

There is Another King: Jesus

Luke – Acts

The Gospel Divides Ephesus

Acts 19:1 – 41

Introduction: Christ Against the Powers

Throughout history, we find example after example of Jesus challenging the powers that be and in some cases freeing people, liberating them from those powers. In the country of Colombia, Jesus has been liberating people in more ways than one. Since the 1980's, cocaine drug cartels have threatened the nation. They murder anyone seriously trying to oppose them. Because the police have not been effective, civilians have started vigilante paramilitary groups, taking the fighting to the streets and creating a guerilla-based civil war. This civil war is believed to be responsible for around 3,500 lives each year. In this environment, Roman Catholic and Protestant evangelicals have proclaimed the message that Jesus Christ is Lord. Jesus is bringing corrupt politicians, guerrillas, and criminals out of darkness and under his reign. Furthermore, thousands of young people are being saved, not just saved eternally, which is ultimately very important, but saved from drug abuse, saved from criminal activity, saved from the paramilitary groups that recruit them into their ranks. But in the midst of this tremendous work of the Spirit of Jesus, there is intense resistance.

Pastors, evangelists and missionaries infuriate guerrilla leaders and drug lords because they stand against violence, drugs and corruption. On 16 March, 2002, the Archbishop of Cali, Isaias Duarte Cancino, was assassinated at the age of 63, in a working-class district of Cali where he had just conducted a wedding. The Archbishop had been a bold advocate of peace and 'clean' politics, criticizing guerrilla forces for the violence they inflict on civilians, and criticizing corrupt politicians who use drug money to fund their campaigns. Just a few weeks later, on Sunday April 7, 2002, Catholic priest Juan Ramon Nunez was shot while giving communion. The US Embassy in Bogota has warned evangelical missionaries and churches in rural Colombia that the guerrillas may target them. And one prominent Colombian church leader (Pastor Hector Pardo, the president of the Commission on Human Rights and Peace of the Evangelical Confederation of Colombia - CEDECOL), confirmed it: guerilla commanders consider evangelical groups to be legitimate military targets. Between 1985 and February 2003, at least seventy-two Protestant pastors and thirty-three Catholic priests had been killed. Hundreds of church buildings have been attacked. Church leaders have received death threats and have been kidnapped and held for ransom. But again, the Spirit of Jesus is at work. There is one church in Bogota that is almost the largest church in the world; it numbers almost a million people; it is featured on the video documentary and it continues to challenge the evil and the chaos around it. Intense resistance, and a tremendous work of the Spirit of Jesus: They almost always go together.

They go together in our personal lives, too. I have a childhood friend that I've known since kindergarten. We did almost all of the same things: school, swimming, water polo, student government. And we liked hanging out together. We both went to Stanford together, and he majored in political science and I majored in public policy. But I had given my life to Jesus my junior year of high school, and he didn't think highly of that. We were hanging out when we were juniors in college. We had a mutual friend who came to Jesus that year, and I had been a part of that. So God was moving. But my friend and I got into a heated conversation. He said, "Christianity is just a western religion." And he said I was selling out as an Asian American.

Context in Chapter Camp

Let's look at two context related questions. The first is what this passage means in the light of our studies of Jonah and Acts. In Nineveh, Jonah preaches and the whole city repents. I wish that I could tell you that if you go preach Jesus to your campus or your family or your neighborhood, that they will all wake up and turn to Jesus. It is more likely that you will see *some* tremendous works of God in the midst of *a lot* of ongoing conflict. In Acts 19, Paul preaches and the city of Ephesus divides. Some parts of the population commit themselves to Jesus. Some incredible change happens. But other parts of the population, who are also vocal and powerful, do not. They resist, because the very foundations of their societies tremble.

Context in Acts

Let's deal with the other context question. Where are we in Acts? We have transitioned off of Simon Peter to Paul. It is in the city of Ephesus, in what is now Turkey in Asia Minor. Ephesus is interesting because it is a city conscious of economic decline, much like the United States. Even though Ephesus had one of the wonders of the ancient world, the Temple of Artemis, and even though Ephesus sat on a major trade route connecting Rome to the East, they knew their days of prosperity were numbered. Silt from the river was filling up the bay. They were in economic jeopardy, which might help explain the riot. Like the United States today, Ephesus was concerned about money. It was in decline.

