

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.

Base Camp 1 – The Camp of Hard Truth

May 4, 2026

Sermon Title – Outrage Without Origin

Sermon Text – Acts 19:28-32 The Passion Translation

When they heard this, they were filled with rage and began shouting, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" The whole city was thrown into confusion. The people rushed to the amphitheater, dragging with them Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul's traveling companions from Macedonia. Paul wanted to appear before the crowd, but the believers wouldn't let him. Even some of the officials of the province -- who were friends of Paul -- sent him a message begging him not to risk his life by going into the theater. Meanwhile some were shouting one thing and some another. The assembly was in total confusion -- most of the people didn't even know why they were there.

Introduction

Last week we established that offense – when personally left unresolved – stops being a simple reaction to a wound ... It becomes a cause ... A movement ... Something worth rallying others around ... Notice -- Demetrius didn't just get offended and walk away like those we saw in John 6 ... He crafted an emotional speech ... Intending to persuade others ... And then he presented his personal offense to an entire city ... And do you know what is crazy -- the city actually bought into it -- never really understanding why.

This is where we are picking up our story this morning ... But before we dive in – let me ask you a couple of questions to ponder ... What if the offense you are carrying – was never even

yours to begin with? ... What if someone else simply handed it to you -- and you decided to take it – never stopping to ask yourself why?

Let me share with you an illustration ... Do you know how a political lobbyist operates ... They don't personally fight for the issue they want addressed ... They find someone with influence – present their passionate plea – and hand off the cause – for that person to carry forward ... Here is what is interesting – the legislator may have never personally experienced the issue – but now he owns it ... Now he is championing it ... Now he is recruiting others to join him in the cause ... That is exactly what Demetrius did ... He was functioning as a lobbyist for his industry and his ideology.

Demetrius Knew Exactly What He Was Doing

Acts 19:24-27 The Passion Translation

A silversmith named Demetrius had a thriving business manufacturing silver shrines of Artemis ... He called a meeting of his guild and said – “Gentlemen -- you know that our prosperity depends on this business ... And you've seen and heard how this fellow Paul has talked a great many people into turning away -- not just in Ephesus -- but almost everywhere in Asia Minor ... Not only is our business in danger -- but the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be discredited.”

Demetrius wasn't simply offended ... He was extremely calculated in expressing his offense ... He knew exactly what he was doing ... His business was being threatened – and he couldn't fight that battle alone ... So, he did what every skilled manipulator does ... He built an emotional narrative ... He identified a villain ... He connected that villain – to a threat – that everyone else could identify with ... Their income – their religion – their way of life – and then he handed it to the crowd – as a regional cause worthy of fighting for.

This is pure manipulation – not passion ... There is a significant difference ... Passion rises as a result of something you personally experienced ... Now catch this – it will help you ... Manipulation is engineered by someone – who needs you to feel – what they feel – so they don't

have to fight the issue alone ... And it always works – Why? ... Because people are always looking to identify a villain and a cause to get behind – no matter what it is ... For example – why did so many people go out to support a – No King’s Rally – when there are no kings in this country? ... And when a true king addressed a joint session of Congress – king Charles received a standing ovation.

Let me remind you of Jeremiah 17:9 -- Passion Translation - - “The human heart is the most deceitful of all things ... Who really knows how bad it is?” ... The heart that has never been transformed – will always receive a well-crafted narrative – and receive it without question ... This is an inherited flaw of an un-regenerated heart – and we see it in full blown manifestation ... Notice our next verse

The Crowd Never Asked Why

Acts 19:32 -- The Passion Translation

Meanwhile some were shouting one thing and some another. The assembly was in total confusion - - most of the people didn't even know why they were there.

This is one of the most powerful sentences Luke ever wrote ... Did you catch it? ... Luke said - - “most of the people didn't even know why they were there” ... The crowd felt the energy ... They heard the outrage ... They joined in the chaos ... They felt the conviction ... This isn’t just a historical story we are reading – this is happening every single day.

Every day – people are enraged over things – that don’t personally involve them – nor do they actually do any personal research concerning that issue ... All too often – a narrative lands on their social media feed – and it triggers an emotion ... That emotion feels like truth – and now they are caught up in the issue ... No verification – no personal investigation – no rational conversation ... They skipped over all of that – and launched into outrage – firing back with a venomous attack.

