



**Acts – Can I get a Witness?
Wk. 68 “A Riot over the Love of Money”
By Pastor Jody May 02/25/2024**

Acts 19:21-41 ESV

A Riot at Ephesus

²¹Now after these events Paul resolved in the Spirit to pass through Macedonia and Achaia and go to Jerusalem, saying, “After I have been there, I must also see Rome.” ²²And having sent into Macedonia two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, he himself stayed in Asia for a while.

²³About that time there arose no little disturbance concerning the Way. ²⁴For a man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought no little business to the craftsmen. ²⁵These he gathered together, with the workmen in similar trades, and said, “Men, you know that from this business we have our wealth. ²⁶And you see and hear that not only in Ephesus but in almost all of Asia this Paul has persuaded and turned away a great many people, saying that gods made with hands are not gods. ²⁷And there is danger not only that this trade of ours may come into disrepute but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis may be counted as nothing, and that she may even be deposed from her magnificence, she whom all Asia and the world worship.”

²⁸When they heard this they were enraged and were crying out, “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!” ²⁹So the city was filled with the confusion, and they rushed together into the theater, dragging with them Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians who were Paul’s companions in travel. ³⁰But when Paul wished to go in among the crowd, the disciples would not let him. ³¹And even some of the Asiarchs, who were friends of his, sent to him and were urging him not to venture into the theater. ³²Now some cried out one thing, some another, for the assembly was in confusion, and most of them did not know why they had come together. ³³Some 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. ³⁴But when they recognized that he was a Jew, for about two hours they all cried out with one voice, “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!”

³⁵And when the town clerk had quieted the crowd, he said, “Men of Ephesus, who is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is temple keeper of the great Artemis, and of the sacred stone that fell from the sky? ³⁶Seeing then that these things cannot be denied, you ought to be quiet and do nothing rash. ³⁷For you have brought these men here who are neither sacrilegious nor blasphemers of our goddess. ³⁸If therefore Demetrius and the craftsmen with him have a complaint against anyone, the courts are open, and there are proconsuls. Let them bring charges against one another. ³⁹But if you seek anything further, it shall be settled in the regular assembly. ⁴⁰For we really are in danger of being charged with rioting today, since there is no cause that we can give to justify this commotion.” ⁴¹And when he had said these things, he dismissed the assembly.

[READ THE TEXT]

Pastor – “People of God, this is the Word of God.”



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People – “Thanks be to God.”

[PRAY]

[ILLUSTRATION]

Tell me if you had heard this lately, “This next election is the most important election in the history of the United States!” Anyone? What about Abraham Lincoln vs. John Breckenridge 1860 (Civil War, Slavery, and a stronger Federal Government)? What about Franklin Roosevelt vs. Hebert Hoover of 1932 (Rise of the Democrats, end of the depression, and that the federal Government should help people)?

What we need to know from history, is underneath all these elections (1860/1932/2024), is that those events were/are not necessarily the fight to ensure rights for American Citizens, it is more about the way to secure/spend money for the American Government, so that it can run correctly according to those in power. Now PJ it seems that you have some negative connotations about the government, no, I am just a realist, and an informed Christian.

We had said **last week** that there is a power behind the nations, according to Luke 4, the **Devil**, and he believes authority was given to him to do what he wants, and he dishes it out to whom he chooses. That was the day Jesus took it back from Satan, and ever since then the church has been in tension with the powers that govern. When those powers are working for God and not man, things go well, when those powers are more concerned about the **almighty dollar** instead of God’s will, the tension increases.

Jesus highlighted this important **truth** for all of us in His teachings:

Matthew 6:24 ESV

“No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.”

Of which Jesus also noted why you cannot serve the almighty dollar.



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1 Timothy 6:10 ESV

“For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.”

When a government becomes too concerned with getting money, spending money, or making money, it leads to covetousness and leads the populace into corporate/national sin. **The church then has the right, the ability, and the call to stand in and oppose these worldly stances on money, not by necessarily decrying money, or by marching/protesting, but by living a life that displays we are to be about serving the Lord and serving one another, and that is the Mandate of Heaven and THIS is what controls our spending.** This is why government has been provided to help us accomplish the glory of Christ ([Rom 13:1-7](#)) in how we live, not in how we can spend a dollar.

[INTRODUCTION]

In the text today, Money is not the issue BUT the Devil makes it the issue by men’s greed, and he uses it now to get the town of Ephesus to turn against the church. He uses the allusion of power, which is what money provides, to get them to go after the church for we know he has suffered a HUGE LOSS at the hands of just a few men. A loss that has not only affected Ephesus, as it was no longer the capital of occult but had become the capital for the church, but it has stretched throughout Asia.