Paul, however, is not in decline. He is at the height of his power in Jesus. Luke makes this clear to us. Paul is paralleled to earlier Christian leaders, including Jesus and Peter. (1) Jesus bestowed the Holy Spirit. Later on, Peter laid hands on the Samaritans and they received the Holy Spirit. Here Paul laid hands on the disciples of John the Baptist and they received the Holy Spirit. (2) Jesus cast out demons. So did Peter. So did Paul. (3) Jesus let people touch his clothes, and they were healed of disease. The same happened to Peter, and it happens to Paul here. Furthermore, and more importantly, (4) God reaches more people through Paul here than anywhere else. Once in v.10 and another time in v.17, Luke says. "All the inhabitants of Asia [Minor] heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks." This is an ongoing situation for 2+ years even when Paul was kicked out of the synagogue.

However, even though we see a tremendous work of the Spirit of Christ in both Jewish and Gentile communities, sadly enough, we also see resistance, from both Jewish and Gentile communities. The Jewish community is more measured and less organized in its resistance; their resistance will only take stronger form when Paul leaves for Jerusalem and they follow him there and cause a riot. The Gentile community is more angry and more organized in its resistance. They cause a riot right now. So I break this passage up into two basic parts. The first is Jewish Acceptance and Resistance in v. 1 – 17. That's a shorter passage. The second is Gentile Acceptance and Resistance: v. 18 – 41. That is a much longer passage. So let's see what we learn.

PART ONE: Jewish Acceptance and Resistance: v. 1 – 17

The section focuses on the responses of the Jewish community in Ephesus. Some believe in Jesus. The first section is one we studied in the third section on the Holy Spirit. We find Paul in v.1, passing "through the upper country and came to Ephesus, and found some disciples. He said to them, 'Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?'" And they said to him, "No." Paul said, in my paraphrase, "You must have left Israel before Jesus died and rose again, and gave his Spirit to us. Let me fill you in!" Those twelve men come to a full knowledge of Jesus! So far, Paul's batting a 1000.

Then in v.8, Paul goes for the major leagues: "And he entered the synagogue and continued speaking out boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God. But when some were becoming hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way [which was what following Jesus Christ was called back then] before the people, he withdrew from them and took away the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. 10 This took place for two years, so that all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks."

Now I imagine Paul being bummed, because this was a prelude to later conflict. Paul was not happy anytime any synagogue leadership structure rejected him. You can tell because he makes such an effort to reengage the Jewish community. That is striking to me. Think about this contrast. Jonah was reluctant to go to people who would receive his message. Paul was reluctant to leave people who already rejected his message. In this case, he looks around for another place to teach. He finds a school that wasn't being used. He teaches there every day. Now this wasn't as easy as it sounds. Historians believe that Greek-speaking and Greek-teaching schools were used in the morning and the evenings, when the temperature was cool. So Paul would have only got to use it during the hottest parts of the day. He would teach in the hot afternoons. Jonah couldn't stand the heat; Paul dives right in. Every **day** he teaches there. He probably had to pay rent to use the school. What an amazing work Jesus has done in this man's heart. Look at his sacrifice.

Illus: I was a slow learner in this. The first time the Lord starting teaching me about this was the summer after my sophomore year of college. I went home to Los Angeles for the summer. The younger sister of a friend of mine calls me and says, "I just finished my freshman year at UCLA. I just accepted Jesus Christ. But my mom and dad won't let me go to church. They think I'm crazy. You're the only person I know who takes Jesus seriously. What should I do?" I ask her, "Well, I'll make some phone calls and we can form a group – let's have a bible study group in the park near your house. When can you make it?" She says, "Saturdays at 8am. I go roller-blading in that park for exercise, and that's the only time when I can get out of the house for long enough." I say, "Okay." But inwardly, I was thinking, "Saturdays at 8am??? That's painfully early." I call some Christian friends of mine. None of them want to come out at Saturday at 8am. They say, "Man, you're nuts." No one can come, except for Heather, a young woman who was still in the high school that we all came from. So we were this small group that met every Saturday at 8am. Jesus was teaching me a lesson in sacrifice! But it was worth it. Not only did we all grow spiritually, we did the same thing the next summer. And Heather told some of her friends at our high school. They asked me to lead them in some bible studies right at my old high school, and I got to tell my high school teachers that I had come to know Jesus!

