

4/7/24 - Acts 19:10-41 - "The Gospel is Disturbing"

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Date: 07 April 2024

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[0 : 0 0] Today we're reading from Acts chapter 19 starting at verse 10. This continued for two years so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks. And God was doing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul 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.

Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists understood to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits saying, I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul proclaims.

Seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Sceva were doing this. But the evil spirit answered them, Jesus I know and Paul I recognize, but who are you?

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. 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. Also, many of those who were now believers came confessing and divulging their practices. 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. It came to 50,000 pieces of silver. So the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily. Now after these events, Paul resolved in the spirit to pass through Macedonia and Achaia and go to Jerusalem saying, after I've been there, I must also see Rome. And having sent into Macedonia two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, he himself stayed in Asia for a while. About that time, there arose no little disturbance concerning the way. For a man named Demetrius, a silversmith who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought no little business to the craftsmen. These he gathered together with the workmen in similar trades and said, men, you know that from this business, we have our wealth. 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. 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. When they heard this, they were enraged and were crying out, great is Artemis of the

Ephesians. So the city was filled with the confusion and they rushed together into the theater, dragging with them Gaius and Aristarchus, the Macedonians who were Paul's companions in travel. But when Paul wished to go in among the crowd, the disciples would not let him. And even some of the Asiarchs, who were friends of his, sent to him and were urging him not to venture into the theater. 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. 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. 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. 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

[4 : 0 1] Ephesians, is temple keeper of the great Artemis and the sacred stone that fell from the sky. Seeing then that these things cannot be denied, you ought to be quiet and do nothing rash.

For you have brought these men here who are neither sacrilegious nor blasphemers of our goddess. If therefore Demetrius and the craftsmen with him have a complaint against anyone, the courts are open and there are precouncils. But let them bring charges against one another. But if you seek anything further, it shall be settled in the regular assembly. 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. And when he had said these things, he dismissed the assembly.

This is God's word. Thanks be to God. It's great to see everyone here today. What an exciting Sunday to not only do the Lord's Supper, to see a baptism, and celebrate together God's salvation in our lives and in the lives of other people.

This is like no other assembly. Amen? Alright, we're going to be interactive today. Amen. Amen. Amen. I'm not going to trap anyone in a false amen today.

Well, there will all be real amens. Don't need to be scared. Oh, the truth comes out when Brynn's at the pulpits.

[5 : 39] Alright. So I want to bring a little phrase that's known in our day today. And the contentious situation that has kind of existed through all history is that people argue and bicker constantly over sometimes the silliest things.

But one specific thing is who is the greatest of all time. Right? What's the acronym for that? The GOAT. Alright. If you don't know what we're talking about, check out Wikipedia.

They can fill you in. The greatest of all time. An acronym. GOAT. G-O-A-T. Right? I once used that acronym in Heartland Christian School teaching the middle school and high schoolers.

And all the teachers were like, what is a GOAT? The kids knew. I connected with the kids. But for some reason, I assumed that everyone knew what GOAT was.

But I was severely wrong. And so this whole issue throughout the years of who is the GOAT, who is the greatest of all time, has been found in many conversations.

[6 : 45] Whether it's in the NBA between LeBron, isn't the GOAT, we'll say that, and MJ, who is the GOAT. That's very serious in our household. Okay? I know.

Somebody's just walking out. They're like, nope, this ain't the church for me. But LeBron versus Jordan. Right? Ali versus Tyson.

Messi. Oh, this isn't a competition. See, we're already bickering about this, guys. You're only proving my points. Let's go to soccer. Messi versus Ronaldo.

Anyone? All right. Whatever. Maybe a debate closer to home. Harry Arroyo versus Boom Boom Mancini. I think Arroyo had that fight taking place.

Boom Boom would have something coming. Amen. Amen. We got one family who's sticking with us today. But man, I'm telling you, sports, who's the GOAT?

