

Acts 19:21-41
New International Version

21 After all this had happened, Paul decided to go to Jerusalem, passing through Macedonia and Achaia. “After I have been there,” he said, “I must visit Rome also.” **22** He sent two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia, while he stayed in the province of Asia a little longer.

23 About that time there arose a great disturbance about the Way. **24** A silversmith named Demetrius, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought in a lot of business for the craftsmen there. **25** He called them together, along with the workers in related trades, and said: “You know, my friends, that we receive a good income from this business. **26** And you see and hear how this fellow Paul has convinced and led astray large numbers of people here in Ephesus and in practically the whole province of Asia. He says that gods made by human hands are no gods at all. **27** There is danger not only that our trade will lose its good name, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be discredited; and the goddess herself, who is worshiped throughout the province of Asia and the world, will be robbed of her divine majesty.”

28 When they heard this, they were furious and began shouting: “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!” **29** Soon the whole city was in an uproar. The people seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul’s traveling companions from Macedonia, and all of them rushed into the theater together. **30** Paul wanted to appear before the crowd, but the disciples would not let him. **31** Even some of the officials of the province, friends of Paul, sent him a message begging him not to venture into the theater.

32 The assembly was in confusion: Some were shouting one thing, some another. Most of the people did not even know why they were there. **33** The Jews in the crowd pushed Alexander to the front, and they shouted instructions to him. He motioned for silence in order to make a defense before the people. **34** But when they realized he was a Jew, they all shouted in unison for about two hours: “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!”

35 The city clerk quieted the crowd and said: “Fellow Ephesians, doesn’t all the world know that the city of Ephesus is the guardian of the temple of the great Artemis and of her image, which fell from heaven? **36** Therefore, since these facts are undeniable, you ought to calm down and not do anything rash. **37** You have brought these men here, though they have neither robbed temples nor blasphemed our goddess. **38** If, then, Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen have a grievance against anybody, the courts are open and there are proconsuls. They can press charges. **39** If there is anything further you want to bring up, it must be settled in a legal assembly. **40** As it is, we are in danger of being charged with rioting because of what happened today. In that case we would not be able to account for this commotion, since there is no reason for it.” **41** After he had said this, he dismissed the assembly.

Questions to Consider:

—Review Acts 19:1-20 briefly. How does it set the scene for what we are reading today?

—Go over the “who, what, when, where, and how” of Acts 19:21-41.

—Does the biblical text say how Paul receives this guidance from the Spirit? How might he have received such guidance, based on his history? How do you receive guidance from the Holy Spirit? Talk about the ways you most commonly experience this guidance.

—Historically, money and power have been considered two of the three most dangerous temptations for all desiring to follow Jesus. How do you struggle with and seek to overcome the temptations associated with money and power? In a faith community, how do we help each other to withstand these temptations?

—Paul wants to come before the Amphitheater audience even though it is more like a mob. Talk about Paul’s motivation for sharing the gospel with even the most radical opponents. Why do you think he is so bold and seemingly fearless? How can we address our fear to share the gospel?