Sometimes when you face some tough circumstances in ministry, it's actually an opening to greater things. Maybe your fellowship is struggling through some things. Maybe your friendships aren't quite where you'd hoped they'd be. Maybe your family thinks you're crazy for being a Christian. **HOLD ON TO JESUS!** Keep letting him live out his sacrificial life through you by his Spirit. Because it'll be an opening to greater things. Likewise for Paul, in v.10, his teaching about Jesus is so attractive that "all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks." In v.11 – 13, God does miracles through Paul. "God was performing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, so that handkerchiefs or aprons were even carried from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out." Once again, here is Paul at the height of his ministry because he is fully yielded to Jesus who lives in and through him.

Trying to Use the Name of Jesus for Yourself: v.13 – 17

But then we come to an odd passage. It doesn't focus on Paul at all. In v.13 – 17, there's the story of some professional Jewish exorcists – seven brothers running a family business – whose jobs are threatened by Paul, who is more effective and works for free. "13 But also some of the Jewish exorcists, who went from place to place, attempted to name over those who had the evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, 'I adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preaches.' 14 Seven sons of one Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. 15 And the evil spirit answered and said to them, 'I recognize Jesus, and I know about Paul, but who are you?' 16 And the man, in whom was the evil spirit, leaped on them and subdued all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. 17 This became known to all, both Jews and Greeks, who lived in Ephesus; and fear fell upon them all and the name of the Lord Jesus was being magnified."

Now this is a bizarre story, isn't it? Some of you are wondering, what is it even doing here? There are three overlapping possibilities here. (1) Luke is portraying belief in Jesus as what Judaism was meant to become. These seven sons don't take advantage of people; there is no suggestion of that. They are genuinely interested in bringing glory to God and blessing to people. You see, the New Testament is not anti-Semitic – it is not the opposite of Judaism, but it claims to be its fulfillment. That's why Paul could do exorcisms but these seven brothers couldn't. (2) The story of the seven exorcists reflects a temporary middle ground. The brothers don't want to commit themselves to Jesus, but they want to use the name of Jesus without actually knowing him themselves. At this point, the Jewish community in Ephesus is still curious about Jesus; later on, we'll see the opposition harden. That's why this is a temporary middle ground. It's not acceptance, but it's not resistance. Now at this point, the Jewish community is doing better than the Gentile community, which we'll see in a few minutes. In fact, it's very likely that these seven brothers, being sons of a Jewish chief priest, were some of the most prominent members of the Jewish community in Ephesus. Maybe one day they'll become followers of Jesus? And (3), Luke is portraying a situation where people want to use the name of Jesus without actually knowing him personally.

Sometimes people want to benefit from Jesus without really knowing him. This is a dangerous place to be. These seven sons are not seeking, really. Jesus welcomes everyone to him, and will let you experience him if you are really seeking him. But there are other people who just want a spiritual buzz. They just want a temporary thing. They don't want to yield to Jesus as Lord. But toying around with Jesus doesn't get you anywhere. It doesn't give you any authority in the spiritual realm. The demons know who is a fake and who is for real.

PART TWO: Gentile Acceptance and Resistance: v.18 – 41

The Gentile side of the story also focuses on some accepting and some rejecting. Now it's very important to pay attention to what the Gentile world is like. Luke highlights two historical aspects of the Gentile world. First, it is very religious, including idols and the occult. Second, it's materialistic. Those two things go hand in hand, even to this very day. So in the story of the book-burning magicians and the story of the Artemis worshippers, both the occult and issues of money are brought out.

Here in v.18 are the Gentiles who commit themselves to Christ: "18 Many also of those who had believed kept coming, confessing and disclosing their practices. 19 And many of those who practiced magic brought their books together and began burning them in the sight of everyone; and they counted up the price of them and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. 20 So the word of the Lord was growing mightily and prevailing." Praise God! Not only are they being freed from things, but all kinds of other people who were influenced by these magicians and the profit motive behind the magic, are being freed.

