

Chaotic Oposition

There we go. Amen. Well, it's so good to come together and really look at this text again of scripture. We realize Paul and Silas came to Ephesus and began to preach the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. And it's amazing how people responded to this message, not only believed on the Lord Jesus, but wanted to follow him. And they wanted to follow him so much, it was just like they were new creations, new creatures. And they were new creatures in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The things that they used to do, the things that they used to want to do, they no longer wanted to do them anymore. And the things that they never wanted to do, now they wanted to do. And we saw that in the text. They started taking all these magic books and they started to burn them because they really didn't need them anymore. They started to throw away all these various different statuettes, and they didn't buy them anymore. And they stopped worshiping, again, this goddess Artemis. And they started to worship the one true God that happened to begin in heaven.

And it's incredible, again, how their lives changed. And we realized, in the midst, again, of all that change, the reaction that happened to begin was very swift, was very sudden, and very, what I would think, even expected when you start to live out your faith. in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And it was led by Demetrius. And remember who Demetrius was. He was the head of this guild of silversmiths that happened to begin in Ephesus. And he brings all the other silversmiths together. And he basically brings two arguments against the apostle, against the gospel of Jesus Christ. And one of them is against Artemis herself.

And he argues, and he really says better than he knows he says, he argues that Paul says that gods made with hands are no gods at all. And it's amazing admission, isn't it? That these gods are what? They're made with human hands. And the reason why that's such an admission is because we realize that here are hands with no wisdom, with no power, with no ability to do, that will bow down to a goddess that they say has all wisdom, has all power, has the ability to do. And we realize the contradiction that happens to begin in that hole there.

You know, in light of that, we don't worship a God who's created with hands. We worship the great Creator God. And we realize that He sent His Son to planet Earth to live that perfect life that none of us could ever live, to die that substitutionary death, and He lives forevermore. We worship a living Savior, a living Lord. So they had this against the Apostle Paul. But the other thing that they had against the Apostle Paul is how it affected their livelihood, how it affected, again, the money coming in for the selling of these silver statuettes.

That's one of the things I'm always amazed at, is how Christianity really has an effect. And it affected the whole society. It affected the whole commerce. And think of it. Again, Christianity in its truest form, when it comes into our heart, affects all of our lives, even how we spend money.

And you can imagine, all of a sudden, they're not buying these statuettes. But you can imagine, they're taking their money and investing it in a different way, maybe investing it in the kingdom of Christ, realizing, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that there's eternal rewards that happen to begin right here. investing it in the needs of others that happen to be around them. They're now working with their hands hard, using those abilities that God has given us. I wonder, has our Christianity affected us so much so that it affects how we even spend money, how we even look at money, even the God again of money that many times people serve that happen to begin today?

What I want us to look at this morning is the chaos, the riot that took place that

happened to begin in Ephesus at this time. I really want us to think why people might impose us. Again, when you look at this, it's not so much that their lives had changed, it's not so much that they believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, but why they protested, why we have this chaotic riot that's going on is because of how it affected their lives. Think of it because, Believers here in Ephesus are not being belligerent, they're not being ignorant, they're not shouting in the face, they're not protesting or anything else like this. You know, and I think a lot of times when we look at Christianity, the thing that turns off people outside of Christianity is our un-Christlike behavior. You know, you look at so many believers and they rant and rave so much about the sins that happen at the beginning of the world. And we almost give the impression, because of our lives, because of how we live, because of how we function, we're righteous in God's sight. In other words, we've earned our position before this whole God, but we have these other people that happen to begin around us. And a lot of times you look at those who happen to be professing believers and they're so angry, they're so upset, they're so bitter that other people look at them and they say, if that's what Christianity is, I don't want any part of it.

You know, I don't want to be like my mom. I don't want to be like my dad. I don't want to be like my aunt and uncle. I don't want to be like that person that just rants and raves against anything. And when you look at true Christianity, it's so different.

The most humble, the most loving individuals, the most forgiving individuals in all of the world are those who've been touched by the divine grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. And that's the amazing thing when you look at Ephesus. is the absolute change, again, how God was using that change in the hearts of so many lives, in the lives of other people. And it basically changed, again, people that happened to begin around him in two ways. One is, you know, when these Ephesians, and this happened right after the seven sons of Sceva, and we have that whole incident, incident and the preaching of Paul and also again the miracles that he was done, you know, it happened among the people of God. You know, many of the people of God started to get their lives right. They started again to worship Christ in heart, in spirit, in life, in all of their lives. And here they are, and these are people that are already saved.

