

Marketing the Holy Spirit

December 2, 2007

Acts 19:23-41

Dr. Jeff H. McCrory Jr.

Synopsis:

This is the season of selling and buying. Is this what Christmas is all about? Paul shows up in Ephesus with the gospel, which clashes with selling and buying, the Artemis cult, enshrined human desire,. Even today the gospel clashes with those who market God.

I.

The Culture Clash

Acts 19:25 “Men, we get our wealth from this business”

Thanksgiving versus Black Friday

- Seattle last weekend
- Email from Cate’s professor
- Promise not to buy

- *Thanksgiving = very Christian
- *Black Friday = very consumer

Story of Paul at Ephesus (Acts 19)

- READ 19:24-25 (business)
- Clash between The Way and Artemis Culture

*Why important?

- increasing clash between pagan and Christian way
(This morning’s Scripture Luke 9:23 “deny themselves”)
- idols are dangerous; we become what we worship

II.

Idol Central

Acts 19:27 “There is danger . . . that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be scorned”

Paul and Friends

- 2nd journey: to Philippi, Thess, Athens, Corinth
- Return to Jerusalem, Antioch (Syria) (“Way”)
- Ephesus (coast of Turkey) province of Asia

READ Acts 19:10 (2 years beginning in 57 AD)

What's Ephesus all about?

- Athens = Boston
- Ephesus = LA or New York
- *Idol Central

READ Acts 19:27

Artemis: (SHOW her picture)

- 8th century BC shrine (READ Acts 19:35) = meteorite
- 6th century BC temple built to Artemis (Diana)
 - daughter of Zeus and Leta
- 4th century BC temple burned
- Rebuilt temple
 - 400 feet long
 - 180 feet wide
 - 127 columns 60 feet high
 - reliefs on walls
 - *3x size of Parthenon
 - One of the 7 wonders of ancient world
- Aspects:
 - Danger/Hunt (notice lions)
 - Power (notice bulls on statue)
 - Fertility: Combined with Cybele in Asia
 - mother goddess (notice breasts)
 - Civic pride (notice walls on head)
- Bank of Artemis Temple
- Ephesus theatre there (25,000 people)
- Sold statues everywhere (Disneyland)

Sum: Combination of human desires

- Danger woman = advertizing
- Sex = culture
- City = America!
- Bank = money
- Business = Good for business

The Clash: The Way meets Artemis

READ Acts 19:24-26

Demetrius (inscription at temple found)

- *Christian way confronts idol worship

What's going to happen?
What's at stake for them and for us?

III.

Idols Today

Acts 19:26 "Saying that gods made with hands are not gods"

What are idols?

- OT images of creation (bulls, bears, lions, people)
- Do people really worship statues?
E.g. Bull and Bear; Donkey and Elephant
- represent human desires
- *Idols are enshrined human desires

OT prohibition of idols (1st commandment)
Calvin "human mind is factory for idols"
Chesterton quote regarding worship ("worship everything")
C.S. Lewis in *The Great Divorce*
"hell is where people get what they desire"

What if you got what you desire?

- What do you desire?
- Will it suffice as god?

Result: READ Acts 19:28-32 = confusion

Imagine a feeding frenzy of competing human desires = idolatry

IV

Idols or Jesus?

Acts 19:23 "No little disturbance broke out concerning the Way"

There will be a clash between Jesus and idols (READ 19:23)

- Enshrined human desire does not die easily
- We all fight this

There is a choice: Give you a few options this Christmas

- Pledge = give Jesus a hand in your finances
- Do something for someone else
Iglesia Park: baskets

Contact Jane Kingston, Kim Baley, Helena H
Alzheimers: visit (E.g. Pranges took dogs)
Contact Irene

-Sponsor a Kenyan orphan (next week)