A Riot at Ephesus

²¹ Now after these events **Paul resolved** in the Spirit to pass through Macedonia and Achaia and go to Jerusalem, saying, “After I have been there, I must also see **Rome.**” ²² And having sent into Macedonia two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, he himself stayed in Asia for a while.

“**These events**”, those are the Baptism and commissioning of the 12 disciples, the taking over of Tyrannus’ school, and the legend of the story of the sons of Sceva. At this point in our story of Ephesus, we are at almost 3 years. It has been a very good run! All due to the power of **the WORD of the Lord** (v.10 & v. 20).



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Now it also says Paul resolved in the Spirit, that pertains more to His thoughts not necessarily the HS, he has developed a mind to do something. He is going to go back through Macedonia and Achaia, and then go back to Jerusalem. You see, this is an instance where money was going to do a good thing. Paul was going to collect an offering from the churches they started in the wealthy cities of the Roman Empire for the church in Jerusalem was poor. We can only imagine Jewish Christians, that have been cut off from many ways to make money in the Jewish capital being that they were not wanted there, so an offering was the way that they were able to do ministry, while being the heart of the Christian church. God provided the wealth of the nations to do His will to take the Word of the Lord into the world. **At the end of the day guys, when a government does not help in this endeavor it is at fault, and is in direct rebellion against God.**

[GOSPEL CHALLENGE]

The Gospel you see redeems money from the intents and hearts of wicked men and puts it to work in the Kingdom of God. The Gospel removes the power of dollar out of the realm and control of the enemy and puts it to work for Jesus. The act of choosing to do so, breaks one's bonds from the world, and it demonstrates one's dependency on the Triune God for life, not the tool of money. **Christian, it's just a good opportunity here** at the end of every year when we look at our taxes, ask yourself, have we been putting to work God's money back into the church or have we been using money to increase other Kingdoms. For 2K years the church has taken care of her own, through the work of the church, we need to be doing the same, and we will be held accountable for it.

Lastly, we need to see here in the text this is where Paul makes a tactical decision, he has decided he must go to Rome. He has already witnessed the rise of Corinth in Achaia, the rise of Philippi in Macedonia, and Antioch in Galatia, so he knows that God works through the lead city of each territory to affect the change of surrounding country and culture. By Paul going to Rome, he knows it is his end game, to take Rome, means to take the empire, you see it has all been a game of chess. But as we shall see later, God gives you dreams and visions sometimes, but he never does it in vacuums and will supply friends along the way that can help achieve these things for His glory.



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It is right at this point when it seems that all is going the way of the Kingdom, when Paul is going to have a chance to put that next chess piece in play, this is when Satan rises up and decides to intervene. What I want you to notice church is it doesn't mean the devil has won when literally all Hell breaks loose! It doesn't mean that you were necessarily wrong in thinking God may be on the move when it seems like the gates of Hell are prevailing. And it definitely doesn't mean He didn't want you involved the process even when your world may be falling apart. But here's what it all means in light of our story today and in light of the past 2K years of church history.

MAIN POINT:

When the world goes on attack, and the church is persecuted, God is about to do AMAZING THINGS!

Today we are going to look at three different aspects from our Riot story so we can learn the signs of how God is getting ready to some really miraculous work. First, we will look at the **causes** of the riot, and then the **characteristics** of the riot, and lastly the **calming** of the riot.

1. The Causes for the Riot.

²³About that time there arose no little disturbance concerning the Way. ²⁴For a man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought no little business to the craftsmen. ²⁵These he gathered together, with the workmen in similar trades, and said,...

Ok let's define and highlight a few things here and is in any story/narrative let's introduce the main characters.

First Luke uses the term **The Way**, he is recognizing that the powers that be in Ephesus viewed Christianity as a force. It wasn't a back water cult, it wasn't just another religion among all the religions represented in Ephesus, it was known as **The Way**. People had been leaving in mass, they have been throwing away money we saw last week (literally burning it), they have been leaving behind old ways of living, it is quite literally a NEW WAY of LIFE. Because it is



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The Way, it has singled itself out from every other way, it doesn't look like anything else. AND it has connections to a living God, that has shown real power by casting out demons, healing the sick, and it is known that other deities fear Him. Christianity is recognized as major force to be reckoned with in Ephesus.