They're taking their magic books and burning them. And why? Because they don't want that in their lives anymore. They don't want, again, to be tempted to go in that direction. They want to make room for the Lord Jesus Christ. They don't want to make any provision for the flesh, because they want to worship Christ.

And the outcome of that life, the outcome of that love for the Lord Jesus Christ, we read about in Acts chapter 19, verse number 20, because it says this, so the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevailed mightily. And I love that, don't you? Because we realize the word of the Lord is talking about the gospel. And here they are living, here they are cherishing Christ. And all of a sudden, the word of the Lord started to increase. It started to prevail, come over people's lives.

And I wonder, do we live a Christianity that's so attractive, that's so different from the world, so loving, so kind, so generous, so truthful, so forgiving, that suddenly it attracts others? You know, they recognize something's missing in their life? I mean, a lot of you have the testimony that there happened to be a believer or a group of believers that you saw, and how they lived, and how they functioned, how they interacted with one another, how forgiving they were. It really moved in your life that something was missing.

I wonder, do we live lives like that, that are so attractive that people can actually see the glory, the grace of Jesus Christ in us? We realize that aspect of

Christianity that God, again, many times uses. You know, the other reaction that we've seen to the preaching of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ in Ephesus happened to be this opposition, even this persecution. And we're all aware of 2 Timothy chapter 3 and verse number 12, which says this, indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. And it's an amazing statement, isn't it? because it's all, all the people who truly want, truly have this desire to live godly. In other words, lives for the glory of this great God, lives for the glory of Christ, lives that radiate and speak of his grace in their lives, says this, not might not be persecuted, but will be persecuted.

And perhaps the lack of opposition that happens to be in many of our lives is just basically this. We have the same goals at the beginning of the world that happens to be around us. In other words, there's really nothing to oppose in our life. And I wonder, as we look at our Christianity, even as we look at our church again as a whole, is there anything to oppose?

Is there anything that would draw others to Jesus Christ because of the attractiveness of Jesus Christ? Is there other things where people hold things that happen to be getting dear in their life that are challenged? You know, what effect are we having?

And I really want us to look at this riot that happens to be occurring right here, understand the riot, understand what's coming from, and see if we can draw some conclusions about how we live, how we function, how we worship this great Christ above. So first of all, I want us to see the chaos of this sin-loving and Christ-hating world that happens to begin around us. And it begins in verse number 28. And look at what it says.

When they heard this, they were enraged, and they were crying out, great is Artemis of the Ephesians. So the city was filled with confusion. And they rushed together into the theater, dragging with them Gaius and Aristarchus. Macedonians who were Paul's companion in travels. So we realize that God has sent us into the world to be ambassadors, and we realize what an ambassador is. An ambassador, again, it happens to be a representative.

Do we realize that? You know, that we're representing Jesus Christ in how we live, how we function, how we speak. And so others should see Jesus Christ through us, no matter what's going on in our lives. You know, and we see this in 2 Corinthians 1, 6, it says, if we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation. If we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which you experience when you patiently endure the same suffering that we suffer. So think of what he's saying here. Whether it happens to be suffering, whether it happens to be affliction, whether it happens to be comfort in my life, it's going to be all about the Lord Jesus Christ.

So God will send us through things that we would never choose to go through in order to be a witness of the Lord Jesus Christ. My hope is not right here. My hope is not in pleasant experiences. My hope is not in a lack of suffering that happens to be in my life. My hope is found in Jesus Christ.

Look at what he's done for a sinner like me. Look at the eternity that he's given me. And even the comforts in our life, the greatest blessings, we point to the greater blessing. Oh, these are great. But look at my Christ. Look at the one who has given me these things that happen to be in my life. This is my hope. It's not here. It's not again to have a whole bunch of things that happen to be right here.

It's all about the Lord Jesus Christ. Here's my point. Our whole goal, our whole objective why God has put us here, it's all about him. It's all about Jesus Christ. It's all about again challenging individuals, whether they happen to be in our families, whether they happen to be again in our workplaces, whether they happen to

be even in our church, to make much of Jesus Christ. Here's the thing.

