

## Fight or Flight?

- What does “Fight or Flight” mean?
  - In response to a threat or danger, we prepare to **fight** or **run away (flight)**
- When does that happen in people like us?
- Which are you more likely to do: fight or flee?

**What danger or trouble or problem or pain or... threatens you today?**

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## Fight or Flight or...

**Acts 19:21-20:1**

Chinese page 1801  
 Spanish page 1415  
 English-Green page 759  
 English-Brown\* page 1113  
 \* **larger print**



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*From last week in Ephesus...*

Paul taught daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus “for two years, so that **all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.**” *Acts 19:10*

- The Gospel went **WIDE** (many people)

“A number who had practiced sorcery brought their [magic] scrolls together and **burned them publicly**. When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to fifty thousand [day’s wages]. In this way the word of the Lord

**spread widely and grew in power.**” *Acts 19:19-20*

- The Gospel went **DEEP** (big changes in each person)

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*Acts 19:21-20:1*

19:10, God brought a WIDE and DEEP response

19-20: to the Gospel

21-22:

23-41:

20:1:

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*Acts 19:21-20:1*

10, God brought a WIDE and DEEP response  
19-20: to the Gospel

21-22: Paul's ministry journeys were led by God

23-41: • Perhaps Paul's work to start new churches  
in the eastern Roman Empire was done

20:1: • "I must visit Rome also"

- A sense of 'divine necessity'
- God was leading and working
- Suggests an awareness of opposition or challenge
- Note that Paul was not working alone

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*Acts 19:21-20:1*

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23-41:

20:1:

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## Model of the Temple of Artemis



Roughly...  
130x69 meters  
425x225 feet  
127 marble columns  
18m/60ft tall

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*Acts 19:21-20:1*

10, God brought a WIDE and DEEP response  
19-20: to the Gospel

21-22: Paul's ministry journeys were led by God

**23-41:** A WIDE and DEEP response to the Gospel (the Way)  
led to a "great disturbance"

20:1: • Sources of uncontrollable disturbance

- Economic, cultural/patriotic, and religious
- Public speaking was powerful!
- Crowds and public momentum
- Some voices not allowed, or would make it worse!
- Eventually a calmer voice brought peace

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A **DEEP** and **WIDE** response to the Gospel will lead to a great disturbance in any other system

- Some industries may lose money
- Some inflammatory rhetoric will lose its power
- Many injustices will be corrected
- Much systemic bias will begin to be corrected
- Many unmet needs will be met

→ through transformation of people, not structural changes

→ **Are we bold enough in our hopes for the Gospel??**

**wide AND deep**

- *And people who benefit in the current system are likely to be very unhappy with the change*

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*Acts 19:21-20:1*

10, God brought a **WIDE** and **DEEP** response

19-20: to the Gospel

21-22: Paul's ministry journeys were led by God

23-41: A **WIDE** and **DEEP** response to the Gospel (the Way) led to a "great disturbance"

**20:1:** No other power can stop the **Kingdom of God**

- This riot seemingly had no negative effects on Paul
- He spoke to **encourage** the Ephesian Christians
  - Certainly they expected more conflicts like this in the future
- **What is the word of encouragement?**

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### **The Big Idea**

While a deep and wide response to the Gospel  
may bring great chaos or trouble or opposition

God is greater still

and His Kingdom will still come  
with His peace and joy and goodness

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### ***Application***

- Go wide and deep in Christianity
  - **WIDE:** This news is to be taken to everyone!
    - Who in your life has not yet deeply understood the amazing news of the Gospel?
    - What can you do to help them gain this understanding?
    - What can **WE** do together to bear witness to the amazing news of God's work in Christ?
    - **"YOU** will receive power, and **YOU** will be my witnesses"

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### *Application*

- Go wide and deep in Christianity
  - WIDE: This news is to be taken to everyone!
  - DEEP: This news should deeply affect each of us
    - What do we do with our money, our talents, our time?
    - In conflict, are we growing in peace, patience, kindness, love?
    - It is good to seek structural changes
    - Yet the first strategy of God is deep personal change by many
    - How can we help each other go DEEP in the Gospel?