How many of you have Domino Sugar in your kitchen shelves? Do you know why it's called Domino Sugar? Because they grow sugar in the Dominican Republic. Years ago, some students who were doing Christian relief, development, and youth work in the DR noticed that Domino Sugar was particularly affected by the idolatry of money. So much so that they weren't paying their workers decent wages. They weren't concerned about the shanty towns that popped up near the factory. They weren't rotating crops so that the soil could have a rest and be replenished. Instead, the soil was getting depleted quickly because it was just being used to grow sugar. So these students, along with a professor of sociology at Eastern College named Tony Campolo, bought one share of Domino Sugar. That entitled them to go to a shareholders' board meeting. They got there, and said, "We've noticed all these things about our company. We are Christians, and we believe Jesus is concerned with the people of the Dominican Republic than he is about profit. In fact, we believe he will come back one day, and that he will not be happy with the way you are running this company." But the executives said, "Give us a few weeks. Let's schedule some meetings together to see what we can do." Weeks later, the board of Domino Sugar came out and said, "We resolve to do the following: We will increase the wages of our workers in the DR. We will implement a system of crop rotation, alternating sugar with food, for long term health. We will dedicate so many millions of dollars over the next few years to education, so many millions of dollars towards infrastructure development, and so many millions to health care initiatives." The message of Jesus and the people of Jesus made a huge difference in lifting oppression. You can pray and learn about creative opportunities you have to bring Jesus into situations like this. The gospel can make a huge difference.

The Real Reason for Resistance: v.21 – 25

But here comes the resistance. In v.21 "Now after these things were finished, Paul purposed in the Spirit to go to Jerusalem after he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, saying, 'After I have been there, I must also see Rome.' 22 And having sent into Macedonia two of those who ministered to him, Timothy and Erastus, he himself stayed in Asia for a while. 23 About that time there occurred no small disturbance concerning the Way. 24 For a man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Artemis, was bringing no little business to the craftsmen; 25 these he gathered together with the workmen of similar trades, and said, 'Men, you know that our prosperity depends upon this business.'"

Stop right there and circle the end of v.25. Seldom do you find such honest statements as this one. "Our prosperity depends upon this business." These are the first words out of Demetrius the silversmith's mouth. It's not, "Our traditional culture is..." It's about a base profit motive. Kind of like the bread industry in the face of these low-carb diets: "Our prosperity depends on this business." It was extremely insulting to have someone in the Greco-Roman world say of you that you were materialistic. And yet Luke does precisely that. He does not hold back because this guy was a mob leader. To the silversmiths,

Artemis was everything. She was this goddess with many breasts. Not terribly attractive, but she symbolized fertility. So in effect, Artemis represented prosperity in herself, especially to the silversmiths. So let's not even pretend that we are motivated by higher ideals. For Demetrius and his cronies, it comes down to money. On the surface, the issue is pagan religious practices. But underneath, the issue is materialism, plain and simple. The ex-magicians gave up fifty thousand pieces of silver. But Demetrius isn't letting one more silver coin go without a fight.

Now it would be easy to say that because by and large we don't have little idols today, that this passage doesn't have any relevance. But you know, an idol is just a physical manifestation of a deeper spiritual problem. People turned to idols because they wanted to control the outcomes of harvests, the weather, war, fortune, anything. An idol is an expression of the human desire for control, control that we do not want God to have. Defined that way, there are plenty of idols today.

For example, one idol is simply money: As I've alluded to all along, and as this passage really points out, our society worships money. The Bible says so in Ephesians 5:5 and Colossians 3:5: Covetousness is idolatry. And Jesus liberates people, he sets us free, from materialism. And yet I challenge you to go out and live that and talk that. You could just say humbly, "I'm just wanting to take Jesus seriously and I don't want to buy into the success syndrome." When I was 20, I told my parents, who are not Christians, I was interested in being a high school teacher, and they hated the idea. I didn't tell them that it was because I saw a public high school teacher lead my sister to Christ and do all kinds of ministry to high school kids. But there was resistance to that because of the idol of family my parents held. I wasn't being an obedient son. When I was 23 and I moved into a lower income neighborhood because I felt Jesus leading me there, my mom, disowned me for a little while. Because the idolatry of family was strong for my mom, she was very resistant to me living out Jesus' heart for the poor. She knew that 'her prosperity' depended on my ongoing interest in being successful. I reassured her that I would care for her, that I was thinking about her future and planning for it. But I was fairly straight up that I didn't think I could buy her a house near the beach in affluent Orange County when she got older. When Jesus became more important than anything else, her idol of family was challenged. Our relationship is now much better, but it took a while. I think some of you may deal with that with your parents. As a result, your parents might be the first place you face resistance to the work of Jesus.

