

The Riot At Ephesus

Acts 19:11-41

MEMORY VERSE

ACTS 19:20

So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

A branch or poster board, wrapped fruit snacks and clothespins or tape.

Construction paper, scissors, crayons or markers, and glue sticks.

A stalk of celery, water and red food coloring.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

The Fruit Snack Tree

Make a fruit snack tree with a branch or a poster. Take wrapped fruit snacks and paperclip it to the branch or tape it to the drawn poster tree.

Instruct your class to mimic you as you do several different gestures. Pat your head, clap your hands, snap your fingers, and pantomime a variety of motions. When you have done a few, stop the class and now show them the fruit snack tree. Tell them that you want them to mimic you again, but this time they will be rewarded. Take them through the paces, but make it more difficult by increasing speed and complexity. Allow the children to come and receive a reward.

Explain to your class that faithfulness to the tasks set before us will reap a “fruitful” reward. **Faithfulness leads to a fruitful life.**

LESSON TIME!

The Apostle Paul ministered in Ephesus for two years and "all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks" (Acts 19:10). His ministry was so effective, that all of the people who lived in the province of Asia heard the gospel. Paul's faithfulness in his service to the Lord led to a fruitful life, what a tremendous testimony of faithfulness. In our lesson today we will learn that **faithfulness leads to a fruitful life**.

ACTS 19:11-12

Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul,

so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them.

What a fruitful ministry! It seems as though everybody knew what the Apostle Paul was saying and doing. It is very clear that God's hand of blessing and approval was on Paul. From the time of his conversion, Paul had surrendered his life to Jesus, allowing Jesus to live through him. He counted it a privilege to share the gospel with others, because he was committed in his heart to please the Lord, wishing that no one would perish. **Faithfulness leads to a fruitful life**, and all of Asia was impacted by the life of Paul.

God had confirmed Paul's ministry by miracles, which were displayed by great works of power. Handkerchiefs and aprons were tangible symbols of God's power through his servant Paul, though they had no magical power in themselves. Paul's ministry demonstrated that the power of the Holy Spirit was real and the plague of disease and demons were under His control.

Paul's Handkerchiefs

Cut several different colors of construction paper into 1" strips. Stack them so they are thin enough stack to cut through and make triangles out of the 1" strips. Take whole sheets of construction paper and have your class fold them in half to make cards. With glue sticks let them paste the different color triangles to make whatever pattern or picture they would like.

Explain to your class that they are making get well cards or cards of encouragement to anyone they know that needs it. As they work go around the class and ask each student who his card is for. Pray with each child for the recipient.

Tell your class that even though these cards don't have the supernatural power to heal, God does and we need to pray for those who are sick.

ACTS 19:13-20

Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists took it upon themselves to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "We exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches."

Also there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so.

And the evil spirit answered and said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?"

Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

This became known both to all Jews and Greeks dwelling in Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.

And many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds.

Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and it totaled fifty thousand pieces of silver.

So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.

It was not unusual for Jewish priests to pray for those who were demon possessed, but it was unusual for them to use the name of Jesus Christ. Since they had no personal relationship with Jesus, failure was inevitable because they were on their own.

The sons of Sceva were impressed by Paul's work, whose power to cast out demons came from God's Holy Spirit and not witchcraft, which was popular in Ephesus. They discovered however, that one could not control or duplicate God's power. These men were calling upon the name without knowing the person. The power to change people is in the person of Jesus Christ.

Ephesus was considered a center for black magic and other occult practices. The people sought spells to give them wealth, happiness, and success. Superstition and sorcery were commonplace, but God's power was greater. The apostle Paul made a big impact in this community because of his faithfulness to the Lord. He stood against the opposition of Satan and the Word of the Lord was taught and proclaimed to everyone and it prevailed. **Faithfulness leads to a fruitful life.**

Many people turned from their wicked ways and destroyed every article of their sorcery. They wanted a clean start as they got rid of the things in their lives that caused them to sin. The total value of the magical books and spells that they burned was equivalent to the total salaries of 150 men working for a whole year.