As we live out that testimony, that faith, that love, that cherishing of the Lord Jesus Christ, as Jesus Christ, through his word, grasp our heart more and more, it will have an attraction on some. On the others, again, it will cause opposition. The reason why it causes opposition is it challenges them with what they hold dear that happened to begin in their life. You can see that right here.

This is what it's all about. what they are holding dear that happens to be in their life. Again, let me just ask this question because I think it's such a good question. Is my love for the Lord Jesus Christ, is my devotion for the Lord Jesus Christ, again, so real, so dynamic that it really has a response in those that happen to be around us? Do we have that kind of a love for Christ?

Because look at verse number 28, it says, when they heard this, They were enraged and were crying out, great is Artemis of the Ephesians. I could shout it, I could scream it, because that's the way it was. It was almost like a shriek going out. And when they heard this, it says, and what did they hear? They heard the words of Demetrius. They heard the challenge, again, of how their lives were changing that happened to begin around them. And they never asked. They never ask this question. Is Christianity legitimate? Is it true? You know, can we look at this? Can we see how it describes our society? Can we see how it describes our heart? Can we see our need of Lord Jesus Christ? They never ask that question.

You know, And what they do is all of a sudden they start to passionately march. They are enraged at this time and they start to cry out, great is Artemis of the Ephesians. It starts to cry out this over and over and over again. And you can imagine because they're marching through the streets and people are hearing this, they're coming out saying, what's the problem? Why do we have this march? Why is there such anger? They start talking about the gospel.

They start talking about, again, Artemis being defamed or whatever it happens to be. And remember, there was many marches through the streets, but this one's unplanned. It's chaotic that happens to begin right there. And here's an amazing thing, because we'll see this later on in this episode, that Paul never speaks out against Artemis. But he does preach this, that there is only truly one way of salvation. There is only one God.

And this is what they're protesting and it even gets more chaotic because we read in the very next verse, so the city was filled with confusion and they rushed together into the theater dragging with them Gaius and Aristarchus. Macedonians who Paul's companion and travel.

Now, I have to tell you this week, I looked at this sermon all week and I practiced that name, Aristocrats, and I got it perfectly. Now, I can't say it and I practiced it all week, so I would say it perfectly here, Aristarchus, that's it right there. It's amazing because they were accused of what? Being Macedonians. Aristarchus was actually a Macedonian. He was from Thessalonica. When you look at Gaius, Gaius was actually from Derbe, which happened to begin in Asia.

But they really don't care. These are foreigners. They are taking their own beliefs and forcing them on them. And they come into this theater. In Ephesus, there was a 25,000-seat open-air theater. And this is where all the processions that went through the streets, and they went through the streets, this is where they would all end up. And it would echo, the sound would echo through it. And that's where they are right here. And again, imagine the chaos that happens to be going on. Because look at the next two verses, beginning of verse number 30.

Paul wished to go in among the crowd. The disciples would not let him go. And some

of the Asiarchs, who were friends of his, sent to him, and urging him not to venture into the theater. So these were really wise counselors, again, of the Apostle Paul. They realized the danger that happened to be right here. They realized that the true danger, the true, again, vehemence, the true anger, happened to be against him, and even some of the Asiarchs.

And the Asiarchs were basically magistrates. They were the ones who decided various different cases. They were the rulers, again, over this area and over these people. And this is probably part of the frustration of the silversmiths. is they could not take legal action against Christianity. And why? Because some of these were sympathetic with the whole Christian message. And so they took matters into their own hands.

And again, this is very chaotic. And let me just say this about riots. You know, when you look at riots, when you look at all these marches and people are gathered in, they all know why they're there. They're there because they're against something. You know, whatever it happens to be, some injustice, something like that is going on. They're mad, they're frustrated and upset. But when you look at many of these marches, when you look at many of these riots, what they want, they're many times divided over, because they really don't know. In other words, if you say, what is the objective to this riot?

They would say, really, we don't know. Or somebody would say this, and another would say this, and another would say this. Well, we want the magistrates to do something. Well, we just want to kill these people. Well, we just want to eliminate all Christians out of our society, or whatever it happened to be. they would not, again, agree on it.

And you can see that, again, right here in the next verse, because it says, now some of them cried out one thing, some another, for the assembly was in confusion, and most of them, listen to this, most of them did not know why they had come together.