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### *Application*

- Go wide and deep in Christianity
  - Christianity is not merely something to give meaning to life
  - It opens us up to a real relationship with the living God
  - Those who genuinely experience God cannot be unchanged!
  - Let's help each other go deeper in God

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### *Application*

- Go wide and deep in Christianity
- Be strong in His mighty power
  - Great trouble is no need to panic
    - Jesus: “When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, **he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.**” *1 Peter 2:23*
    - “So then, those who suffer according to God’s will should **commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.**” *1 Peter 4:19*
  - There is no need to fear: fight or flight

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### Sometimes...

- It feels like I am digging with a shovel
- And my challenges are being piled up with an excavator



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### Sometimes...

- It feels like I am digging with a shovel
- And my challenges are being piled up with an excavator

### In reality...

- God moves the very ground where we stand!
- "His greatness no one can fathom!"



fathom = fully comprehend

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“Finally, **be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power**. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to **stand your ground**, and after you have done everything, **to stand.**”

*Ephesians 5:10-13*

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### *Application*

- Go wide and deep in Christianity
- Be strong in His mighty power
  - Great trouble is no need to panic
  - There is no need to fear: fight or flight
  - Instead... **Stand in God's power** and in God's ways
    - The **only secure and good place** to be is in God's will, no matter how problematic it looks
    - How often are our decisions guided by...
      - Fear? Fatalism? Insecurities? Lack of faith?

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*Gamaliel's advice to people who opposed Christianity, when early Christians were making a huge impact in Jerusalem:*

“Therefore, in the present case I advise you: Leave these men alone! Let them go! For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. **But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God.**”

*Acts 5:38-39*

**The Church of Jesus Christ is “from God”**

**The life of Christ in each of His children is “from God”**

**The will of God for you is “from God”**

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**When you look at life...**

- **Are you seeing only what is visible?**
- **Or...**

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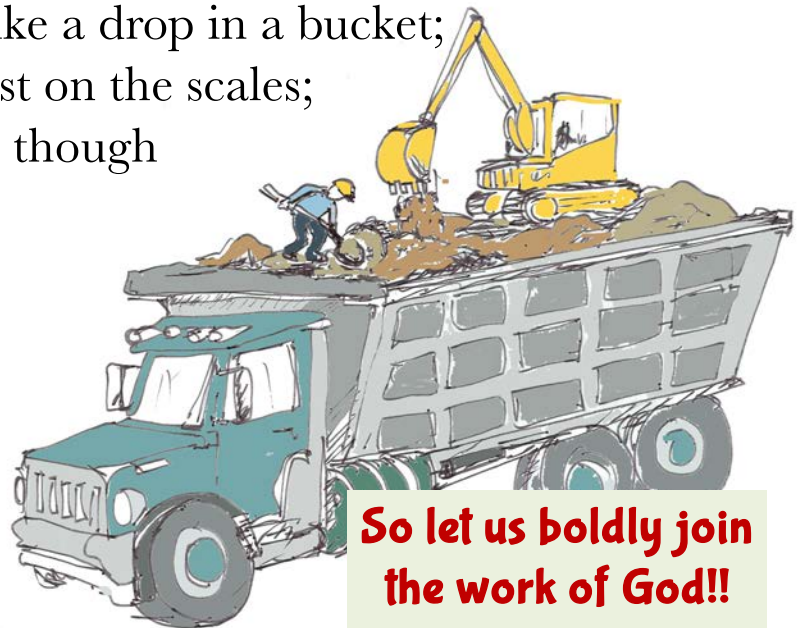
Surely the nations are like a drop in a bucket;  
they are regarded as dust on the scales;  
he weighs the islands as though  
they were fine dust.

*Isaiah 40:15*

**The work of God is  
a divine necessity**

**No power can  
stand in its way**

**Even when all we can see is the brokenness inside the truck**



**So let us boldly join  
the work of God!!**

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## The Big Idea

While a deep and wide response to the Gospel  
may bring great chaos or trouble or opposition

God is greater still

and His Kingdom will still come  
with His peace and joy and goodness

**What problem or 'disturbance' seems too great for God's work?**  
**What is the work of God you are joining boldly?**