

To God Alone My Heart Belongs

The Gospel in Motion

[Acts 19:23-41](#)

This passage in Acts finds Paul in Ephesus, having spent about two years there. Ephesus is the intellectual and economic hub of the region, and also of pagan worship. In Ephesus there is a giant temple to the Artemis, the goddess of nature and fertility. A silversmith, Demetrius, stirs up the crowd with talk that Paul is threatening this lucrative business by claiming that “gods made with hands are not gods.” (v.26) When we follow Jesus, we must be open to the Holy Spirit leading us on unexpected adventures too. **How much is Paul risking by making this claim and stirring up the crowd? What commandments is Paul referencing in making this claim?**

The crowd, becoming increasingly enraged, marches into the theater taking with them Paul’s traveling companions Gaius and Aristarchus. Desperate in their allegiance to Artemis, the crowd’s rage and confusion increases, to the point that “most did not know why they had come together.” (v.26) Paul’s words threatened their tourist trade and beliefs, and robbed Artemis of her great prestige. **How do you relate to this feeling of desperation the people were feeling? What is one attraction in your life that you feel like you can’t live without?**

Even though we have probably never been tempted to actually create idols out of wood, we are all guilty of misplacing our loyalties and devotion. John Calvin said “the human heart is a perpetual factory of idols, and that every hour of every day we all bow to something.” Our hearts take the good things of life and turn them into idols - career, family, attitudes, hobbies, self. The ultimate reason we don’t make idols or images is that Jesus Christ is the image of God, and it is to God alone our hearts belong. **The best way to discern our own lives and idols is to have a close brother or sister in Christ tell us what we are especially devoted to. Who can you trust to have this conversation with this week?**