Next, we have **Demetrius**, and he **represents another way**. He is a silversmith that makes little Artemis shrines for people to take and put in their homes, so that they have a way to make petition in their lives for fertility and protection. Artemis is a big deal in the ancient world especially in Ephesus! Artemis the daughter of Zeus known to the Romans as Dianna, was born from Zeus' adulterous affair in Ephesus long before it was a major town and port for trade. The temple of Artemis was rebuilt in 356 BCE and was 4Xs bigger than the Parthenon in Athens, at it's base it was 450 long by 250 wide, i and it's roof was held in place by 127 pillars standing at 60ft high, in-scripted by the kings and nations that donated them over a hundred years of construction, making it one of the original 7 wonders of the world!

Demetrius leads the guild for these little shrine makers. Artemis represents not only fertility, but the temple also operated as the first bank of Asia being that so much money funneled in and through it. So, to me this reminds me of the Power of Disney, it's one of the main money makers in the land, driving the hearts and affections of the people, while people make money on the magic of the experience. And you all know what people are like when you try to mess with Disney right!? People lose their minds when you mess with the Tragic Kingdom :). And much like modern times though when the church grows in purity she needs less and less magic of a worldly Kingdom as God's Kingdom is flowing like water through her as the blockades of idolatry are removed. Ok so those are the players of the cause of this riot, **The Way**, Demetrius, and the Alternate Way the Temple of Artemis representing the **Way of Money**. Now what caused all the friction?

^{25b}“Men, you know that from this business we have our wealth. ²⁶And you see and hear that not only in Ephesus but **in almost all of Asia** this Paul has persuaded and turned away a great many people, saying that gods made with hands are not gods. ²⁷And there is danger not only that this trade of ours may



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come into disrepute but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis may be counted as nothing, and that she may even be deposed from her magnificence, she whom all Asia and the world worship.”

Well, I kind of already forewarned you in the beginning today, it seems money, or the **Pocket Book**, of these guild men is what is being affected. Demetrius he’s no dummy, he paints a big picture, he’s talking about the effects of the lack of business that extends into all of Asia. He’s talking about The Way, corrupting their ability to sell these shrines anywhere! Then being a smart businessman, he makes the attack personal.

He claims that they Way, is not only taking away customers but is influencing the religion of all of Asia by claiming there are no other God’s but the one True God. He’s right in that, for we know what Paul preaches, changing things by the power of Jesus’ Word:

Acts 17:24 ESV

The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man.

So, Demetrius then stirs up **Personal Piety** (*I’m offended*), he is making them think the attack is personal, that Christians and their goal is to steal worship from Artemis, that they think other religions are worthless, and therefore it means that they think people that worship Artemis are less than them. **That is not the goal of Christianity, but it is most definitely the byproduct.** The first goal of Christianity is to Love the Lord with everything you have and in turn when the HS moves, the result of that display is that it does rob the devil of his worship and authority. Yes, it will offend the devils' minions but not because he is an equal, only God deserves worship. Secondly, true Christianity teaches all men are depraved and saved by Grace ([Eph 2:8](#)) Christians understand they have no right to judge another’s worth based on works, for all works are filthy rags before the Lord ([Is 64:6](#)). The Christian though does not do this as a personal assault on the people of Ephesus, but that is not how Demetrius paints it.



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What happens when you add attacks to the **pocketbook** + attacks to one’s **personal piety** what one gets is a **poisoned mind!** The mind has put together the danger of losing wealth along with the danger of feeling like a fool, and Satan says that’s a personal attack by the church. And what happens since the call of the church is to **PREACH the WORD**, then as soon as you open your mouth you are looked at as guilty for you are speaking against the world. Again, you cannot serve God and money, you have to pick one or the other, and by loving God you will speak the Truth but church it also means you will make some enemies.

Illustration – You see one of the marks of a successful church is that by its’ natural patterns in life, by focusing on the call of the church, it will make culture eventually get mad at her because she will not bow down like everyone else, and the devil likes to to point that out. That was one of the defining moments during COVID, when there were churches that would not shut their doors or decided before the public to reopen, they were spoken ill of, and in some places in our country were gone after by the law. In response to this threat the Georgia House of Representatives just passed [House Bill 925, called the PRAISE Act](#), which protects the church from being shut down in times of emergency as with a public health crisis. All of that to say, again an example of money being spent correctly, not for the sake of making money, but for the sake of allowing the church to lead in her respected areas. The government actually did its’ job, according to Romans 13, promoting the welfare of God’s Kingdom.

The cause of the Riot, the love of money, the love of one’s own personal piety, going against the love of God above all, mixing them together you are going to cause some angst. Just remember though family, **when the world goes on attack, and the church is persecuted, God is about to do AMAZING THINGS!** Now let’s look at how this begins to spill out in their culture so we may understand what to expect in ours.