Wow! What a sacrifice, but what a lesson for us! If there is something in our lives that does not please the Lord and causes us to sin, we need to get rid of it. God desires for us to have a fruitful life that will make an impact for His kingdom. Habitual sin has no room in the life of a Christian. **Faithfulness leads to a fruitful life.**

ACTS 19:21-22

When these things were accomplished, Paul purposed in the Spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, "After I have been there, I must also see Rome."

So he sent into Macedonia two of those who ministered to him, Timothy and Erastus, but he himself stayed in Asia for a time.

Paul desired to visit the churches of Macedonia and Achaia but because his ministry was not done in Asia, he sent Timothy and Erastus. Both of these men were faithful to assist Paul, having the same commitment to spread the gospel. **Faithfulness leads to a fruitful life.**

God is more concerned with faithfulness than results. We need to follow Paul's example as did Timothy and Erastus. Their example shows us to press on in our service for the Lord. As we serve the Lord, we can leave the results to Him.

The Lord desires that we focus on doing His will from our hearts each day. Don't miss out on the wonderful ways God wants to use and bless you. **Faithfulness leads to a fruitful life.** A faithful man will abound with blessings (Proverbs 28:20).

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.”

Demetrius and his silversmiths were promoting idolatry and immorality in order to make a living, while Paul was declaring the true God. The gospel brought about a change in the lives of those who received it by living a life of holiness. The implications of this would result in bad business for Demetrius and his friends.

Paul's faithfulness in ministry among a city filled with idolatry brought about a change that led others to the Lord. Even in the midst of wickedness, Paul's faithfulness resulted in a fruitful ministry for God's kingdom. **Faithfulness leads to a fruitful life.**

ACTS 19:28-41

And when they heard this, they were full of wrath and cried out, saying, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!"

So the whole city was filled with confusion, and rushed into the theater with one accord, having seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians, Paul's travel companions.

And when Paul wanted to go in to the people, the disciples would not allow him.

Then some of the officials of Asia, who were his friends, sent to him pleading that he would not venture into the theater.

Some therefore cried one thing and some another, for the assembly was confused, and most of them did not know why they had come together.

And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander motioned with his hand, and wanted to make his defense to the people.

But when they found out that he was a Jew, all with one voice cried out for about two hours, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!"

And when the city clerk had quieted the crowd, he said: "Men of Ephesus, what man is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is temple guardian of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Zeus?"

"Therefore, since these things cannot be denied, you ought to be quiet and do nothing rashly.

"For you have brought these men here who are neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of your goddess.

"Therefore, if Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen have a case against anyone, the courts are open and there are proconsuls. Let them bring charges against one another.

"But if you have any other inquiry to make, it shall be determined in the lawful assembly.

"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.

Demetrius' strategy for stirring up a riot brought about a large gathering, resulting in the arrest of Paul's traveling companions, Gaius and Aristarchus. Jesus does not promise us escape from persecution, but a way through it. He also promises not to send us through it alone. He said, "I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20).

Paul was eager to defend the gospel, ready to take on his opponents. But the Christians did not let him. Here again, we see the faithfulness of Paul not only to the gospel, but also to his faithful friends.

The mob had become anti-Jewish as well as anti-Christian. This Alexander may have been pulled forward by the Jews as a spokesman to explain that the Jews had no part in the economic problem of the silversmiths.

The city of Ephesus was under the domination of the Roman Empire and it was the responsibility of the local city leaders to maintain peace and order. It was possible for them to lose their position and the city could be put under martial law, losing many civic freedoms.

The riot in Ephesus showed Paul that it was time to move on, but the result of his ministry made an everlasting impact for the kingdom of God. The church in Ephesus flourished because of the faithfulness of Paul and his companions. **Faithfulness leads to a fruitful life.** God can use us also. No matter who we are or where we live, we can make an impact for the kingdom of God, if we are only faithful.

See Food

Take a stalk of celery and soak it over night in a solution of water and red food coloring. In the morning the celery will have absorbed the color. Use the celery as an object lesson for your class. Explain that whatever we immerse ourselves in will be the character of our lives. If we live for Jesus and remain faithful to Him, His fruit will be the character of our lives.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to be faithful to the Lord, asking him to make each life fruitful. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.