You know, they just joined in the crowd. You know, here's all this noise. Here's all this passion. Here's all this rage. They just joined in. You know, they weren't doing anything. So come on in. Come on in. And here's all this that happens to be going on. So there needs to be somebody that takes control over this whole situation. So this is what we read in the next couple of verses.

Some of the crowd prompted Alexander. whom the Jews had put forward. And Alexander, motioning with his hand, wanted to make a defense to the crowd. But when they recognized that he was a Jew, for about two hours they cried out with one voice, Great is Artemis of the Ephesians! So you can imagine the scene right here. Somebody needs to take control, and here's Alexander.

And a lot of people think that Alexander is a Christian, and he's going to come up, and he's going to make a defense of Christianity. But what's more probable is that he's a Jew that's going to speak against Christianity, speak against, again, the truth of the Lord Jesus Christ. But here, they recognize this is not one of us. This is not a worship of Artemis, and they drown him out.

And you can imagine how loud it was. You know, all these people gathered in this theater, how it echoed through out of that theater, through the streets, all the way down to the harbor. It was many times, again, accompanied by loud clapping, whistling. It was very chaotic. And you look at a scene like this and it's amazing, isn't it?

Because everything in scripture is written for what? Our edification, our learning, right? Our good that happens to be in Jesus Christ. And we come to a passage like

this and we say, what kind of benefit could this be for us? You know, and one of the things it does is it tells us beyond a shadow of a doubt why people reject. You know, why do they reject Christianity? And we could bring it down to its lowest common denominator and say this, it's because of the message. It's because of Jesus Christ and him crucified. You know, and our true belief, our true trust in that.

You know, Peter said it earlier in the book of Acts, in Acts 4.12, he said this, So, Artemis can't save. You know, our good works cannot save. Our idols that happen to begin in our life,

whatever they happen to be, that we trust will give us life, will trust to give us satisfaction, will not give what we want in this life.

I mean, that's really easy, isn't it? But let me just say this. People object. People many times are critical of various different things that happen to be in life. but their passions are not on fire. What is it about Christianity, many times, where it elicits such passionate response? This is it.

When we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, when true Christianity trusts in the Lord Jesus Christ, I want to say this very clearly. I want to say very clear, we are never saved by works. But when somebody truly recognizes Jesus Christ, when somebody recognizes what he has done, when somebody really trusts in him, let me say, it changes your life. Why?

Because it changes our passion. It changes again how we look at life. It changes how we look at salvation. It changes how we look at God. Look at what he's done for a sinner like us. And the way that we describe that change many times is by putting off and putting on. When we come to Christ, when we recognize who he is, there's a way that we used to live, there's a way that we used to function, there's things in our life that we used to want that we no longer want in our life anymore. And we realize as we go on, as we grow, we put more of those things off.

It's like Colossians chapter 3 beginning at verse number 5 says, it says, put to death, therefore, what is earthly in you. Right? Here are the things that people live for, sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these, the wrath of God is coming.

In these, listen to what he says, you too once walked when you were living in them. You once lived in them, visited them, and you no longer live in them any longer. So think of the Ephesians, because they used to go to places in all of these what we call temple celebrations in everything in the ancient world. It didn't matter what deity you were serving.

They had temple prostitution and they also had drunkenness. All of a sudden again, here they are, they're not controlled by strong liquor, they're not again going to these places again of ill repute, but they want to live pure lives. Why do they want to live pure lives? Because their God is pure, their God is holy. Look at my Christ. I want to follow him.

He's so much better than these things that happen to begin around them. And he even says, again, when you look at these things, they're no longer covetousness. It's no longer coveting. I want this, and I want this, and I want this. I mean, think of this world. It's all about getting, getting, getting, more, and more, and more. But what happens in Christianity? Oh, my God. Oh, my Jesus is enough. And think of their lives changing. You know, and why? Because there's this putting off. I used to live for these things. I used to want these things. But now I have Christ. Now I have this salvation. Now I have this Lord. Now I have my forever Jesus.

And it changes people. And so when you look at true, authentic Christianity, there's always a putting off, isn't there? And as we grow in Christ, we grow to see

who he is. And there's more putting off on our lives. But not only that, but there's a putting on, because Colossians chapter three goes on and it says this, but put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another, and if anyone has a complaint against another, forgiving each other as the Lord has forgiven you. So also you must forgive. And above all these, put on love, which binds everything together. in perfect harmony. So think about that. Think about that because all of a sudden they're putting these things on and it's affecting the commerce.