[7 : 48] Who's the greatest of all time? Look at what it just did. This is important. Look what it just did within even this kind of gathering. Bickering. Back and forth.

Who's the greatest of all time? People sit glued to the TV. Fans sit on the edge of their seats, right? As they watch rematches of people trying to defend the throne and dethrone others.

And event after event, the question is raised. Will the opponent prevail? Will somebody rise up and prevail against who we perceive as the greatest of all time?

That same question was raised by followers of Jesus Christ at the cross. The blood-stained, dripping cross where flesh was poured out of Jesus Christ and laid in the tomb.

The same was asked as the opponent prevailed. This is raised by the death of numerous martyrs in the early church who gave their life on account of their faith in Jesus Christ, which they would never recant.

[9 : 00] Followed by many uncertain dark periods in church history. Will the opponent prevail? And we can make sense of this tension of history in the making in the text today.

What you have here, obviously, are historic events. The book of Acts is historic narrative. These are historic. But don't miss the tension that follows each and every episode.

Because they don't know what could transpire following that event. There's tension in the narrative that I want us to feel in the text today.

Because for Luke, recording a detailed record of how the church was established, how it was sustained, he's making a point of how it was started.

How everything came to be and how it was sustained. How the church will prevail. Right?

Additionally, considering the prevailing attribute of the church, it forces us to see the theological disturbance that the gospel creates, which causes opponents naturally to rise up.

[10 : 18] And we'll call it the goat games. Right? If the church prevails, it shouldn't be a surprise that an opponent would rise up against her in the goat games.

So Paul, where's Paul right now? He's in his second missionary journey. He's currently in his longest stay in the city, two to three years, which is a city known as Ephesus.

And this was around the time where he wrote to the Corinthian church. We have it bound in our Bibles, the book of 1 Corinthians, about the time when he wrote to them. And he makes it clear that Ephesus is important.

In chapter 16 of 1 Corinthians, in verse 8, he says, I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost, for a wide door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.

And so let's see this unfold for us today. And I have a sermon titled, The Gospel is Disturbing. And we're going to ask two questions as we break up this text.

[11:29] And what we will see unfold what Scripture and Luke will prove to us by the power of the Holy Spirit is that the church prevails by faith in the prevailing word of God.

That is what we will see through Luke's structure and what we will see unfold and unpack into our lives today. So let's ask ourselves two questions today in the text.

Break this up in a sermon titled, The Gospel is Disturbing. And let's pray. Father, thank you for this time where we can celebrate a baptism, where we can celebrate communion, which is our participation, our koinonia in you, in salvation.

Father, thank you for redeeming us, forgiving us, and sanctifying us. And we pray that at this time, we might be sanctified by the encouragement from your word, the conviction of your word, or maybe reproof from your word.

And whatever you have for us today, let it be so. And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

And so the first of two questions that I want to ask us today is, will the gospel prevail against imposters?

[12:53] Will the gospel prevail against imposters? And this question is posed in between verse 10 and verse 20. In verse 10, it says, This continued for two years, so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.

What was going on? The move of the Holy Spirit through the power of the word of God, as Paul is invading and disrupting Ephesus.

And people are being drawn to that. Everyone, Jews and Greeks. It's very multi-ethnic. And in verse 10, And God was doing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, 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.

Now I know. Well, you're already thinking. This incident probably brings up to your mind that commercial you saw of somebody selling their \$99 prayer cloth, a little prayer hanky that apparently claims to heal you of your disease and everything.

No refunds though, right? Or as my professor, Dr. Schreiner from seminary, explained how he experienced someone marketing a prayer carpet, that if you prayed on that prayer carpet, you would be healed suddenly, and you'd actually get vacations to Hawaii by praying on that prayer carpet.

[14:31] But I know. I know. I didn't fall for it. For long. I'm just kidding. But right out the gate, right out the gate, we ought to be confronted by something.

From how silly we can take a passage like this and all of a sudden make a market out of it, when did healing ever be contingent upon us?

