



The message of Jesus is offensive. Those reading the gospel accounts will notice how many respond to His claims negatively. Yet Jesus trained his disciples to be tactical & truthful, even when it could cost them. Today we are reminded to speak the truth, even when our voices shake.

Throughout the writing we call ACTS, we have watched followers of Jesus share the truth and experience a broad range of responses.

- Some ***immediately listen and receive the TRUTH*** about their sin and their need for the forgiveness that only Jesus can bring.
- ***Others need more time to process what they've heard***; time to watch to see if those who told them about Jesus behave like they believe.
- Still ***others stiff-arm the Gospel message and some even respond in anger***, attempting to silence the Gospel message.

So what are followers of Jesus to do when people don't respond positively?

***Speak the TRUTH even if your voice shakes.***

Because...eternity is at stake.

**Catch the Context:** Last week we saw how Paul and those he trained for 2 years impacted people throughout Asia Minor. Many of the people were turning from their sinful actions, magic, & worship of false gods.

**Acts 19:21-22** (NET) <sup>21</sup> Now after all these things had taken place, Paul resolved to go to Jerusalem, passing through Macedonia and Achaia. He said, "After I have been there, I must also see Rome."<sup>22</sup> So after sending two of his assistants, Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia, he himself stayed on for a while in the province of Asia.

So here was Paul's plan: to leave **Ephesus** to **Macedonia** and then GREECE, AKA **Achaia**. After that Paul planned to **SAIL** to **Jerusalem** and then to **Rome**. Back in Ephesus a storm was brewing. As many people in Ephesus and surrounding regions turned away from **Artemis** (goddess of fertility) men who made their living from making silver shrines to Artemis got pretty upset.

**Acts 19:23-28** (NET) <sup>23</sup> At that time a great disturbance took place concerning the Way.<sup>24</sup> For a man named Demetrius, a silversmith who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought a great deal of business to the craftsmen. <sup>25</sup> He gathered these together, along with the workmen in similar trades, and said, "Men, you know that our prosperity comes from this business. <sup>26</sup> And you see and hear that this Paul has persuaded and turned away a large crowd, not only in Ephesus but in practically all of the province of Asia, by **saying that gods made by hands are not gods at all.**<sup>27</sup> There is danger not only that this business of ours will come into disrepute, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be regarded as nothing, and she whom all the province of Asia and the world worship will suffer the loss of her greatness."<sup>28</sup> When they heard this they became enraged and began to shout, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"

And that outrage began to overspill the banks of Ephesus.

**Acts 19:29-31** (NET) <sup>29</sup> The city was filled with the uproar, and the crowd rushed to the theater [seating capacity of 25,000] together, dragging with them Gaius and Aristarchus, the Macedonians who were Paul's traveling companions. <sup>30</sup> But when Paul wanted to enter the public assembly, the disciples would not let him. <sup>31</sup> Even some of the provincial authorities who were his friends sent a message to him, urging him not to venture into the theater.

**Acts 19:34** (NET) ...they all shouted in unison, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" for about two hours.

Finally, calmer minds prevailed and the crowd dispersed, but this shows that the Gospel message of Jesus is NOT ALWAYS good news to those who want to stay in their sin & continue to live for their own gods. Unless people realize they are SINNERS (BAD NEWS), they will never realize their need for a SAVIOR (GOOD NEWS of Jesus).

**Speak the TRUTH even if your voice shakes.**

**QUESTION:** Are you WILLING to share the BAD NEWS & the GOOD NEWS, even though the Gospel Message is offensive? When is the last time you did that? Do you need someone to take you to share with another person? (Mark that on your Connection Card)

Of course, Paul was committed to share the Good News, regardless of what it cost him. And now it was time to continue his missionary journey.

**Acts 20:1-3** (NET)<sup>1</sup> After the disturbance had ended, Paul sent for the disciples, and after encouraging them and saying farewell, he left to go to Macedonia.<sup>2</sup> After he had gone through those regions and spoken many words of encouragement to the believers there, he came to Greece,<sup>3</sup> where he stayed for three months. Because the Jews had made a plot against him as he was intending to sail for Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia.

**Acts 20:7** (NET) <sup>7</sup> On the first day of the week, when we met to break bread, Paul began to speak to the people, and because he intended to leave the next day, he extended his message until midnight [You just THINK I can be long-winded!].

What is **the first day of the week** and why does it matter? The 7th day of the week is "Shabbat" (Sabbath) - the day that Genesis 2:2-3 refers to as God making "holy" - a day to rest. The Shabbat is our Saturday (Friday sundown - Saturday sundown). Why does this matter? These followers of Jesus met on **the first day of the week** - that would be a **Sunday - the day that Jesus rose from the dead** (a normal work day for most folks).

Further, they **met to break bread**. They had a common meal followed by a communion meal, where they remembered the Lord Jesus' death - breaking the bread and giving thank for His body broken for them.

Paul only had one night with them, so he took the opportunity to teach a marathon message until **midnight**. What questions might YOU ask if the apostle Paul were here!?!?

**Acts 20:8-10** (NET) <sup>8</sup> (Now there were many lamps in the upstairs room where we were meeting.) <sup>9</sup> A young man named Eutychus [meaning “good fortune” or “lucky”; a common Roman name<sup>2</sup>], who was sitting in the window, was sinking into a deep sleep while Paul continued to speak for a long time. Fast asleep, he fell down from the third story and was picked up dead. <sup>10</sup> But Paul went down, threw himself on the young man, put his arms around him, and said, “Do not be distressed, for he is still alive!” [Greek “his life is in him”]

If you're familiar with the OT prophets, you might remember:

- **Elijah** asking God to raise a young boy from the dead (1 Kings 17), even stretching his body on the dead child 3 different times asking Yahweh God to raise him from the dead...and God did!
- **Elisha** did something similar in 2 Kings 4.
- So too, **Peter** was used to raise Tabitha, from the dead earlier in Acts 9:36–43.

And just like Elijah, Elisha, & the apostle Peter. Paul is enabled to bring the dead back to life!

**Acts 20:11-12** (NET) <sup>11</sup> Then Paul went back upstairs, and after he had broken bread and eaten, he talked with them a long time, until dawn. Then he left. <sup>12</sup> They took the boy home alive and were greatly comforted.

It was **after** the miracle that the believers celebrated communion, remembering the DEATH & RESURRECTION of Jesus. What a vivid picture of what the return of Jesus will mean! Just as the young boy had risen from the dead, so would THEY!!!! What could stop them if Jesus - who raises the dead - was FOR them!!!!???

**Paul was about to leave, and when he did, WHO would carry the truth to that town and beyond?** Paul encouraged them to carry the truth to Jesus to their community. He would tell us the same, to...

**Speak the TRUTH even if your voice shakes.**



1. **Know WHO Jesus IS and WHAT Jesus SAYS - get in the Gospels** (1 chapter a day).
2. **Take the opportunities you have to speak truth in love.** What if YOU'RE the only one who will?

<sup>1</sup> Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 607.

<sup>2</sup> \* Eutychus was the ninth commonest Greek name in Rome's inscriptions (337 times), dominant especially close to the first century. Craig S. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary*: 15:1–23:35, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014), 2970.