Do you think, because your livelihood is being affected because again the things that you love, the things that you cherish doing, the sins again that you harbor that have a beginning in your heart are being challenged. Do you think Christianity would drive you crazy? Do you think it would drive you crazy when you look at these people that they're not ignorant, they're not bad, that they're not full of malice, but here they are forgiving, here they are kind, here they are generous, here they are patience, even though you're shouting at them, even though you're screaming at them. Do you think that would drive you crazy? If you were truly harboring those things that happen in the beginning of your life, because that's the way Christianity is. Let me just give you one example of this. You know, and this is an example, again, that I think we all know about, and that happens to be the LGBTQ community.

Now, let me, I think a lot of times we say things that are unhealthy and unhelpful, right? It's not Adam and Steve, it's Adam and Eve. That's not helpful, folks. It really isn't. You know, with people struggling with sin, that is not helpful. And what do we present to them? We present the same thing that God presents. This is my God. This is the cost of sin. Whatever that sin happens to be in your life, whatever that sin happens to be in my life, we need to repent of it. We need to trust the Lord Jesus Christ.

And I don't know if you're aware of this. It's incredible how many individuals in the LGBTQ community have actually come out of that of actually living lives, again, of either celibacy or same-sex attraction are different. They've been delivered out of same-sex attraction and now have a spouse. You know, and the reason why is why? Because of the power of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

So think of it, again, we're gonna stand up here, and we're gonna preach, and we're gonna call people, again, this is sin, this is sin, this is sin, your drunkenness, your sexual debauchery, whether it happens to be homosexuality, whether it happens to be prostitution, whether it happens to be internet pornography, whether it happens to be the grossness that happened to begin in your mind. You need to turn from that. But there's a Savior who will cleanse you. There's a Savior who will forgive you.

Now think about that. What do you think if you're holding that sin really tightly, really tightly, what do you think the response is going to be? Well, you're unloving. You're the most unloving person I have ever met. Let me tell you, is our God unloving when he points out our sin? Does he want the best for us? We define love by somebody challenging my beliefs. God challenges our beliefs. He shows us our sin that happened to be in our life.

The most unloving thing that we can do is not preach on sin, because if you're not preaching on sin, you can't get to the Savior. You can't get to this Lord. You can't get to this one that happened to be getting ready. But your unloving Christianity is a stain on society, and it must be eliminated.

And you listen to the arguments that happen to be out there. And let me just say this. They're so passionate. And what's the problem? The problem isn't in the gospel itself. It's on the change that it brings over the heart and the change that

it calls other people, again, to bring in their lives. You know, what sin happens to be. And I wonder if we realize that. Because I'm not really fearful of churches. I'm really fearful, again, of believers.

Because if you preach, who's preaching through Colossians? I think it's you, is it? Is it Jeff? Who's preaching through Colossians? It's you. When you preach through Colossians chapter three, more often than not, you will be, if you look at this, put off and put on, and you preach and you have categories. When you preach through that, people will accuse you of being a legalist. You know, pastor, get a life.

God has given us freedom. And you know what? God has given us freedom. And you know what that freedom is? I have a new freedom to follow Christ. I have a new freedom to love him and cherish him and walk in his ways. That's the freedom that God has given us. You know, and do we realize that? You know, because there is a sin, and it's called worldliness. And you know what worldliness is? Just loving the things of the world. You know, that's all it is.

You know, and John says this in 1 John 2, in verse number 15, he says, do not love the world, nor the things of the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. So just like you can't love God and mammon, you can't love God and money, you can't love God and the world.

You know, and if I have my heart on the things that happen at the beginning of this life, and I'm not saying that we're living real immoral lives, but that's where my life is. I have the same goals, the same expectations, the same purposes as the world that happens to begin around us. Well, we're living a godless life, aren't we? A life without God, and a godless life is living for the world. Let me just give you an example, and I know some of the tomatoes, and if you get angry at me, you can yell at me afterwards, but don't do it right now, okay?

