

Our Journey -- The Season of Formation

Romans 8:29 -- Mirror Translation

For those He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the exact image of His Son.

We are Presently at Base Camp 1 -- The Camp of Hard Truth

April 26, 2026

Sermon Title -- The Face of Offense

Sermon Text -- Acts 19:23-28 New Living Translation

About that time, serious trouble developed in Ephesus concerning the Way ... 24 It began with Demetrius, a silversmith who had a large business manufacturing silver shrines of the Greek goddess Artemis ... He kept many craftsmen busy ... 25 He called them together, along with others employed in similar trades, and addressed them as follows: “Gentlemen, you know that our wealth comes from this business ... 26 But as you have seen and heard, this man Paul has persuaded many people that handmade gods aren’t really gods at all ... And he’s done this not only here in Ephesus but throughout the entire province! ... 27 Of course, I’m not just talking about the loss of public respect for our business ... I’m also concerned that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will lose its influence and that Artemis – this magnificent goddess worshiped throughout the province of Asia and all around the world – will be robbed of her great prestige!” ... 28 At this their anger boiled, and they began shouting, “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!”

Introduction

Last week – we established that offense – is the flesh's emergency exit ... When the internal cycle fails – the flesh looks for an external target ... But what happens when a person stops using offense as an exit – and starts living there permanently? ... What happens when offense stops being a reaction – and starts becoming a lifestyle? ... That is where we are heading this

morning – as Luke captured this concept perfectly in Acts 19 ... The man’s name is Demetrius – and the story we will examine – could have been written in yesterday’s newspaper.

But – before we dive into our text – let me refresh your memory for some fuller context ... Paul has been in Ephesus for two years ... He has been preaching every day – and extraordinary miracles have been happening in the streets ... You recall the story of the sons of Sceva and what happened to them ... As a result of all these supernatural manifestations – people are now publicly burning their sorcery books ... The whole city is being spiritually dismantled – and there are many – that are none too happy – about what has been occurring ... So, by the time Demetrius gathers the local silversmiths – the pressure had been building for two years ... He had been watching his business and belief in the goddess Diana – unravel one miracle at a time ... Now let’s take a look at our text and this underlying current of offense.

Offense Always Starts with a Legitimate Wound

Acts 19:23-25 New Living Translation

About that time – serious trouble developed in Ephesus concerning the Way ... 24 It began with Demetrius – a silversmith who had a large business manufacturing silver shrines of the Greek goddess Artemis ... He kept many craftsmen busy ... 25 He called them together – along with others employed in similar trades, and addressed them as follows: Gentlemen – you know that our wealth comes from this business.

Notice – the arrival of Paul – his message – and the spiritual manifestations that followed – were genuinely impacting the lives and livelihood of many in the region ... The silversmith industry was being directly dismantled by – “The Way” ... In their minds – the wound was real and legitimate ... But this is where discernment becomes critical ... Not every strong feeling is actually an offense ... Sometimes – things are genuinely difficult – genuinely threatening – and genuinely painful ... But here is the key ... What you do with a legitimate wound – will determine everything that follows.

Demetrius had a choice ... Sit with the tension – or redirect it outward toward a target ... He chose the target ... The moment he made that decision – the offense stopped being a wound – and started becoming a weapon ... In Proverbs 19:11 – the Mirror Translation says ... “A person's wisdom gives him patience – it is his glory to overlook an offense.” ... Here – Solomon is not saying the wound isn't real ... What he is saying is – wisdom creates space – between the wound and your knee-jerk reaction to it ... Demetrius never created that space by sitting with the tension ... He moved immediately from feeling – into firing ... And that is where everything unraveled.

When the Offense becomes a Noble Cause

Acts 19:26-27 New Living Translation

But as you have seen and heard, this man Paul has persuaded many people that handmade gods aren't really gods at all ... And he's done this not only here in Ephesus but throughout the entire province! ... 27 Of course, I'm not just talking about the loss of public respect for our business ... I'm also concerned that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will lose its influence and that Artemis – this magnificent goddess worshiped throughout the province of Asia and all around the world – will be robbed of her great prestige!”