Then there is the idol of your career. Talk about something you make with your own hands and worship at the same time!!! Nowadays, we expect a lot out of our career. We expect it to deliver the goods: satisfaction, significance, security. When I graduated, I got a job at Intel. This was during the heyday of the late 90's when the stock price was doubling every year. Employee surveys showed that over 2/3 of all Intel employees worked more than 50 hours a week. Usually, single people lead the rat race because it's not until you're married do other people look at you as if you have a life outside of work. But I wasn't married then; instead, I was doing urban ministry, enjoying my Christian team of friends, and discipling some younger guys. I was even giving this Mexican grandmother from my apartment complex rides to and from her work for over a year, so that constrained my work hours. One day my supervisors offered me a promotion. I thought and prayed about it, studied Scripture, and decided NO. It would require too much from me. Some said, "Really? You'd get more stock, more impact in the company, more visibility." I said, "I'm sorry. I'm a Christian, and I feel like what Jesus is doing with me outside of work is too valuable – I don't want to cut into that." Within the next year, they offered me another promotion, and I turned it down again. By the time I was there for 4 years or so, I had mastered my job and was working about 30 hours a week. Some of my co-workers made unpleasant jokes about me, though, when I bought a house in Boston's inner city. One said, not to me but in everyone's hearing, "Mako's finally a slumlord." Where does that come from?!? That's what happens when you challenge idols. But it was alright, because I got to witness to people about healthy lifestyles and how to find satisfaction and significance in spiritual places.

What are the idols that Jesus is challenging right now? In our world, or on our campuses? Is it success? Is it security? Is it approval from the [mostly liberal] intellectual establishment? If you were proclaiming and living Jesus Christ, what idols would be threatened? And let's remember that Jesus not only impacts individuals, but also entire structures and societies. What is the pornography industry complained about Christians resisting it, saying it's not healthy? What if places of institutionalized racism complained about

Christians trying to work for the dignity of all people? Can't you imagine them saying, "But our prosperity depends on this business!""??

The Rhetoric of Civic Pride: v.26 – 27

So we also need to be prepared for the resistance. Demetrius does two things. First, he offers rhetoric appealing to people's civic pride. Second, he foments a riot. The rhetoric of civic pride sounds like this. Listen to how materialism is wedded to a people's collective self-interest: "26 You see and hear that not only in Ephesus, but in almost all of Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away a considerable number of people, saying that gods made with hands are no gods at all. 27 Not only is there danger that this trade of ours fall into disrepute, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis be regarded as worthless and that she whom all of Asia and the world worship will even be dethroned from her magnificence."

[Wow. That's a strong case. Just to draw a parallel, can you imagine Paul on the show *The Apprentice*? Just imagine if Donald Trump called Paul up to the boardroom. He would jut out his lips and crinkle his eyebrows and say, "Paul, not only in the Trump Towers but in the Trump Taj Mahal and in all of my establishments, you have persuaded and turned away a considerable number of people, saying that the god of materialism and pleasure is no god at all. Not only is there danger that my businesses fall into disrepute, but also that the heartbeat of the great god capitalism be regarded as worthless and that the system that the U.S. and much of the world worships will even be dethroned from her magnificence. You are not a leader. You're fired." Sound likely? Unfortunately for Paul, this didn't happen in a private boardroom. This happened in public, in the hearing of a people already beset with economic fears.]

Demetrius is seizing on some powerful group fears and group pride. Yet that happens in the U.S. One newscaster said a day after September 11th, "Show everyone how great the United States is. Go shopping." And when we criticize this or even stand against it in the name of Jesus, you'll hear this kind of rhetoric. You're not a faithful American.

The Rage of the Masses: v.28 – 34

Well, that language works. The riot starts in v.28: "When they heard this and were filled with rage, they began crying out, saying, 'Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!'" 29 The city was filled with the confusion, and they rushed with one accord into the theater, dragging along Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul's traveling companions from Macedonia." Paul, though, wants to go into the mob in v.30: "And when Paul wanted to go into the assembly, the disciples would not let him. 31 Also some of the Asiarchs who were friends of his sent to him and repeatedly urged him not to venture into the theater."

But we see cracks in the facade in v.32: "So then, some were shouting one thing and some another, for the assembly was in confusion and the majority did not know for what reason they had come together." This is a badly organized group. Their cohesion is not absolute. And in v.33, we see allies in strange places: "Some of the crowd concluded it was Alexander, since the Jews had put him forward; and having motioned with his hand, Alexander was intending to make a defense to the assembly. 34 But when they recognized that he was a Jew, a single outcry arose from them all as they shouted for about two hours, 'Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!'"

