

Courage in the Face of Opposition

Acts 19:21-41

I. Intro

- A. There is a riot in Ephesus due to the change in people that have received the gospel.
- B. It impacted the economy of Ephesus, and those most harmed financially stirred up trouble.
- C. The argument was not dissimilar to how things happen today.

II. Text

- A. Verses 21-22: Paul was mapping out his mission, next Rome.
- B. Verse 23: The Church is called "The Way" This is the Way.
- C. Verse 24
 - 1. Demetrius:
 - a) Silver smith, profited from people worshipping idols,
 - b) a craftsman...at stirring up trouble.
 - c) There is no reason to believe that this is the same Demetrius in John's 3rd letter who is commended for being a person of faith, and probably the one entrusted to deliver the letter...but what if he was?????
 - 2. Artemis:
 - a) Artemis was considered the mother goddess, also called Diana in Roman mythology
 - b) Artemis' shrines, temples and festivals (Artemisia) could be found throughout the Greek world, but Ephesian Artemis was unique. The Ephesians considered her theirs, and resented any foreign claims to her protection.
 - c) Artemis is also a powerful rocket meant to take astronauts to the moon in coming years...first test launch was scrubbed on Monday...
- D. Verses 25-27: Demetrius stirs them up, his argument:
 - 1. First is the business aspect
 - 2. Second is the de-legitimizing of Artemis, the lack of attention being brought to Artemis
 - 3. Third is the popular argument...the world worships her!
- E. Verses 28-29: The response of the crowd...GREAT IS ARTEMIS...if she is so great, why are they worried about Paul?
- F. Verses 30-31:
 - 1. Paul's friends had been seized
 - 2. Paul wished to go into the midst of the mob and make a stand! COURAGE!
 - 3. His friends protected him from the crowd
- G. Verses 32-34:
 - 1. The crowd was in ignorance
 - 2. Alexander was trying to give a defense
 - 3. The crowd shouted him down for 2 hours!
 - a) This is what the world does!
 - b) If they don't have a good argument, or a logical position...They get loud until you submit.
- H. Verses 35-41: the voice of reason from the town clerk

III. Point

- A. Don't allow troublemakers to stop the mission
 - 1. There will be Demetrius' in your life, don't let them live rent free in your head.
 - 2. The shocking aspects of life:
 - a) I'm shocked by certain aspects of this story/world
 - b) The most shocking aspect is the voice of reason at the end of the story.
 - c) The least shocking aspect is the reaction from the crowd early in the story:
 - (1) Stirred up by someone with a PhD in causing trouble

- (2) Mad for a real reason, but then appeals to an entirely different, and seemingly sacred matter that attempts to bring validity.
 - (3) Normal.
 - 3. Paul was having none of it and was heading into the midst of them all.
 - a) He had experienced persecution from the Jews and Greeks alike.
 - b) He had been beaten, and run out of town
 - c) Lets just say...this was an expected response for Paul.
 - B. Don't forget who has the power
 - 1. As he was marching towards the mob to make a defense, Paul was appealing to all that he learned in his missionary journeys.
 - 2. He started as a terrorist, became a servant, and had endured much.
 - 3. God built his faith the entire way
 - 4. Paul knew there was no other plan that would succeed other than God's plan.
 - 5. The Power of God on display through a person of faith is world changing!
 - 6. Last week we saw that God can bring revival through a demon beating up 7 men, still true that God can accomplish His will in His way.
 - C. Pray that reason and reasonableness will be restored
 - 1. Somewhere along the way, reasonableness took over.
 - 2. I'm hoping to see that in our society, but not expecting it.
 - 3. Wouldn't it be great if people realized how far they have strayed from Biblical truth and understand, and repented?
 - 4. Wouldn't it be great if people could see that they are saying things that don't make sense and stop it?
 - 5. But the truth is, they may not see it, and we still need to be a witness to the the truth of scripture in a way that will make an eternal impact.
 - 6. We are called to serve in a time where the philosophy of the world is not making much sense, and the impact the church can have has not changed.
 - 7. Don't get mad and lost people doing what lost people do...get motivated to proclaim the message that will bring change to one.
- IV. Close