2. The Characteristics of the Riot.

²⁸When they heard this they were **enraged** and were crying out, “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!” ²⁹So the city was filled with the **confusion**, and they



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rushed together into the theater, **dragging** with them Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians who were Paul’s companions in travel. ³⁰ But when Paul wished to go in among the crowd, the **disciples** would not let him. ³¹ And even some of the **Asiarchs**, who were friends of his, sent to him and were urging him not to venture into the theater. ³² Now some cried out one thing, some another, for the assembly was in **confusion**, and most of them **did not know why they had come together**.

V. 28 is pre-riot, but we see the results of Demetrius’ talk, enragement! These Christians are going to take your livelihood, these Christians think they are better than you, it’s a hostile takeover! In our country we hear this, “It’s the end of Democracy, and we should be afraid!” Then this enraged little mob spills out into the community, (much like our nation’s progressives) and they fill everyone with **Confusion**, that’s the first Characteristic of this Riot. People are confused. We mentioned this back when we saw the first protests against Israel, a mob got students and social justice warriors to march, who were confused, and were used to chant death to Israel by the time they were done not knowing what they were saying! The BLM leaders used the confusion of people to get them to march so they could take money from left wing political bankers, and as of right now they sit deposed and bankrupt. All for the lure of money, which it turns out, is all that the BLM organization was about.

Confusion then leads to **Consternation** and that is our 2nd characteristic. Consternation is a word that means scared into action, or alarmed in times of confusion, to **move without thought of repercussions**. It’s like when Heather rides an elevator and it stops without reason. Let me tell you, she would move from confusion to consternation in about 2 minutes, and she would be using me as a step ladder trying to climb out the roof! The Devil loves to use Confusion and alarm to get people to do things that they wouldn’t otherwise do.

This mob in Ephesus, they kidnapped and dragged a couple of the church leaders (Gaius and Aristarchus) because they couldn’t get Paul. They attack indiscriminately and by force, against the law in Ephesus, for there was a time



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for court sessions 3Xs a month for civil cases. They become a lynching mob like in the old west, with no judge, no jury, and no due process.

Of course, Paul is not going to stand for it. He’s diving into action, but the text says he’s stopped by the disciples, and the Asiarchs. Asiarchs were community leaders, businesspeople, even they had the sense not to let Paul into that. BTW, as I said earlier, God gives us good people in our lives to guide us sometimes when all we want to do is react, God will do amazing things, but that doesn’t necessarily mean put yourself in danger on purpose. God will deliver you from danger if He so wills, but to put yourself into danger on purpose is a decision to be done in wisdom with other people of God around you, it is not a decision to do out of consternation. Was this the devil’s plan, to get Paul out in the open so he could get him? To jump in would be playing into the hand of the enemy.

Because of this Confusion and Consternation no one stood a chance.

³³Some 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. ³⁴But when they recognized that he was a Jew, for about two hours they all cried out with one voice, “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!”

Remember from the trial at Corinth, Jews and Christians were both considered to be branches of the same religion. They shouted down Alexander, and for two hours Paul had to bite his nails as he was in fear for his people’s lives. Do you trust God when things are going bad, do you try to fix things too soon in the lives of people you love instead of letting God work His plans, do you heed the counsel of other wise Christians not tied up in the emotions of the moment to help you think clearly? If not, you should because Satan is all about using the emotions of the mob to get what he wants. This is when we can’t forget what we are learning today, **when the world goes on attack, and the church is persecuted, God is about to do AMAZING THINGS!**

At the right moment when the crowd was getting really confused, tired, angry, and probably hungry He uses a pagan to talk sense into the mob.



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3. The Calming of the Riot.

³⁵ And when the town clerk had quieted the crowd, he said, “Men of Ephesus, who is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is temple keeper of the great Artemis, and of the sacred stone that fell from the sky? ³⁶ Seeing then that these things cannot be denied, you ought to be quiet and do nothing rash. ³⁷ For you have brought these men here who are neither sacrilegious nor blasphemers of our goddess.

The Town Clerk, “The Mayor”, so the fact that he has let it go on this long has been an act of political correctness. He has given the consternation an outlet, pouting, a time out, in the theater which could hold all of them over 30K people. It kept them off the street from looting, from doing rash things. You see sometimes guys you and I don’t always like how politicians do things, but they are aware of things when we are not. That is why we are told to be in submission to them as long as it does not break the laws of God. That plus the fact that they dismissed when he said ‘go’ means he played it rightly. It’s like trying to reason with a raging toddler/kindergartner, you can’t, you can either put down the anger with force, or you can wait it out. Being a smart politician, he waits out the temper tantrum and then appeals to their own pride.

