

Paul's Third Missionary Journey

Acts 18:23-21:14

Prayer

Oh Almighty God in heaven, since the beginning of time man has created gods to replace You. There is no comparing those idols to your power and majesty. Today we will be studying a famous missionary who took this wonderful Gospel message of Your love and carried to those who knew only false gods. Help us take heart and gain courage from this story that we, too, become missionaries for You. We pray this in Jesus name. Amen.

The Story

The third missionary journey of Paul lasted about four years. Three of those years were spent in Ephesus, one of the largest cities of Asia Minor. Ephesus was 1,000 years old by the time Paul reached it. While Paul was there, Ephesus was at the height of its glory, being the most prosperous commercial center of that time.



Diana (Artemis)

In those days of wickedness, cities claimed false gods as their own. The chief goddess of Ephesus was Diana, daughter of Zeus, sister to Apollo. Ephesus enjoyed a sort of "sacredness" because the great temple to the goddess Diana lay just outside the city and was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

This temple attracted tourists by the thousands. Those tourists bought souvenirs, mostly small statues of Diana, made by silversmiths whose shops were everywhere in the city. Those silversmiths made a living through these sales.

Paul had not been in Ephesus very long before he had those silversmiths so angry that they started a panic city-wide.

Acts 19:23-27 "And about that time there arose a great commotion about the Way. For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Diana, brought no small profit to the craftsmen. He called them together with the workers of similar occupation, and said: "Men, you know that we have our prosperity by this trade. Moreover you see and hear that not only at Ephesus, but throughout almost all Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away many people, saying that they are not gods which are made with hands. So not

only is this trade of ours in danger of falling into disrepute, but also the temple of the great goddess Diana may be despised and her magnificence destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worship." Now when they heard this, they were full of wrath and cried out, saying, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!"

They convinced the citizens that Paul's ideas would overthrow not only their religion but also their government. Everyone gathered in the streets, shouting and fighting. So the whole city was filled with confusion. Paul and his companions were in danger of being seized by the mob and harmed. Finally the city clerk quieted the crowd because he was afraid that the Roman army would come to restore order if he did not. *"For we are in danger of being called in question for today's uproar, there being no reason which we may give to account for this disorderly gathering!"* And when he had said these things, he dismissed the assembly.

But Paul was not intimidated by this outbreak. He saw this great city as a field full of ripe grain, ready to be picked. He stayed for nearly three years for one reason: to bring the gospel to the Gentiles. One of his strongest characteristics was his eagerness to take advantage of every opportunity to promote Christianity. He never passed up a chance to proclaim the news of the risen Lord and wrote in 1 Corinthians that *"a window was opened there."*



Inner Aim Paul preached to the people in Ephesus and many became believers.

Activity One - Summarize the story in two sentences. Use the following words in your summary: **Paul, Ephesus, Diana, greedy, riot, missionary, example, troubles**

Activity Two - Explain the following expressions and ideas from today's story.

1. In the second paragraph of the story, why is "sacredness" in quotation marks?
2. What was the real reason that the riot over Paul and his followers started?
3. In the last paragraph the city was described as , "as a field full of ripe grain, ready to be picked. "
4. In th e last paragraph, "...a window was opened there."

Passages

Read 1 Corinthians 3: 1-13. (page 4) Paul writes from Ephesus to the believers in Corinth as their pastor. Here God reveals, through Paul, a true pastor's heart. Write a paragraph that summarizes what God says of the work he (and all pastors) is doing. Conclude the paragraph by writing down, as a quote, the most important verse in this group.

Hymn - Answer the following questions about the stanzas of Hymn #502 (TLH)

1. Saints of God, the dawn is bright'ning, Token of our coming Lord; O'er the earth the field is whit'ning; Louder rings the Master's word: Pray for reapers, Pray for reapers, In the harvest of the Lord!	Who are the "reapers"? What is the "harvest of the Lord"?
2. Now, O Lord, fulfil Thy pleasure, Breathe upon Thy chosen band, And with Pentecostal measure Send forth reapers o'er our land, Faithful reapers, Faithful reapers, Gath'ring sheaves for Thy right hand.	What is happening when God "breath(es) upon Thy chosen band"? What is happening when reapers are "gath'ring sheaves for They right hand"?
3. Soon shall end the time of weeping, Soon the reaping time will come, Heav'n and earth together keeping God's eternal Harvest-home. Saints and angels, saints and angels, Shout the world's great Harvest-home.	When is the "end (of) the time of weeping"? Where is "God's eternal Harvest-home"?

Prayer

Lord God in heaven, You know that we often fail when You give us opportunities to talk to others about You. Please help us to overcome our fear and to speak of You and Your mercy and love in sending Your Son Jesus to die for all of us. It is only with Your help that we can get the Gospel message out to rescue people from death in Hell. Give us that courage, we pray. In the name of that Son Jesus we pray. Amen.

1st Corinthians 3:1-13

1Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly—mere infants in Christ. 2I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. 3You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men? 4For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not mere men?

5What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. 6I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. 7So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. 8The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor. 9For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building.

10By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. 11For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, 13his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work.

PASSAGES

These passages can be assigned as memory work or simply discussed in class as to how they fit the lesson.

Lower

Mark 16:15 - "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature."

Rom. 10:13 - "For whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Middle

Prov. 3:5 - "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding."

Prov. 3:6 - "In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths."

Upper

Is. 55:11 - "So shall My Word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it."

Matt. 9:37-38 - "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."

John 15:16 - "You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give it to you."