Notice that Alexander, a representative of the Jewish community, steps forward. Why? Alexander could be saying, "Hey, we Jews don't like idolatry, either but it's those Christians you want! They're the ones causing trouble and converting your people!" Or, he could be going on the offensive, too. He could be making a courageous defense of the Jewish position against idols, which Christianity inherited from Judaism. I think it's this second option. I think Alexander wanted to make a critique against idols. And for that moment, Judaism and Christianity are allies, bound together by its ethical and spiritual stands. But once again, belief in Jesus is portrayed as the fulfillment of Judaism. It's what Judaism should have been, for Christianity goes out and challenges the Gentile world to give up its idols. This riot was caused by the spread of Christian truth. That's okay. But the mob doesn't let Alexander speak anyway, because the Gentiles see Judaism and Christianity as being together – together enough for both to pose the same threat. For two hours they chant mindlessly, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians." I'll bet their throats were hoarse after that!

The Quandary: v.35 – 41

35 After quieting the crowd, the town clerk said, ‘Men of Ephesus, what man is there after all who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is guardian of the temple of the great Artemis and of the image which fell down from heaven? 36 So, since these are undeniable facts, you ought to keep calm and to do nothing rash. 37 For you have brought these men here who are neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of our goddess. 38 So then, if Demetrius and the craftsmen who are with him have a complaint against any man, the courts are in session and proconsuls are available; let them bring charges against one another. 39 But if you want anything beyond this, it shall be settled in the lawful assembly. 40 For indeed we are in danger of being accused of a riot in connection with today’s events, since there is no real cause for it, and in this connection we will be unable to account for this disorderly gathering.’ 41 After saying this he dismissed the assembly.

The executive treasurer of the city placates the crowd with a few white lies and a threat. “Don’t worry. We all know Artemis will be okay (which is not true). We all know that Ephesus will keep being a prestigious city (which is not true). We know these men are harmless against our religion (which is not true). Go through the right channels, the courts. For we are in danger of being accused of a riot (which is the threat).” He uses the same phrase Demetrius used; you think we’re in danger because of that? We’re in danger for causing a riot, that’s the real danger! This crowd appears to be fairly simple-minded and easily influenced. One might even say manipulated. Appeals to fear work. For that, we need to remember God’s love for them. Only God’s love will cast out that fear.

Conclusion

Paul sees fruit in the midst of ongoing conflict. If you go preach Jesus to your campus, it’s not likely that the whole campus will repent and turn to Jesus. It is more likely that you will see fruit in the midst of ongoing conflict.

When I was a student at Stanford, the Spirit of Christ seemed to be doing something. During my last 2 years, I got to be a part of 5 people giving their lives to Christ. My friends and I had the chance to plan an Easter Sunrise Service that drew 5,000 people. We’d just hear stories of God doing things that were really encouraging. But then the university started cracking down. Floyd Thompkins, the only not-liberal staff at Memorial Church was pushed out. A Campus Crusade staff worker was given a restraining order from campus. And two years after I graduated, the administration decreed that there would be no proselytizing on campus.

But within that tension, look at Paul’s response to both the good results and the hard conflict: He has a very Christ-like way of responding. He wanted to rush into the mob to be with his friends – very sacrificial. He rented room in the school of Tyrannus, and taught there during the hot afternoons – also very sacrificial. Seems like in a self-centered world, the way Jesus lives his life out through us is primarily to not be self-centered, but Christ-centered. That will continue to shake the very foundations of the societies we live in.

Conclusion of the Week

Let me also recap what we’ve done this week. This week has been about God’s mission and God’s missionaries. In Jonah we saw:

- A. Jonah gets God’s word, runs away, gets angry
 - B. Jonah’s psalm of thanks
 - C. Nineveh gets God’s word, repents
 - D. Jonah’s heart is exposed, cultural idolatry of Jonah exposed

- X. Holy Spirit is given to proclaim the kingdom
 - A.’ Peter gets God’s word, obeys
 - B.’ Peter’s statement of thanks, “What God has made clean...”
 - C.’ Ephesus gets God’s word
 - D’. Paul’s heart is revealed, cultural idolatry of Ephesus exposed

God has an incredibly big mission. He has incredibly ordinary missionaries: People like you and me. But within us is the Spirit of Christ, if we have truly come to believe in Christ, and through us God will proclaim His message. He will advance His kingdom. He will advance His mission among the Nineveh's and Ephesus' of the world. He will challenge the boundaries and barriers of people everywhere. He will draw all praise to Himself. And He will shine forth His character of self-sacrifice against the backdrop of the self-centeredness of the world. **MAY IT BE SO WITH US, LORD JESUS!!!**