But why do you think this time of year, and some of you are gonna know this name, why this time of year, Freddy Krueger movies are so popular? Why are horror movies so popular this time of year? That many times go blood, gore, death, You know, and all of it, why is it so popular? You know, and it's incredible because people go to it and believers will go to it and sensationalize it again, death, gore, murder, all these things.

You know, and they'll come and they'll say, man, was I ever great. You know, why is it so popular among believers where they have to argue to go see nudity on a big screen? that glamorizes adultery, glamorizes again the lust of the flesh and says no big deal.

Now think about it, if all of a sudden my love for the Lord Jesus Christ was so intoxicating that I wanted to do this, this

is recorded, this is not up in screens, but this is recorded in Philippians chapter three, verse number eight, it says, finally brothers, whatever's true, whatever's honorable, whatever's just, whatever's pure, whatever's lovely, whatever's commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, here it is, think about these things.

What if I only thought about those things? Those things that are honorable, those things that are glorious, those things that have to do with Jesus Christ. I didn't fill my mind with all the filth, with all the sins that glamorize the things of this world and the things of this life. Now, think about it. If all Christians did that, all of a sudden, and this is no exaggeration, 15, 25, 30, maybe 40 percent of the revenue in Hollywood for these movies would go down. Well, what kind of effect do you think it would have?

Do you think it would have an effect on some saying, what is it about those

Christians that they find so interesting about Jesus Christ that they don't need all of this death, this gore, this sensuality, these things that we prize? What is it about Christ? What's so lovely and attractive? What's so satisfying about him in their lives? Do you think it would make some, again, upset that they can't make films like this because they're no longer financially sustainable? You know, what effect do we have because of our love for the Lord Jesus Christ?

Let me just say this. I think a lot of times we sing what we celebrate. You know, I wrote this on a Wednesday blog a few weeks ago, but I think if you're at a football game, and maybe it's a Michigan game, You know, and it's fourth down. It's on the one yard line. You know, there's one second on the clock. You know, and here's the hut, and then he gives it to the, he gives it to the running back, and the running back goes in for Michigan and scores. And all of a sudden, they win the game by one point.

Now, what's the reaction in the stands? The reaction in the stands is not just to sit there. Right? The reaction in the stands is what? Cheering. You know, you're high-fiving people that you don't even know, right? You're hugging strangers. And why? Because it's meant to celebrate. Think of the things we celebrate.

Folks, I'm not trying to be, if I'm being too legalistic, I'm really, really sorry, but it's incredible the things we sing about. We'll sing about drunkenness. You know, the old country western songs about drunkenness. We'll sing the pop songs that idolize sex. And all of that, and, you know, we'll snap our fingers, we'll go down and watch these individuals sing live.

And there was nothing wrong with my heart. Folks, what if we had that kind of passion when we came out Sunday morning and sang to our Lord? What if we had that kind of passion when we turned on the Christian radio and sang about our great God and our redemption that happens to be in the Lord Jesus Christ, and we said, guess what?

This is worth celebrating. This is worth enjoying. Look at my Jesus. Do you think it would have an effect on other people? Do you think, again, others would say, wow, look at what they're rejoicing, look at what they're celebrating, look at what they're prizing. Look at what they're cheering about that happens to begin over there. It's so different from us.

What is it about Jesus? I mean, we worship drunkenness, we worship sensuality. What is it about this Jesus? You know, that's so different in our lives. You know, do you think it would anger others? You know, who prize those gods and do not want to turn from them? You know, here's the thing, I think. When we look at these things so often in our lives, we look at it, oh man, that's just legalism, you know? Give me Jesus and a cup of coffee in the morning and that's it. You know, we have these trite phrases.

You know what Christianity did in Ephesus? It changed it, but it didn't change it on the outside. It didn't change it because all these laws were changed, all of these edicts. We put the right people in power, and look at this. We got this moral society. It didn't change it like that. It changed it from the inside.

These believers were so overwhelmed with Jesus Christ, all they could do was to live for him. Let me ask you, do we have a passion for Jesus like that? Do we have a passion again as a church, in all churches? It's incredible because we look at things that happen to begin in the word of God and they're just too hard. It's just too hard to be Jesus. It's just too hard to be a church that believes this.

You know, let's be more sensitive to the LGBTQ community. And don't preach about that. Don't preach and make them feel uncomfortable. You know, let's just bring

them in and let them sit there. You know, Jesus loves everybody. You know, let's just not be, again, doing church discipline. Church discipline looks, too, again, unloving to the world. So we're not going to let God decide what's loving. We're going to decide what's loving. it's loving.

