

Date: June 9, 2019

Text: Acts 19:23-41

Title: “Don’t Step on My Idol!”

Big Idea: The Gospel can transform both individuals and cultures by challenging idols with the claims of King Jesus!

A MAJOR DISTURBANCE (v. 23)

Why do you think Luke calls the church “The Way” in Acts 19:9 & 23?

How was “the way” that the disciples in Ephesus were living causing a disturbance in the city?

How do you think “the way” we live should “cause disturbance” where we are living?

IDOLS: GODS MADE WITH HANDS (vv. 24-27)

Read Exodus 20:1-6. Note:

- The first commandment clarifies *who* we are to worship.
- The second commandment clarifies *how* we are to worship.

How is our worship—not just on Sundays, but throughout our entire life—to be *different* than the world’s worship? Is it? Why or why not?

If the lives of those who claim to follow Jesus *look* almost identical to the lives of the rest of the world, then what does that say about *who* and *how* we are worshipping? Does it mean that we struggle with idols too?

What then does God require of us?

The Truth Behind the Lie

In verses 24-25 we see that the true *god* behind the *idol-making business* in Ephesus is MONEY. They were tapping into the religious sentiments of the Ephesian people in order to protect their profits.

What are ways we are tempted to manipulate and/or use others to protect our own idols?

ARTEMIS OF THE EPHESIANS: CULTURAL IDOLS (vv. 27-35)

The Ephesians identified with the goddess Artemis as a patron and protector of their city. Her worship was wrapped up in their social, economic, and religious lives. Protecting her was core to their values, and they didn’t even know why (see v. 32).

What are our cultural idols?

A few ideas: *The American Dream; Freedom, individualism, and autonomy; Conservatism or Liberalism. A political party or viewpoint; Government; Entertainment; Consumerism; Instant gratification.*

The Power of Cultural Idols

- Cultural idols are powerful because we don't recognize them.
- Cultural idols are powerful because they rarely get challenged.
- Cultural idols are powerful because they are tied to our emotions.
- Cultural idols are powerful because they give us our identity.

Note the crowds response when their cultural idol is challenged: **verses 29-34**.

King Jesus is in the business of challenging and tearing down our cultural idols.

Conclusion

The Gospel has the power to threaten, disturb, and disrupt cultures and to change them. It turns the world upside down. This kind of change doesn't come through adjusting or leaning on our cultural idols—like the government, political ideals, business, industry, education, etc.—it begins with individual human hearts. It starts when people like you and I *repent* and *follow Jesus radically*. And when that happens, nothing is safe. We will be willing to abandon it all. We will say, “Jesus, take everything!” in our devotion to him. And when that happens to people, nothing can stop it from changing the world.

Application

So what are your idols? Gods gifts can become our gods. Money is a big one. Can you identify any other idols that you tend to worship? How do you identify your idols? A suggestion: next time you experience a deep emotion, or find yourself in conflict, prayerfully ask God to help you hunt down its root: Where did it come from? (Be willing to look *inside* yourself, not outside!)

How is Jesus challenging your devotion to cultural idols? Take time to examine how cultural idols shape your life, thinking, actions, and worldview. Are you “living a life worthy of the Gospel” that is devoted to King Jesus alone, and not submissive to cultural values that don't honor Jesus' unique lordship?

Will you live in community and do the work of discipleship? We all need help confronting and abandoning our idols. We need help living lives of devotion to King Jesus. How will you let others challenge and speak into and shape your own walk with Jesus? How will you invest in this same work of discipling others in the Way of Jesus?