

How to Change a City, part 2

At Peace in the Panic

Acts 19:21-41*

Wherever the Gospel is preached in power, it will be opposed by people who make money from superstition and sin. Paul did not arouse the opposition of the silversmiths by picketing the temple of Artemis or staging anti-idolatry rallies. All he did was teach the truth daily and send out his converts to witness to the lost people in the city. As more and more people got converted, fewer and fewer customers were available.³ Is peace possible in the face of opposition?

1. When plans are interrupted (21-22)

2. When opposition mounts (23-28)

3. When everything seems out of control (29-34)

4. When unexpected solutions occur (35-41)



This month marks the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. This theological revolution is largely ignored and forgotten, not just in our secular culture, but more tragically in an increasingly confused and compromised Church.

At the Reformation's heart was the question, "How are sinful men and women made right with God?" It was this that preoccupied Martin Luther and caused him great agony of soul. When he came to discover that justification is not a process involving good deeds, but an act of God accounting the work of Christ to the sinner that receives Him, he declared: "I felt myself straightway born afresh and to have entered through the open gates into paradise itself."

"The true treasure of the Church is the Most Holy Gospel of the glory and the grace of God."

- MARTIN LUTHER

Around the same time in England, Thomas Bilney (the forgotten Reformer) read in Latin the New Testament translated by Erasmus. When he came to 1 Timothy 1:15, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," he realized he was put right with God not on account of something done by him, but for him. Justification is a once-for-all event of which good works are not a part, but a consequence. The Reformation declared that authority was found in Scripture alone. In looking to Scripture, we find our acceptance with God. In Christ alone, by grace alone, through faith alone—*solus Deo gloria*.

The task of Gospel proclamation is not over.⁴

* These notes are prayerfully provided to aid, not replace, your personal study of God's Word.

³ Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 482.

⁴ Alistair Begg, October 20-17 Newsletter