CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

MARCH 28 2026

Scripture Story: Acts 19; Acts 20:1.
Commentary: *The Acts of the Apostles* (or *Unlikely Leaders*), chapters 27, 28.

the inspiring minority



Photo by The Crystal Lenz

flashlight

"It was by cherishing a humble, teachable spirit that these men gained the experience that enabled them to go out as workers into the harvest field. Their example presents to Christians a lesson of great value. There are many who make but little progress in the divine life because they are too self-sufficient to occupy the position of learners. They are content with a superficial knowledge of God's Word. They do not wish to change their faith or practice and hence make no effort to obtain greater light" (*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 283).

keytext

"God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them."

(Acts 19:11, 12, NIV)

what do you think?

Do you know the saying, "You can't make everyone happy all of the time"? In any group of people, at any time of day, there will always be someone who loves you, someone who hates you, someone who thinks you make ridiculous decisions, and someone who respects you from a distance. There are times, however, when the balance seems to be off!

Have you ever had an experience when you felt like everyone was against you? Have you ever been picked on? What do you think the reason was for this?

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did you know?

If the followers of Christ were but earnest seekers after wisdom, they would be led into rich fields of truth as yet wholly unknown to them. He who will give himself fully to God will be guided by the divine hand. He may be lowly and apparently ungifted; yet if with a loving, trusting heart he obeys every intimation of God's will, his powers will be purified, ennobled, energized, and his capabilities will be increased. As he treasures the lessons of divine wisdom, a sacred commission will be entrusted to him; he will be enabled to make his life an honor to God and a blessing to the world" (*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 283, 284).

INTO THE STORY

"About that time there arose a great disturbance about the Way. A silversmith named Demetrius, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought in a lot of business for the craftsmen there. He called them together, along with the workers in related trades, and said: 'You know, my friends, that we receive a good income from this business. And you see and hear how this fellow Paul has convinced and led astray large numbers of people here in Ephesus and in practically the whole province of Asia. He says that gods made by human hands are no gods at all. There is danger not only that our trade will lose its good name, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be discredited; and the goddess herself, who is worshiped throughout the province of Asia and the world, will be robbed of her divine majesty.'

"When they heard this, they were furious and began shouting: 'Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!' Soon the whole city was in an uproar. The people seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul's traveling companions from Macedonia, and all of them rushed into the theater together. Paul wanted to appear before the crowd, but the disciples would not let him. Even some of the officials of the province, friends of Paul, sent him a message begging him not to venture into the theater.

"The assembly was in confusion: Some were shouting one thing, some another. Most of the people did not even know why they were there. The Jews in the crowd pushed Alexander to the front, and they shouted instructions to him. He motioned for silence in order to make a defense before the people. But when they realized he was a Jew, they all shouted in unison for about two hours: 'Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!'

"The city clerk quieted the crowd and said: 'Fellow Ephesians, doesn't all the world know that the city of Ephesus is the guardian of the temple of the great Artemis and of her image, which fell from heaven? Therefore, since these facts are undeniable, you ought to calm down and not do anything rash. You have brought these men here, though they have neither robbed temples nor blasphemed our goddess. If, then, Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen have a grievance against anybody, the courts are open and there are proconsuls. They can press charges. If there is anything further you want to bring up, it must be settled in a legal assembly. As it is, we are in danger of being charged with rioting because of what happened today. In that case we would not be able to account for this com-

motion, since there is no reason for it.' After he had said this, he dismissed the assembly."

(Acts 19:23-41, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

What was the reason for Demetrius's behavior toward Paul?

Do you think that Paul was aware of why the city had been thrown into an uproar? Why or why not?

Do you think that the city clerk was courageous in facing the mob? Why or why not?

What do you think had a calming effect on the crowd?

In the mob, it says that "most of the people did not even know why they were there." What made them follow the group in this show of rage?