When did this book suddenly stop describing historical events in the early church and all of a sudden start prescribing how to run a good successful business? Charlatans, hucksters take advantage of this kind of thing.

But we see a big picture. What's the big picture? Paul was an instrument of God. We see that in verse 11. What does it say? And God was doing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul.

For God so chose to do it his way. Right? So that's the big picture. That's much more than we can say for the next seven men that we meet in the text.

[15:53] And might that be the point of Luke including this. In verse 13, then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists. That's a good job title. They 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.

Seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Siva were doing this. But the evil spirit answered them. Look at this. Jesus I know.

And Paul I recognize. But who are you? 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 the house naked and wounded.

Will the gospel prevail? Right? This is embarrassing to the gospel work in Ephesus. If we were making any progress in Ephesus, God, why would you not just use this twisted means and selfish motives for the glory of your name and then work it all out afterwards?
[17 : 16] Why make the gospel a spectacle of humiliation and mockery? Why didn't God work here?

This is so embarrassing. I love how Matt Chandler jokes on this. He says that if you enter a battle wearing pants and you leave without pants, you lost.

Right? That's true. Amen. Amen. It's one thing to say, to hear Jesus Christ say to believers, apparent believers, depart from me.

I never knew you. But it's a whole other can of worms, isn't it? To hear the devil say, depart from me. He don't know you. Right?

These seven streakers, years as Alistair Begg calls them, they were frauds of the gospel, using the gospel. History following them.

[18 : 20] If history is in the making, imagine history of the gospel spreading by the works of these seven rods. And what would come of that in the church?

Maybe that's why it's included here after all. We got to behold the why then. Maybe you're questioning me on that. Well, that doesn't make sense. Maybe God could have used that. God uses crooked sticks to make straight lines. Right? Come on. Where's the grace? These poor seven guys stripped of their clothes and humiliated. Behold the why.

This is God's word. This is not my word or opinion. Verse 17. And this spectacle, 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. Also, many of those who were now believers came confessing and divulging their practices and a number of those who had practiced magic arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all.

[19 : 32] And they counted the value of them and found it came to 50,000 pieces of silver. In other words, that's a lot, a lot, a lot of money, like 50 years worth of work and wages.

And look at verse 20. So the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily. Amen. There's a really awesome picture and a painting, portrait in a museum far away, but of this very moment of Paul preaching.

His hand is raised and people burning their books and witchcraft and practices. The wonderful depiction of what's happening here. Because something is happening miraculous here.

More miraculous than some prayer hanky. More miraculous than even being exercised from a demon. Something miraculous is happening here.

[20 : 31] Luke is making it clear that nothing is more miraculous than the word of God and its effect upon people. This is disturbing this pagan city and increasing in effect.

This word is spreading mightily. It's increasing mightily. Repeatedly through the book of Acts, if maybe this is your first Sunday with us, this has been the story and the unfolding of Acts.

So many times and periods, there's been checkpoints throughout the book of Acts that state about the work of the word, the enduring word throughout the early church.

In the Pentecost summary in Acts 2, verse 41, it says, So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about 3,000 souls.

Getting to the walls of Jerusalem, as the gospel word is spreading to the walls of Jerusalem, there's another summary in Acts 6, verse 7, And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.

[21 : 45] Not only the walls of Jerusalem, but the walls of Samaria outside of Jerusalem. In Samaria, there's an Acts summary in Acts 10, 24, But the word of God increased and multiplied, and not only Samaria and all Judea, but to the ends of the earth, in Acts 13, verse 49, And the word of the Lord was spreading throughout the whole region.

Church, if the gospel prevails through the power of the word, then his church prevails only by centering our lives upon it only.

But is exposition the center of our lives? It certainly is the center of our main gathering as Steel Valley Church.

The sermon is never something to be tossed out on account of singing more songs or hearing testimonies. The word is central to our gathering, but is it central to your lives?