I received a profound revelation from the Holy Spirit this past week ... Without sharing the entire story – I found myself in a conversation – where the other person simply wasn't receiving what I was sharing ... My goal is always to communicate in a rational – common sense manner ... So, the day after this event – I asked the Spirit why this person wasn't getting it ... The Spirit said – "You can't have a rational discussion with an irrational person – and if you try – you will always walk away feeling like you were the problem." ... That hit me like a ton of bricks ... Because that is exactly how I felt ... I thought I wasn't communicating properly ... When in reality – the other person had no interest in reason – nor the actual data I was presenting ... They had already decided what they wanted to believe.

That is what Paul's friends understood when they begged Paul not to go into the theater ... Not because the truth wasn't worth sharing – but because the crowd didn't care about the truth nor listening to reason ... Again – you can't have a rational conversation with an irrational person ... And yes – it is your responsibility to determine – if the other person is being rational or not ... Catch this - - Proverbs 14:15 in the Passion Translation says this ... “A gullible person believes anything he's told -- but a sensible person carefully considers his steps.” ... So – be discerning – do your homework – and honestly evaluate the situation ... Not every conversation deserves your engagement – and not every crowd deserves your participation ... A sensible person carefully evaluates who they engage with – and who they allow to influence – what they think and feel. ... Never forget – when the crowd is no longer concerned with – The Why ... It's only a matter of time before someone gets hurt.

Every Mob Needs a Target

Acts 19:29 -- The Passion Translation

Soon the whole city was in an uproar ... The mob rushed to the amphitheater -- dragging with them Gaius and Aristarchus -- Paul's traveling companions from Macedonia.

Look at how fast this situation escalated ... Demetrius declares his crafted narrative ... The crowd bought it without question ... And now – two innocent men – are being dragged through

the streets ... Gaius and Aristarchus probably never engaged with Demetrius ... They weren't even the source of the offense ... They were simply associated with being part of "The Way" and connected with Paul ... This is how irrational and out of control the mob had become ... They didn't even need the correct villain – as anyone who associated with Paul – would do.

Now here is something that doesn't get talked about enough ... There is a very real dynamic that happens inside a highly charged mob ... When people rally around a shared outrage – individual reasoning disappears and personal responsibility becomes irrelevant ... All that now matters is attacking the perceived target.

Paul addresses this directly in 1Corinthians 15:33 - - "Do not be deceived – bad company corrupts good character." ... Most people apply that verse to relationships ... But it applies equally to crowds – to movements – to social media feeds ... To any highly charged environment where group think and emotional hype becomes greater than personal discernment ... You stop thinking for yourself – and start feeling what everyone around you is feeling ... And once that happens – you will start acting like the group – even if it is something you never would have done on your own.

Honestly – we watch this play out on a daily basis ... Protests regularly erupt and participants cannot even tell you why they are protesting ... School kids were sent into the streets on May Day – and when asked why they were there – they were clueless.

Rage is spreading across social media – and no one bothers to stop – to verify its validity... Group think doesn't desire truth – it only requires a villain ... And it does not care who gets dragged through the streets ... This is the cancer Demetrius released into Ephesus ... And it is the same cancer spreading through our society today ... The question is not whether you see it happening around you ... The question is – whether you recognize it – when you are participating in it.

Takeaway

Let me leave you with an admonition this morning ... The most dangerous aspect of this societal cancer – is that it never feels like a cancer ... It feels like conviction ... It feels like righteous anger ... It feels like you are standing for something that really matters ... Demetrius felt that way ... The crowd in Ephesus felt that way ... And Gaius and Aristarchus got dragged through the streets while everyone felt completely justified.

Let me ask you a few weighty questions ... Are you carrying an offense that was handed to you – that you never fully vetted? ... Are you enraged over a cause – that you cannot fully articulate – without using someone else's talking points? ... Are you allowing the crowd's group think to form your beliefs? ... If that crowd were to disappear tomorrow – would you even know where to stand?

This cancer spreads because it wears a false mask of justice – and hides behind righteous anger ... Guard your heart ... Examine what you have been carrying ... And make sure the convictions you are standing on – are actually yours.