

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

How God Turned a Band of Nobodies into a Movement for Everybody

How did a handful of ordinary people become ten thousand followers of Jesus in the year following his public execution? Acts of the Apostles tells the story of how Christianity spread like wildfire across the Roman Empire and beyond. Join us as we journey through Acts in pursuit of the truth behind history's most consequential movement!

Group Discussion Guide: Week 20

Conversation Starter

How (if at all) has following Jesus disrupted the way you used to live?

Paul's Ministry in Ephesus

It's important to see that, before the events in today's reading, things were going well for Paul and the Christians of Ephesus. *Read Acts 19:17-22*. What do you notice?

Just three verses later, we find that there was already an angry uprising in response to the Gospel's influence in Ephesus. *Read Acts 19:23-27*. Who was Artemis (a.k.a. "Diana") of the Ephesians? What do we know about her and her temple in Ephesus?

What is the relationship between modern-day idols and economic prosperity today? What typically happens to people who reject and speak against these idols?

Read Acts 19:28-41. What do you notice about the mob and the chaos that ensued? What unique role did the city clerk play in this passage?

Despite the mob, Paul and the other Christians established a Church in Ephesus and we can see Paul's special affection for this community in his letter to the Ephesians (Ephesians 1:15-23). Paul prayed a very specific prayer for them found in *Ephesians 3:16-19*. Take a moment to read this prayer and then copy it on a note where you will see it this week. Use this as your prayer this week, even memorize it if you can.

Reflection Questions

Under what types of circumstances do you think Christianity should reject the values and disrupt the economy of a society? Can you think of any examples in your lifetime or in recent history when Christians have been righteously disruptive?

As Christians who are living in a riotous world in which the mob mentality is a daily reality, how can we follow Jesus faithfully, by not only persevering through the pushback, but also joyfully clinging to “the love we had at first”?

Have you ever witnessed (or personally known) a reasonable unbeliever who rejected the mob mentality and chose to make peace? How does God use such people? (See Gamaliel in Acts 5:33-39, Nicodemus in John 2:13-3:2, and Jesus' words in Luke 10:5-7).

Upcoming Events:



Ash Wednesday Worship Service

Save the date to join us on Wednesday, February 14 at 7pm as we mark the beginning of the season of Lent with a special time of worship and teaching. Childcare available for ages 6 months up to 4.



Special Serve Day for Loaves & Fishes

Join us for a special serve day with our partner organization, Loaves & Fishes Soup Kitchen! On Monday, February 19, a team of 20 volunteers is needed to help deep clean their kitchen area. Sign up: thestory.church/serveday



Summer Trip with GO Ministries

We have limited spots available for this year's trip to the Dominican Republic with our partner GO Ministries, June 4-11. Visit thestory.church/gomin to learn more about the trip and submit your deposit to secure your spot.