Will we prevail in the gospel, in our workplace, in our family life, in our relationships, whether boyfriend, girlfriend, or even just a neighbor relationship?

[23 : 03] Is it prevailing in your life? And we must remember the mode of exposition. You might be like, Of course, Brent, I'm not preaching a sermon to my neighbor.

Yeah. Yeah. But are you leading people to his word, showing them Jesus, and explaining the gospel to them?

Right? Exposition. This is just kind of like different than that. It doesn't have to be a sermon. It can simply be opening up your word with one another.

Right? It doesn't have to be a dressed up sermon. And what's this look like? What can you expect? Verse 19 gives us a pretty vivid depiction, just as the painting that I was referencing does.

And a number of those who had practiced magic arts, brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. They literally, their livelihood couldn't hold them back, could not restrain them from surrendering everything to the Lord.

[24 : 09] There is nothing. You want to talk about miracles. Now, having the Lord remove you from your position, maybe it's pretty, it's something you've invested in.

50,000 pieces of silver, there's quite a, quite a number on that sacrifice. What if God called you to leave it all? Pick up your cross and follow him.

What if? That's what it looks like. The miracle of the gospel working in people materializes in this way. This is how it appears.

This is what happens. And all of a sudden, it's not these books of magic arts that they center their lives on. It's the centered word of God, of which encapsulates their entire life and entire attitude.

And so I would encourage everyone to be confident in the power of the word. Sounds simple? I don't want to take a poll and have you raise your hand.

[25 : 13] How many of you read the word this morning with your families? I don't want to take a poll of how many people are still tuned in with their Bible reading plan at Steel Valley Churches somewhere in the Old Testament, right?

I don't know. We'll catch up later on. I was talking to a church member this week and he described just the moment with his son where he was able to just stop talking about it and just do it.

Just stop talking and just do it. Trust in the power of the word. Keep explaining it and keep applying it in small groups and large groups, in the grocery store, in a restaurant, one-on-one with a friend, in the rescue mission with other residents, in your church and also in your homes.

Stop talking about a plan and just do it. The gospel prevails through the power of the word and the church prevails only by centering our lives upon it.

Is your life centered by the exposition of the word? See, the prevailing word sustains a prevailing church. And so in answer to our question in this section, will the gospel prevail against imposters?

[26 : 36] The only answer is it must. It must because the word defines truth. It divides truth and error.

And so the question that we have posed with the following verses, a larger portion of the text, is will the gospel prevail against culture? And in verse 21, we see these travel plans that Luke notates. It's basically just kind of centering our minds on what's coming up. He's in his last hundred-meter dash to the finish line. He's like, we're getting to the end of the book.

This is what's coming up. He says, 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.

And having sent into Macedonia two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, he himself stayed in Asia for a while. And so Paul, what's his sights on?

[27 : 38] What's the remainder of the book all about? What's the future journey in history? Paul has his sights on Rome. He wants to go to Rome.

He feels so called to be in Rome and spread the gospel in Rome. But Paul has found quite a great awakening, we'll call it, occurring in Ephesus.

There is a work that needs to be done here that is not yet finished, an open door, just as 1 Corinthians 16, 8 says in details. And this larger chunk of the passage includes great detail of how the gospel disturbed an entire culture of their entire way of life.

It was disturbing Ephesus. And so kind of thinking, if Paul's got his sight on Rome, you kind of know his plans for Rome. He wants to disturb a little bit of people over there with the good news of Jesus

Christ.

Right? The single most fascinating aspect of Ephesus that we haven't discovered until the passage today, we didn't discover it last sermon when we were in Ephesus with Paul, but we discover it today, is that central to this culture in the Ephesians' life is the worship of Artemis.

[28 : 59] This is historically profound, historically significant to the Ephesians. You might be like, oh, it's just one of their gods. How central could that be?

Very central. Very central to the Ephesians. This is the goddess Artemis. This is the daughter, the virgin daughter of Zeus, the mighty Zeus, claimed to be the god of all livelihood and also the god of death.