Did you catch that? ... In one breath – Demetrius moved from his wallet to his worship ... From his livelihood being destroyed – to our beloved goddess Diana being dishonored ... This is where the pivot happened ... This issue has now changed from being solely personal – to an economical and religious disaster that needed to be identified and defended.

See – it is no longer about Demetrius and his business ... Now it is about something much grander – something worth defending – something others need to rally around ... This is what happens when offense – tries to use the emergency exit ramp – we talked about last week – and it didn't resolve the internal tension.

Now the offense can't just stay personal – it must become a noble cause – that rallies others behind it – in order to justify this internal tension ... And once it finds that cause – the original wound disappears from view – buried underneath the language of conviction – and causation.

This is happening everywhere ... In politics – which I saw on the State House floor last week ... In the church – where we must destroy that preacher and ministry – in order to silence their influence ... In relationships – where we must destroy the character of the person who wounded me.

Spiritual Nugget

When you are listening to someone who is expressing their woundedness – and you hear a change in their language – where it shifted from them – to a conversation about a principle – an ideology – or a movement ... Understand – this is the person's attempt to find relief from the internal tension of the situation – to becoming the person who is championing a cause – and is looking to solicit your support ... And the most dangerous part? ... They believe every word they are saying ... Just like Demetrius did.

Jeremiah 17:9 in the Passion Translation says - - “The human heart is the most deceitful of all things - - Who really knows how bad it is?” ... Understand – the heart seeks to cover its own tracks ... It will dress the wound it is dealing with – in whatever language is culturally acceptable ... And it will do it so smoothly – you won't even notice the pivot happened – unless you listen closely – and protect your own heart from the emotions of the discourse.

The True Danger is When the Offense is Mixed with Identity

Acts 19:28 -- Message

That set them off in a frenzy ... They ran into the street yelling, - - “Great Artemis of the Ephesians! - - Great Artemis of the Ephesians!”

This is where it gets serious ... This past week – I watched this play out in real time at the state house ... A fellow representative – who had been disciplined for inappropriate behavior after she presented her bill in senate committee ... Asked for a personal privilege and spoke to the

offense and discipline ... She delivered a very moving speech - explaining her behavior ... I'll be honest – she was persuasive – and I found myself being drawn in ... Until she said something that seemed to stick in my ear ... She said – This is who I am.

Once she said that – I came to myself and thought wow – she is standing there – justifying her inappropriate behavior and tying it to her identity ... See – she was no longer defending her position on the bill – she was now defending her identity ... The offense had stopped being about what she experienced ... It now became about defending her identity – and she was declaring her inappropriate behavior – as a badge of honor ... It was amazing to see once she was done – her side of the isle – and some on my side – stood and applauded.

This is exactly what we see in our text ... Demetrius gives his little speech – which changed a personal reaction of an offense – into a city-wide declaration ... Great is Artemis of the Ephesians ... The crowd was literally saying – this is who we are – and you will never take that away from us.

Now catch this – this is where offense begins to form into a cancer ... Look at the progression ... A personal wound – pivots into a noble cause – which pivots again into – this is who I am ... Now let's make this personal as this is dangerous place to live ... Any hard truth – that challenges an offense you hold – now feel like a challenge to your very identity ... If you find yourself at this place – the potter can no longer work the clay ... Because the clay has decided it is already formed.

Paul tells us in Galatians 2:20 – this is from the Mirror Translation - - "I have been crucified with Christ – it is no longer I who live – but Christ who lives in me." ... That is the only identity that survives this altitude of the journey ... Not what I feel ... Not what the crowd expects ... Not what I have built my livelihood around ... But Christ – formed within – expressed outward – unshaken by what threatens the flesh ... That is what this journey is forming in you.

Takeaway

Is offense driving your identity? ... Are you known more for what you are against – rather than by - - Who you are in Christ?

Let me remind you as we sit at the base camp of hard truth ... The climbing equipment that got you this far – will not take you further up the mountain ... Living a life of offense – is like carrying dead weight along your journey ... You can't carry and climb at the same time.

Let me encourage you to spend some quiet time this week – get deeply serious – and ask the Spirit to reveal to you – if you are carrying any offense in your back pack ... Because the further you go and the higher you climb – that dead weight will become even more dangerous than it is now.