

Series: Acts

Title: No Longer Confounded

Scripture: Acts 19: 23-29

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Acts 19: 21: After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome. 22: So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus; but he himself stayed in Asia for a season.

The Lord Jesus Christ, God our Savior, gave Paul a desire to go to these places by giving Paul a love for his Redeemer and a love for his brethren. We covered this before: with the death of the former Caesar, Paul saw an open door to Rome, the brethren in Macedonia and Achaia had let him know they had an offering for the poor saints in Jerusalem, and Paul was concerned for the weak brethren in Corinth who were impressed by the vain show of false prophets.

Acts 19: 23: And the same time there arose no small stir about that way.

Before Paul leaves, there are several things that the Lord God would have Paul to remember. As he often does for each of us in our day, the Lord reminded Paul of these things by using evil, wicked men and a great heresy in Ephesus.

Acts 19: 23: And the same time there arose no small stir about that way. 24: For a certain *man* named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen; 25: Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth. 26: Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands: 27: So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth. 28: And when they heard *these sayings*, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great *is* Diana of the Ephesians.

I. FIRST, THE LORD REMINDS PAUL THAT EVERY MAN HE WILL FACE ON HIS JOURNEY ARE IDOLATORS BY NATURE.

Strip away all the veneer in this text: the image, the zeal of Demetrius and the others, for their god and for the work they did in her name, their covetousness over the gain they made in their religion, their anger at the gospel of Christ the Way and you are left with the real idol, the fountain head of the problem—man.

Ecclesiastes 7: 29: Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.

God made Adam upright. What a difference we see here in our text from how Adam was made by God.

But we lost knowledge. We lost righteousness and holiness. We lost a godly nature, a moral freedom to will that which is good and all power to perform it. We lost the presence of God, we lost communion with God. We lost it all by one transgression, only one.

From that one transgression forward, Adam's posterity—us included--have been inventors of evil things. In our sinful flesh, we invent ways to sin against God: inventions for our own satisfaction, inventions to get riches;

inventions to get honour, inventions for pleasures, inventions to increase our fleshly wisdom and knowledge, inventions of new ways to somehow call our evil inventions works of righteousness.

The reason we have so many new laws is because we have so many new evil inventions.

Whether our images are our degrees, our books, our gold, our religious images, our homes, our sons and daughters, or whether our confidence is in that we have put away all our images—the great three in one of sinful man—is ME, MYSELF, AND I.

When Paul hears of the false prophets in Corinth, their fair speeches, of how they are robbing the saints, of how the saints are tossed about with the show of the prophets, he can remember: Demetrius and how his fair speech tickled the ears of his fellow craftsmen. Paul can remember that the fair speech of Demetrius saying, “Great is the goddess Diana” is the same as the fair speech of false prophets who say, “Great is God Almighty” while as yet they worship themselves. The “no small gain” he got was monetary, but it was also a soothed conscience against sin. And Paul can remember that he too, was just like Demetrius, in his blind zeal for the god of his imagination.

The Lord uses trials just as these, to remind us of what we are by nature. Before Paul goes on his journey, he is reminded that he needs to deal patiently with sinners, just as God was longsuffering with him. So it is with us and our brethren and with men and women who do not yet know the grace of God in Christ Jesus.

II. THE LORD REMINDS PAUL ONLY THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED MAKES SINNERS OF ONE MIND.

Everything else will result in confusion.

Acts 19: 29: And the whole city was filled with confusion:...32: Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was confused; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together.

Throughout Acts the message and methods of those who oppose the gospel always result in confusion.

James 3:16: For where envying and strife *is*, there *is* confusion and every evil work.

Confusion is the result of sin. We hid from God in the garden for this reason, one moment we were naked, with no sin, and God says, "The man and his wife, were not ashamed."--the word is "confounded." After one transgression, Adam said, "I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself." Yet, Adam was so full of sin, in confusion, in the shame of sin, he thought he could hide himself.