Her temple that was dedicated for Artemis was literally just bigger than a football field. And when I say just a little bit bigger, I mean, you're talking about a football field, so I'm talking like 100 feet bigger.

But that's still pretty significant, right? It was huge. This temple was huge. It had 127 or something marble columns all around. It was dressed in brilliant colors.

It had a gold leaf on it. And those pillars, I mean, it stretched over 60 feet high. This was a temple. When you got inside this temple, you had a 20-foot wide square, 20-foot, you know what I'm saying, wide altar for Artemis.

[30 : 15] And behold the statue of Artemis. It's a little scandalous, but it's massive and it is vivid. Surrounded in birds and animals.

And not only that, because of the power of this lower G God, this was the center of wealth.

Well, if I can, you know, be blessed in my life, I'll just give to the temple and have a good life. Right? I'll give 20% just to be, because I'm living by faith, right? Giving to these false gods.

Drew lots of wealth. This was huge. This was central in Ephesians culture. This is something that we are very unaware of.

[31 : 14] You see, this temple was significant and central to the Ephesians lives. There's no other way around it, especially a man named Demetrius. In verse 23, we meet him. This is a disgruntled worker.

He rallies the emotions of patriotic workers in Ephesus. Why? To see the disturbance that this guy named Paul is causing on our market.

We're here manufacturing gods for people that are said to bless people if they take it home and put it on their altar. Every person has to leave here, just as every person has to leave New York City with a tower in their hand, a little statue.

Every person that leaves Ephesus has to leave with one of these little mini Artemis gods, little figures. Paul's tapping into our market and this is ridiculous.

In summary, he gives a three-point message. Good Baptist, maybe. But a three-point message of stating his concern. Well, number one, Paul's preaching threatens the craftsman's livelihood.

[32 : 28] We're going to be out of business if Paul keeps spreading that gospel. Number two, Paul is misleading people, proclaiming that gods made with hands aren't gods. These little things here, guys, you want to be out of job?

You want to live on the streets? We've got to put an end to it. And the third point is that Paul's preaching robs the glory of Artemis, the great goddess Artemis.

Artemis. In other words, guys, this attack, Paul's activity, we need to take this personal. This is very personal to our lives, our culture, our well-being, and even our society.

In other words, the gospel threatens everything in our lives. It threatens our identity, livelihood, and our beliefs. Even an unbelieving world.

Demetrius isn't a Christian, obviously, right? Judge him by his fruits. I joke that he's a Baptist. He's definitely not a Baptist. He's a three-point message guy, but not a Baptist.

[33 : 34] And even an unbelieving world can see that the gospel changes everything. The unbelieving world can see it. And maybe that's the reason.

And maybe some of us here today are reluctant to surrender your entire life to Jesus Christ. That you're counting the cost.

We can call that, we'll put a name on that, as fringe-line Christians. The ones that kind of look like a Christian, act like a Christian, stalk like a Christian, attend church like a Christian, join a church like a Christian, be baptized like a Christian, take communion like a Christian.

But outside of here, there's a disconnect. I call that fringe-line Christians who want to enjoy the privilege of salvation without having to suffer for it.

Unfortunately for you, and even Christians, suffering will come. It's not a matter of if, it's just when suffering will come.

[34 : 41] And if you are a fringe-line Christian, that will have catastrophic effects for your faith. And so there is great call to return that prayer mat, return that prayer cloth, and turn to the one through living God.

Surrender all lower-gee gods and idols that you may have. May today be the end of your lukewarmness, and just be consumed by the overwhelming miracle of God's powerful word working in your hearts.

But maybe you're a believer, not a fringe-line Christian. You're just like, no, that's not me. Well, I'm not done with you yet. Maybe you're a believer. And you, if you had been evangelizing Ephesus, maybe Paul said, all right, who do I want to pick on?

