

“Inside, the people were all shouting, some one thing and some another. Everything was in confusion. In fact, most of them didn’t even know why they were there.”

Acts 19:32 NLT

[lectio] // ACTS 19:28-41

“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!” Demetrius is mad at Paul because he “thinks” it will effect business, he “believes” it will put his craftsman out of work. This may not even be true, but as a businessman, he’s looking at his SWOT and staring right at Paul. Here’s he thing, he (and the city) believed that the goddess Artemis had to be protected and that she (it) was worthy of building business and social life around her (its) fame. But of course he’s right! It did need protection! Because it was just a statue, it not only had to be protected from vandalism and damage (because it was carved by MAN), the persona that the statue represented had to be maintained. In many ways I think Demetrius was just trying to protect his bottom line, but in another way, he was trying to preserve the city’s ethos, culture and values. Of course he was wrong about building an entire financial and social network dependent on a man-carved statue, but it did cause people to fear change or loss of identity. The mayor of Ephesus was able to play to their “truth” - “At last the mayor was able to quiet them down enough to speak. “Citizens of Ephesus,” he said. “Everyone knows that Ephesus is the official guardian of the temple of the great Artemis, whose image fell down to us from heaven. Since this is an undeniable fact, you should stay calm and not do anything rash.” He asked the crowd to let the system that they had set up to handle disagreements run its course and admitted, “Paul really didn’t do anything against Artemis.”

[oratio]

pray as responding to the words, phrase, sentence that God has stirred within you

Dad,

You are not a statue or image man-carved! You do not need us to rally or defend you like a fake god. We should not fear you being damaged, vandalized or even disrespected because YOU ARE THE TRUE GOD! You can not only defend yourself, you are OUR defense. You are worth building a life, a culture an eternity around based on who you are. Why would I feel the need to defend such a definitive truth? The mayor declared “who’s image fell from heaven... and it was an undeniable truth.” However, that was a lie. Humans riot over perceived rights and perceived losses, but you are the only one worthy of placing our trust, our faith and our entire life.

[contemplatio]

rest in the presence of God, allowing the words revealed to take root