And we become more like the world that happens to begin around us. But folks, how about our individual lives? You know, it's easy to look at the church again at the whole. We realize, you know, it's a slippery slope and the world many times becomes worldly. But how about our own lives? You know, how about our own testimonies?

Because here it is. Our love for the Lord Jesus Christ among our children, among our spouses, among our extended family, among our fellow believers, among those that we work with, what we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, what we believe most in our life, what we cherish most in our life, here it is, comes out. And if that's true, which scripture says it is true, what's coming out of us? You know, maybe we don't see many people challenged by the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. And I realize God has to challenge people. Maybe we don't see more people challenged by the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It's because we just don't have a love for Christ. We love the things of this world rather than the things of God. Maybe the reason why we don't have more opposition that happens to be in our life, there's not a fervor of passion that happens to be against us. All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus, will be persecuted. Maybe it's because we're not living godly in Christ Jesus. Maybe because our goals, our expectations, our wants, our desires are like the world that happens to be again around us rather than Jesus Christ.

Maybe folks, if we look at our lives and we're honest with our lives, in order to put on the Lord Jesus Christ, there's idols that need to be replaced in our life. There's things that need to be replaced in our lives. There's books that need to be burned. There's old loves that we just seem to hang on to that need to be eradicated in our life that we might have a greater love for the Lord Jesus Christ.

I mean, look at that quote in Colossians chapter 3 and verse number 5 again. It says, put to death, put to death, put to death. In other words, slay in your life, make no provision, burn them just like the Ephesians. Put to death, therefore, what is earthly in you. Sexual immorality. Think of these things. Impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is what? Which is idolatry.

You know, what things need to be put to death in our lives, burned, that we might breed in our hearts a greater love for the Lord Jesus Christ? Because there is a new Lord, isn't there? You know, the old idols, again, are to be put away from our lives. And it's incredible, again, the more that we love Christ, the more that we're passionate about serving Him, the more the Spirit of God chooses to use that to draw other people to heaven to begin in the Lord Jesus Christ. So let me just end this way.

What effect is your life, what effect is my life having on my world, in other words, my relationships, Around me, what effect is your life having on your children? What effect is your life having on your spouse? Is your spouse a more godly individual because you are in their lives? What effect, again, is it in your workplaces that you live in? If God is in his sovereign goodness, has chosen to use our lives, what's our testimony?

I think the greater impact, and you always see this, Right, revival always starts in what? The household of God. Maybe we need to look at our lives and see the greatness of the Lord Jesus Christ and may the light of Christ really dwell in us and may we be used that he might be glorified in opposition or in increase. Let's bow our hearts in a moment of prayer. Father, this is an amazing text to look

through, to realize Christianity can change Lord's society from the inside out. Lord, it can bring people to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, and we realize that more than a standing is involved here, that Lord, you really change the lives, you change the hearts. Lord, we still have struggles in our life, we still fall down, but God, here's the amazing thing, we still keep going forward. and loving and cherishing and seeking to know you.

And Lord, to look at the Ephesian assembly and to realize, Lord, how it changed that society. How, Lord, there was places and various different marches that happened to begin through the streets, processions. Lord, and how empty they were. Lord, how there were spaces where they used to be again filled.

And God, it's incredible to look that our love for the Lord Jesus Christ, our cherishing of all that he is for us can really change us and then start to change those that happen to be around us. Lord, to think that their love for Christ, their burning even of these magic books, Lord, that they might make no provision for the faith and their love, Lord, and jubilation and all that Jesus Christ is for them. actually brought many, many to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. We realize the word, your word, increased. It prevailed mightily. God, this is what we pray for our church.

Lord, we don't go looking for opposition. We don't go looking for persecution. Lord, we don't go looking to be defamed. But God, so often in our lives, We realize that many times we do not see an increase, we do not see opposition, just basically because we really don't have a passion for Christ.

God, help us to change. Help us to put on Jesus Christ. Help us to put off those deeds of the flesh. And Lord, we don't ask this for our own glory, but the glory of Jesus Christ. We thank you so much. Just be with us as we close now. In Christ's name, amen. Thank you, Pastor, for that bold preaching.