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| <b>Series</b>              | Acts: A Church for the People (Part 8)  |
| <b>Bible</b>               | Acts 18-19  |
| <b>Title/Topic</b>         | The Church That Disrupts  |
| <b>Overview</b>            | <p>If we want to be a church that truly reaches people for Jesus Christ, then we must not be afraid to disrupt things in our culture that are opposed or misaligned to the things of God. As we do this, we should not expect that the Enemy is going to be silent and not put up a fight. Opposition will come—sometimes in ways and from areas that we least expect it. However, amid this we can trust that Christ will continue to grow His church as promised in Matthew 16:18.</p>  |
| <b>Scripture Breakdown</b> | <p><b>Main Point: A church that disrupts the ways of the culture can expect opposition.</b></p> <p>Opposition is par for the course. We can also say that if a church does not at times face opposition from the culture in some ways, it may not be truly striving to make impact for the Kingdom of God.</p> <p>A PATTERN OF OPPOSITION:</p> <p><b>1. Acts 18:1-17; 19:8-10</b></p> <p>In this passage, Paul is seen in Corinth reasoning for the Gospel among the Jews. Verse 5 tells us that he was “occupied with the word,” meaning that he was going all out to speak the truth about Jesus. Eventually, the Jews began to oppose and revile him—so much so that he vowed to leave them and move on, allowing their blood to be on their own heads (v.6).</p> <p>However, not all hope was lost. We’re told that Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord along with his entire household. At this time, God spoke to Paul in a vision at night to keep on speaking in Corinth even though he was facing opposition. As a result of this word from the Lord, he stayed a year and a half (v.11).</p> <p>Eventually, more opposition broke out. In v.12-13, we see Paul being falsely accused by the Jews of spreading heresy. However, God used Gallio (a government official) to keep Paul safe and deliver him from their hands.</p> <p>In this text, we see that sometimes God will ask us to stay in places of opposition because he is still at work—sometimes in ways that we don’t see. In these moments, we must trust God to lead us accordingly. Sometimes, however, God permits us to move on, as seen in 19:8-10. We must seek the Lord for the proper way to move forward.</p> |

## **2. Acts 19:11-20**

The opposition mentioned in this passage is a little more subtle. We might not even call it opposition.

In this text, we see where God was doing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul (v.11). These miracles were so extraordinary that people wanted to copy them without first being submitted to Jesus. They wanted the power *of* Christ without being submitted *to* Christ.

The opposition came, therefore, by an attempt of some Jewish exorcists to invoke the name of Jesus over those who had evil spirits. This doesn't go well, and they are humiliated. As a result, many people, including Jews and Greeks came to fear the Lord in an appropriate way, so that the name of Jesus was lifted up (v.13-17). As a further result, many who became believers during this began to confess and give up their practices—even to the point of burning their books of magic art (v.18-20).

Here we learn that we can trust God to defend himself when opposition comes. While as Christians we shouldn't allow opposition towards God in our culture to go unchecked, sometimes the best thing we can do is pray, be still, and let God defend himself. The name of Jesus will be exalted.

This also means that we should expect that sometimes people will want to copy what the church does by improper means. We are to be diligent and on the lookout for this.

## **3. Acts 19:21-41**

Here we see another instance where the Word of God is going forward through the work of the Church. We're told in v.23 that there arose "no little disturbance concerning the Way." The opposition came primarily because of economic concern. A silversmith named Demetrius rallied a bunch of men in similar trades to oppose the work of the church because the church was promoting the fact that gods made with hands are not gods. If this message continued to spread, Demetrius and his colleagues would soon be out of a job.

In v.27, Demetrius expresses his concern that not only his trade but also the name of the goddess Artemis would come into disrepute and be counted as nothing. As a result of this concern, a riot broke out in Ephesus. But once again, we see how God used a government official (a town clerk) to quiet the crowd and keep Paul safe (v.28-41).

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|                   | <b><i>A WORD OF CAUTION: As we read these stories, we should not expect that when we face opposition that God will do exactly the same thing for us. We know from Church history that sometimes God allowed opposition to grow to the point of death for many Christians (including eventually the Apostle Paul himself). Our objective is to face opposition boldly when (not if) it comes, knowing that God will use us to further his kingdom—even if we ourselves end up facing harsh circumstances or even death for the Kingdom of God.</i></b> |
| <b>Gospel</b>     | The message of the Gospel disrupts things—including our sin nature that needs to be dealt with. Thankfully, we can turn to Jesus for forgiveness and trust in him for salvation.  |
| <b>Next Steps</b> | Are you willing to disrupt the culture around you to reach people for Jesus? Or do you let the culture influence you in such a way as to make you a passive Christian?  |

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