶Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them, overpowered them all, and prevailed against them, so that they ran out of that house naked and wounded. ¹⁷When this became known to everyone who lived in Ephesus, both Jews and Greeks, they became afraid, and the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high esteem.

- In light of Paul’s power in the previous story, the point is this: **the power of God is not a force to be bought and sold!** | Remember Simon the Magician in Samaria back ch. 8?

Deep Repentance

¹⁸And many who had become believers came confessing and disclosing their practices, ¹⁹while many of those who had practiced magic collected their books and burned them in front of everyone.

- They realize the difference between true power of God and false spiritual power So they calculated their value and found it to be fifty thousand pieces of silver. ²⁰In this way the word of the Lord spread and prevailed. ²¹After these events, Paul resolved by the Spirit to pass through Macedonia and Achaia and go to Jerusalem. “After I’ve been there,” he said, “It is necessary for me to see Rome as well.”

- This now sets the focal point for the remainder of the book

²²After sending to Macedonia two of those who assisted him, Timothy and Erastus, he himself stayed in Asia for a while.

Major Disturbance

²³About that time there was a major disturbance about the Way. ²⁴For a person named Demetrius, a silversmith who made silver shrines of Artemis, provided a great deal of business for the craftsmen. ²⁵When he had assembled them, as well as the workers engaged in this type of business, he said, “Men, you know that our prosperity is derived from this business. ²⁶You see and

hear that not only in Ephesus, but in almost all of Asia, this man Paul has persuaded and misled a considerable number of people by saying that gods made by hand are not gods.²⁷ Not only do we run a risk that our business may be discredited, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis may be despised and her magnificence come to the verge of ruin—the very one all of Asia and the world worship.”

- Artemis is the Greek name, Diana is the Roman name
 - Known as the virgin archer-huntress, associated with nature, animals, and fertility.
 - One of the twelve Olympians, and the twin sister of Apollo
- However, in Ephesus, there was a slight twist Artemis
 - Fusion of Greek Artemis, but a local fertility goddess
 - Archaeology shows statues more associated with fertility
- Her temple in Ephesus was the center, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world
 - 425 feet long and 220 feet wide | **XXXX time larger than this building**
 - Interesting fact: worship was almost entirely run by female priests
- The point: worship of Artemis was a big deal. A big *FINANCIAL* deal
 - Seahawks and Mariners and Kraken and Storm and a returning Sonics

²⁸When they had heard this, they were filled with rage and began to cry out, “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!”²⁹ So the city was filled with confusion, and they rushed all together into the amphitheater, dragging along Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians who were Paul’s traveling companions.

- The amphitheater in Ephesus holds approx. 25,000 people
- We don’t know how many in this crowd, but something big | My First NFL Game

³⁰Although Paul wanted to go in before the people, the disciples did not let him.³¹ Even some of the provincial officials of Asia, who were his friends, sent word to him, pleading with him not to venture into the amphitheater.

- Don’t you just love Paul’s fearlessness?
- “Provincial officials” some translations have Asiarchs, a term of some type of nobility

³²Some were shouting one thing and some another, because the assembly was in confusion, and most of them did not know why they had come together.³³ Some Jews in the crowd gave instructions to Alexander after they pushed him to the front. Motioning with his hand, Alexander wanted to make his defense to the people.³⁴ But when they recognized that he was a Jew, they all shouted in unison for about two hours, “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!”

- We don’t know who Alexander is, other than he’s Jewish and associated with Paul
- Don’t act snobby about “chanted for two hours” | SEA---HAWKS

Charges Dismissed

³⁵When the city clerk had calmed the crowd down, he said, “People of Ephesus! What person is there who doesn’t know that the city of the Ephesians is the temple guardian of the great Artemis, and of the image that fell from heaven?”

- Many scholars believe this to be a meteor, fairly common occurrence in the ancient world

³⁶Therefore, since these things are undeniable, you must keep calm and not do anything rash.³⁷ For you have brought these men here who are not temple robbers or blasphemers of our goddess.³⁸ So

if Demetrius and the craftsmen who are with him have a case against anyone, the courts are in session, and there are proconsuls. Let them bring charges against one another.³⁹ But if you seek anything further, it must be decided in a legal assembly.⁴⁰ In fact, we run a risk of being charged with rioting for what happened today, since there is no justification that we can give as a reason for this disturbance.”⁴¹ After saying this, he dismissed the assembly.

- They stepped on a landmine: **MONEY!**
- But their conduct wasn't illegal, there was anger but no actual legal charge

N.T. Wright Have we learnt the lesson of being so definite in our witness to the powerful name of Jesus that people will indeed find their vested interests radically challenged, while being so innocent in our actual behaviour that there will be nothing to accuse us of? There is a fine line to be trodden between a quiet, ineffective 'preaching' of a 'gospel' which will make no impact on real life, on the one hand, and a noisy, obstreperous [noisy, hard to control], personally and socially offensive proclamation on the other.

Money Issues

1. Money is a heart issue
 - a. Love of money is actually love of something else:
 - b. Freedom, pleasure, safety, control/power, people
2. Money is a gospel issue
 - a. One of the metaphors for the gospel: financial ruin and debt
 - b. Jesus became poor: all the way to death on a cross
 - c. We've been given an eternal inheritance | **1 Peter 1**³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,⁴ to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,⁵ who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.
3. Money is a lifestyle issue
 - a. Following Jesus means full surrender, which includes finances
 - b. People can be OK with "Jesus wants your heart" but not "he wants your debit card"

Gospel Finances (talk about it this week!)

1. Let's talk about tithing | Steady vs. skeptical?
2. Let's talk about generosity | Ready vs. reluctant?
3. Let's talk about spending | Worship vs. waste?
4. Let's talk about saving | Wisdom vs. worry?
5. Let's talk about motives | Love vs. love?

Benediction

Romans 11³³ Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!³⁶ For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.