Carmen. Carmen, I'm going to leave you here, just finish the work that I'm doing, and just, you know, do it well so that it stirs up, you know, Demetrius will probably get mad at you, but it's okay. This is normal. Would Demetrius have concluded that your presence in Ephesus was a threat? How many Christians, I don't have to pick on Carmen now, generalizing, how many Christians their presence in Ephesus at this time would have been a non-threat to Demetrius?

[36 : 16] Just blending in, making friends, going out to eat, hanging out with all the different religions, seeing their altars, and seeing their Artemis little horrific dolls and things, and saying, oh, that's cool.

Nice. Let's have, let's chat about that more. Right? There is a disturbance in Ephesus. There is a disturbance.

See, gospel work, it is quite peaceful, and historically and theologically speaking, the opponents of that peaceful work of the gospel are the ones who are most hostile against it.

Right? It's never the Christians it shouldn't be, mind you. I'm not talking about the dark ages, but this gospel work is peaceful.

The church has been called to the unbelieving world where to find hope, and if there is any hostility against that call and that proclamation, it is from a hostile world coming against the church.

[37 : 24] Right? Why? Why would they be hostile towards peace? Why would they be hostile towards such good news as we claim it to be and the gospel claims it to be?

Well, the gospel is disturbing. The gospel is disturbing. The prevailing word of God is disturbing. Lies make war against truth.

And it's a theological reality. If you want to understand opposition in a world that says, you're not the greatest of all time, you're God, Jesus, what?

The greatest of all time, really? Just one road to heaven? That seems a little bit too narrow for me. And indeed, his word says that it is narrow.

And it certainly disturbed this lost and unbelieving city. And as we see in verse 28, everyone basically lost their minds. You want to see the fallout of this disturbance of the world losing their utter minds?

[38 : 27] It's pretty comical in verse 28. When they heard this, they were enraged. They grabbed their, I don't know, we'll say Confederate flags of Ephesus and they ran out.

They're crying, how great is Artemis of the Ephesians. And so the city was filled with confusion and they rushed together into the theater, dragging with them Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians who were with Paul and his companions.

They're pulling like Christians. They don't care. You a Christian? I saw you with Paul. You're coming with me. And Paul's actually protected at this time saying, Paul, if you go in that theater, you ain't gonna come out alive.

They're saying, stay out, pump the brakes. And in verse 32, look, they've lost their minds this confusion. Now some cried out one thing, some another, for this assembly was in confusion and most of them did not even know why they had come together.

You want to talk about groupthink? Groupthink. This is utter confusion. If you were to go around and survey people in this crowd, why are you here?

[39 : 35] One might say, well, I heard somebody's dissing Artemis. You ask another person why they're here right next to the other guy, right? They're like, I thought I was, I heard I was gonna lose

my job.

And then you ask some other guy, why are you here? It's like, I thought there was gonna be pizza, pizza, right? Utter confusion. No one could settle this crowd for two whole hours.

And it was getting rowdy. The Jews tried to put forward Alexander, Alexander, you handle this, and they back out, right? No one could settle this crowd until the town clerk, the high office of town clerk, was able to reason with the crowd in verse 35, concluding that, guys, Jesus Christ isn't even on the same league as Artemis.

They're two different sports. Artemis is superior. Remember the actual historical event that took place which led to our false worship and everything of which the golden calves that we've created for our God, right?

Don't worry. If we don't chill, if we don't keep it together, it is not going to be the behavior of Paul that causes us to be in trouble with the state.

[40 : 56] It's gonna be our behavior against Paul that's gonna cause some problems for the state. Don't worry. Go home. Whereas in the last sermon title states, ignorance is hell.

The violent riot was prevented. No pizza was found. And to answer the second question, will the gospel prevail against culture, against such a profound deity in a society, Artemis?

It must. Because the word defines truth. Remember this, church. Because our rights and privileges in a beautiful country like America are not guaranteed.