Sinners have to be given life. We have to have our conscious purged by the blood of Christ, so that we know what we are. We have to be made new, one new body, drinking into one Spirit. God hath revealed that which no eye hath seen to those he makes to see Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:13: For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

1 Corinthians 2: 9: But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. 10: But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God...16:...But we have the mind of Christ.

The intercession of our Lord Jesus Christ on behalf of his people is this:

Psalm 69: 6: Let not them that wait on thee, O Lord GOD of hosts, not be ashamed for my sake: let not those that seek thee be confounded for my sake, O God of Israel. 7: Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face.

Having the mind of Christ has to do with a believer being made to see how desperately wicked I am. the more I see how fully God made Christ sin for me the more utterly abased I am at God's holy character.

Proverbs 17: 26 :...to punish the just *is* not good, *nor* to strike princes for equity.

Shall not the God of all the earth do right? Our God is so just that he would never exercise eternal justice on Christ Jesus until he who knew no sin was made fitly deserving of justice. The very reason for Christ being lifted up in place of his people, bearing the shame of what we are in his own body on the tree, is because God is just. He hates in-equity. He fitly makes his people righteous by fitly paying making his Son to be what his people are that the debt of justice owed to Christ might be ministered to him in complete justice.

I can not enter into it, but I will take Christ's word--this one who was not conceived of sinful seed, who never had a sinful thought, was made what I am so much so that he called my sin, his sin--not only that but he said, "mine iniquities have taken hold upon me." (Ps 69: 6; 40: 12.)

Think of that. Our sins really do not take hold upon us, because sin is all we have ever known. We have never known sinless perfection so that we can truly know the horror of our sin. But this Holy One who knew no sin, describes something infinitely incomprehensible to us when he says, "Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me."

But here is the amazing thing. When the Spirit of grace, makes us to behold that God made him who knew no sin, sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him, we behold:

- the unparalleled holy character of our God,
- the unparalleled mercy of our God,
- the unparalleled faithfulness and love of Christ Jesus for God and his brethren,
- and the utter shame and confusion of our sin, of what we are.

In this work of grace, by purging our conscience with his blood, instead of making us ashamed of Christ on the cross, God makes us ashamed of what WE are by nature. Instead of making us ashamed of Christ on the cross he makes us REJOICE in Christ Jesus and to put no confidence in our flesh.

1 Peter 2:6:...Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

To his spiritual Israel, God says:

Isaiah 41:11: Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded: they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish....14: Fear not, thou worm Jacob, *and* ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the LORD, and thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.

Isaiah 45:16: They shall be ashamed, and also confounded, all of them: they shall go to confusion together *that are* makers of idols. 17: *But* Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end.

This work can not be accomplished by telling a sinner a few things he ought to do, or by a system of doctrine that men give a mental assent to. This work is designed by God to be accomplished through the gospel of

Christ, through the Spirit Christ sends forth. Paul was an ambassador of Christ his King. Therefore he declared what Christ sent him to declare. It is because Christ gets the glory of being the beginning, the Creator, the Firstborn, the Everlasting Father, of the new creation, the entire generation of children he has birthed through his work and his supernatural regenerating birth. He renews his children in knowledge, creating his children in righteousness and true holiness after the image of Christ Jesus who created that new man within. Likewise, Christ Jesus receives the glory of resurrecting a new body for his children so that their body will be created in his righteousness and holiness even as their new nature is on this earth. Everything in the new heavens and new earth will be the creation of Christ Jesus because it pleased God that in him should all fullness dwell. That in all, Christ Jesus might have the Preeminence. For it pleased God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit that all fullness of the Godhead should dwell in Christ Jesus bodily.

Every other word that claims to be righteousness is idolatry and results only in more of the same confusion that men are born into the first time. By the grace of God in Christ Jesus, through the work of the Holy Spirit, believers have this promise of God, we shall no longer be confounded.