

THE CONTINUING ACTS OF THE CHRIST



Week Twenty-Two - Light of the Gospel

A Note to the Parents/Teachers

In chapter 19, a riot breaks out in Ephesus over the message of Jesus. For the one inciting it, it was about money and business. For some, it was in defense of their false god. For many, they didn't even know why they were there — just part of the crowd. For the Jewish leaders, they didn't want to risk their power and position. What are the things we hold onto that we would have to give up to truly follow Jesus?

- **Big Idea:** The light of the Gospel will disrupt/interrupt what our heart worships

Starter

Evidence of Grace

- Ask kids to share ways they've seen God at work lately. Anything, big or small, which is good is from God. Take time to thank God together.

Discussion:

- Have you ever gone from a dark room into a bright room or outside during the day? A lot of times you have to pause to let your eyes adjust to the new light. Why do you think that is?

Sing Together

Story - from Acts 19: 21-41

In chapter 19 we read that Paul is making plans to leave Ephesus and return to Jerusalem by way of passing through Macedonia and Achaia. So Paul sends Timothy and Erastus to Macedonia to start to prepare the people for Paul's arrival. But Paul stays in Ephesus for a little while longer and while he is there, a riot erupts because of Paul's teaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We are told in chapter 19 that there arose a major disturbance about the followers of Jesus and Paul. A man named Demetrius was a silversmith who made silver shrines or statues of the goddess Artemis. To the Ephesians, Artemis was the goddess of nature, animals, and fertility. She was the goddess of all non-human creation. Demetrius and other silversmiths made a lot of money by making statues of Artemis that they would sell to people who worshipped Artemis and to tourists who would travel through the city of Ephesus. Paul taught that there was only one true God of all of creation and that Jesus was the human expression of God. Paul taught that God could not be made into statues or out of things made by human hands because they were not real. Jesus was the only real model of who God was and what he was like.

Demetrius gathered all of his silversmith buddies and riles them up because they will lose not only a lot of money but may also lose their jobs if everyone in Ephesus starts believing in Jesus because then they will stop buying their statues of Artemis. Demetrius disguises his real motive behind getting rid of Paul by creating fear in the people of Ephesus that their goddess Artemis is being threatened because people will stop worshipping her, and worship God instead.

This makes the people angry and the people of Ephesus start shouting, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" The whole city erupted and was thrown into confusion. The whole city rushed into and filled the huge amphitheater that could hold 25,000 people. They were still all shouting and arguing with each other about different things because most of the people that had gathered weren't sure whom they were supposed to be mad at.

Then the Jewish leaders sent out a guy named Alexander and all of a sudden the people of Ephesus thought this was the guy they were supposed to be mad at so they start shouting again, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians," for two straight hours!

Some people tried to calm them down, including a Jewish guy named Alexander, but when the people of Ephesus saw that it was another guy who didn't worship Artemis either, they shouted even louder, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians," for two hours straight! The Jewish leaders wanted to try and distance themselves from Paul and his teachings because they did not want to be lumped into the same story that Paul was teaching. Maybe so that they could keep the power and influence that they enjoyed in the city.

The gospel of Jesus will disrupt and interrupt our worship of anything other than God. Any other thing, idea, or person other than Jesus will leave us empty and full of fear. God loves us enough to not allow us to continue to worship any other god or thing that is not him. Anything other than God, displayed in the person of Jesus Christ is empty. God, not Artemis, is the creator and sustainer of all of creation. God is the God of the universe, of humans, and of the earth.

[Dialogue Questions - you may use some or all]

- What are some things, other than Jesus, that you worship?
- What are things, people, or ideas that your life revolves around that are not Jesus?
- What are things or ideas you can see that your friends, siblings, or parents worship?
- How can Jesus be good news to you, your friends, siblings, or parents?

Breakout Time

Pray:

God, I know that you are the one true living God who created all things. You created the earth and everything in the earth. You created me. Thank you for sending your Son Jesus so that I can be forgiven of worshiping other things. Forgive me for sometimes worshiping other things than you. I repent. Holy Spirit please work in my heart to love God and love others.

Craft:

- The kids can color the following page

BLESS Activity

This week, ask your family how you can practice the **Listen** rhythm. As you go to school, go to the store with your parent, go to your sports game or after-school activity, or even in your own home, listen and look for the idols that people are worshiping. Listen to the words people use. Look for how people act toward one another. Look around your city and neighborhood and see if you can tell what is most important to people, and what they worship.

Jesus said:

I AM the

light

of the
world

John 9v5

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