And we may find ourselves outlawed from even raising our kids in the truth of the gospel and thrown in the prison. Not fear-mongering. Laying it out that we must remember this.

See, one thing in this crowd that they got right, one thing, is that the gospel is disturbing. This crowd, they attested to it.

[42 : 14] Their actions attested to it. Their words attested to it. This gospel message is ruining everything for us. Standing back and seeing this commotion unfolding, we not only see that the gospel advances through the word, but we also should see that it doesn't advance by weapons, by Paul going in there and setting the record straight, by force, it doesn't advance by violence.

The town clerk had that right, if he had anything right. So why is the gospel disturbing? Because the gospel makes war within.

The gospel confronts a sinful heart. It calls for a sinful world to renounce their way, which is known as idolatry, which threatens identity, it threatens livelihood, it threatens culture.

In other words, it confronts self-rule, just as Brother Justin was attesting when God woke him up. he said, not your way, but my way.

It confronts self-rule, it demolishes self. The only ones who find the gospel good news proclaim with Paul in Philippians 3, 8, Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord.

[43 : 57] For his sake, I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law or works, but that which comes through faith in Christ.

The righteousness from God that depends on faith. Has the gospel disturbed you?

Has the gospel disrupted your life? Remaking you into a new person, aligning your lives counter to culture, counter to the status quo?

Maybe it's not necessarily a disruption, but maybe God is ordering confusion. Clearly, mankind is unable and maybe at times unwilling to bring order to the chaos, order to confusion.

Take this crowd and this riot, for example. If we have any play in the role of salvation, we create more of a mess when we try to do it our way.

[45 : 17] right? And so maybe the gospel is not so much a disruption, but maybe a reorienting, maybe a reprioritizing, maybe a renewal.

Has it disturbed you? It's like Luke is describing such details to make us wonder if the gospel will prevail in Ephesus. I mean, why couldn't God just destroy the temple of Artemis send down fire and like that one cool story back in the king's books, right?

Just destroy it all. Prove that he's God. What a spectacle that would be. You want revival? You want a great awakening? Throw a stick of dynamite in that temple and glory to God as it all falls down, right?

If we had it our way, right? But maybe Luke is providing these details, this sort of conclusion that is unresolved.

Artemis still stayed in place. People still worshipped Artemis. Maybe he's trying to drive in the very sole point that in Luke's eyes, Jesus Christ has already prevailed over all.

[46 : 36] These people want to bicker about who's the goat? Is that even something worthy of our attention and our time? No, that's a senseless debate.

Unlike the goat rivals, death has been defeated. The empty tomb that we celebrated last week attested to that truth. The victory has been won.

Jesus Christ won. So who is Artemis, right? Who is Artemis? Maybe we can understand the weight of Paul's letter to them then in Ephesians 1 as Paul writes to the Ephesians.

Kind of brings some contextual insight. He says in the first chapter, verse 20, he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at the right hand in the heavenly places.

far above all rule, authority, and power, and dominion in every name that is named, not only in this age but also that to come. And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

[48 : 00] This is the victory in Christ's life, death, burial, and resurrection. This is the good news of the gospel that prevails. It reorients culture, it reorients identity, and it could very well reorient your livelihood.

Who cares about that pay raise or that cool job title or the couple dollar signs after your salary compared to the worth of following Jesus Christ, the surpassing worth of knowing him as Paul says. The very truth of the gospel is what makes it disturbing, especially to a world of pluralism, of many ways to Jesus, of universalism. But the greatest gift that we receive from God is gospel reality, gospel truth, truth, church, truth.

The world can redefine reality and try to redefine reality, reality, but they are not at luxury to redefine truth. The culture, they can legislate a different reality, but they can never legislate a change of truth.

They are not at luxury to do that. So how do we receive it? How do we remain in it? How do we prevail in it? By our faith, right? You see, the church prevails by faith in the prevailing word of God.

[49 : 32] That is how the church prevails. Let's pray. Let's pray.