What can we learn from this story about peer pressure?

punch lines

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go" **(Joshua 1:9, NIV).**

"When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus" **(Acts 4:13, NIV).**

"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it" **(Matthew 7:13, NIV).**

"If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all" **(Isaiah 7:9, NIV).**

"Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear; though war break out against me, even then I will be confident" **(Psalm 27:3, NIV).**

"Everyone will hate you because of me, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved" **(Mark 13:13, NIV).**

further insight

"If the follower of Christ would grow up 'unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ' (Ephesians 4:13), he must eat of the bread of life and drink of the water of salvation. He must watch and pray and work, in all things giving heed to the instructions of God in His Word."

—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles,* pp. 284, 285

connectingtolife

Sabbath

Read Psalm 27:3.

Have you ever felt as if everyone was against you? Perhaps you were being picked on for not fitting in, or maybe you did something that was considered unpopular. Regardless of the reason why, being the unpopular minority is never a comfortable experience. As a Christian, you might find yourself in this situation in order to stand up for what you believe in. Psalm 27:3 says: "Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear; though war break out against me, even then I will be confident" (NIV).

Are you willing to take a stand for what is right, even if you are the only one to do it? How can you do so fearlessly and confidently?

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Sunday

Read Joshua 1:9.

In our story this week, we see one man's ambition for wealth and position fueling a mob against Paul. Paul had not hurt anyone. In fact, he was preaching love and decent living! He might not have even known that the riot was caused by one man who resented the decrease in his sales of idols. This was a terrifying situation. Sometimes when it feels like the entire world is against us, it isn't because of anything we have done wrong. Sometimes it is about something else entirely. How can you trust God enough to continue doing the right thing, even when everything seems to go crazy around you?

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Monday

Read Acts 19:11, 12.

The Key Text chosen for memorizing this week tells us about the miracles that God worked for people through Paul. God was able to work through Paul because Paul was both humble and determined to do the right thing no matter what the cost. People were healed and made happier because of God's use of Paul. What do you think God could do through you for your friends and acquaintances if you let Him? How could other people be made happier because they knew you? How might they realize that there is a God because of your life?

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Tuesday

Read Acts 4:13.

Ellen White emphasizes the need for Christians to be humble. Christians need to take God seriously, not themselves! If we take ourselves too seriously, we end up like the bully who was so concerned about his sales. In order for God to do something with us, He has to be able to teach us; and to be able to teach us, we have to be flexible. There is always something more to learn, something deeper to realize. Try to consciously keep an open mind today and ask God to teach you something new.

Wednesday

Read Matthew 7:13.

It isn't easy sometimes doing the right thing. It seems that the right path tends to be the harder one a lot of the time! (Mark 13:13). But God never asks us to do it alone. God is with us, protecting us and supporting us every step of the way. It takes courage to face adversity in order to do what God asks us to do. It takes courage to be different from the rest of the crowd. It is that God-given courage that sets us apart and makes it obvious that we have been with Jesus. Have you been waffling about something you believe in? Ask God for the courage to stand firm, and watch how He blesses you for your commitment!

Thursday

Read Isaiah 7:9.

It's much easier to be in the majority, blending in and enjoying the approval of your peers than it is to be the unpopular minority. In any group, there are always the few who are picked on and aren't accepted. It isn't easy to stand up against the majority, but if no one does, nothing will ever change! Are there any people in your social sphere who are left out or picked on? Do you have the courage to stand up for them and do the right thing, even though you would have to oppose the popular majority? How big of a difference could you make in one person's life for taking a stand?

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Friday

Read Mark 13:13.

God expects us to stand firm on the important issues. In your relationship with God, what issues has God shown you to be most important? What issues or positions matter most to you? What is worth standing for? And how can you stand firm in a way that shows people the kind, gracious, awesome God we serve?

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this week's reading*

The Acts of the Apostles (or *Unlikely Leaders*), chapters 27, 28.

* Unlikely Leaders is a special adaptation of *The Acts of the Apostles* created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at http://www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URlhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.