First, he calms them by speaking to their rational side, *if you are so pious and Artemis is so powerful then you have nothing to fear!* The proof of their god being with them wasn’t the building or the money, it was a meteorite that had fallen from the sky, their version of divine incarnation. That meteorite was still there, so you are fine. The Mayor removes their lust for money with their naivety over the spiritual world that the devil had incorporated himself. God has the pagan talk down the crowd using the very thing that blinded them, a god that wasn’t really anything. What a Debbi downer for the devil, he kept his followers but lost Paul’s life.

³⁸ If therefore Demetrius and the craftsmen with him have a complaint against anyone, the courts are open, and there are proconsuls. Let them bring charges against one another. ³⁹ But if you seek anything further, it shall be settled in the regular assembly. ⁴⁰ For we really are in danger of being charged with rioting



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today, since there is no cause that we can give to justify this commotion.”⁴¹ And when he had said these things, he dismissed the assembly.

Secondly, in playing it smart and waiting it out, he addresses a bigger issue at play. The Romans do not care about your complaints on how you think someone is trying to outdo your business, nor about your personal piety being questioned, they want peace. And if you don't live in peace, and use the courts the right way, they will force it on you, by **PaxRoma**, peace by force. That meant military involvement, the taking over the banking by the Romans, and heavy taxes because of their involvement. Because in the end the government, when not operating under God's authority, is about making money, and it will have its' pound of flesh.

[CHALLENGE]

When the world goes on attack, and the church is persecuted, God is about to do AMAZING THINGS! (It just might take a few years)

Ephesus, being the fact that Paul played it cool, and the mayor played it cool, therefore church in Ephesus was allowed to grow. Ten to 12 years later after this riot in 62-64AD Paul had finally made it to Rome, on the support of Ephesus, where he also met his end in Rome by beheading. The Apostle John though came to Ephesus after Paul's incarceration, and became their lead elder, and for at least 30 years worked with them to lead the churches in Asia Minor. From there he went to Rome where they tried to kill him but couldn't, they banished him to Patmos where he wrote Revelations, and then it is said he went back home to Ephesus to live out his remaining years. **When the church was persecuted, it was a sign of something magnificent that was going to happen, God was moving His chess pieces.** He got Paul's trip to Rome so that even Caesar even heard him and he started a church there while in prison, He got John to finish the Canon of Scripture, and through the church of Ephesus they became the hub for Christianity for decades.

Family, I know many of you right now have been enduring trials, and you may have even encountered hostility, but thanks be to Jesus, none of that is wasted, and we know God will work it together for the good of His people.



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Maybe you’re like Gaius and Aristarchus, and you feel as if you have been dragged by an angry mob to face accusations or face punitive measures (**why me?**). You have family that blames you for its’ dysfunctions, you have work people that blame you for their incompetencies, you have so called friends that blame you for their problems. Whatever it is, know that you are not alone, Jesus was blamed by everybody for everything, and His mob killed Him for it. Sometimes being the scapegoat is a way for you to learn how Jesus felt so you can associate with Him better. Sometimes being the scapegoat develops in you the ability to love people who are blind with love of money. It is only when we go through a little suffering such as Christ are we able to pray like Him, “Father forgive them for they know not what they do.”

Maybe you’re like Paul, and right now you are looking at someone in this world you need to save! You want to jump in and rescue them but really you are perhaps sensing it’s not the right thing to do. Maybe your calling is to watch it unfold and pray for mercy. Many of us have family, and loved ones, that cannot be served by our intervention, but they are better served by the intervention of others, which are led to intervene by the same spirit we pray to. How do you know whether you should act or not, have you gotten counsel yet from wise people you know? Have you come to the elders of the church, have you talked with those in your Christian community to seek clarity? God gave us a body so we could move in this world in unison not independently of one another.

Maybe today, you are a part of the mob, you have been confused and it has led to your consternation. You move through life always under the impulse of fear, anxiety, or dread without ever thinking before leaping. Your life is a path strewn with the results of irrational behaviors and decisions because you have not bent a knee yet to the Lord Jesus, and you have not put your trust in the one that controls all mobs and all wealth. You don’t have to live in panic mode anymore loved one, come to Christ, and surrender that confusion, ask Him to make Himself clear, and put yourself under His domain, for He is a good and loving master.



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Wherever you are this morning let’s practice that which separates us from all other religions in the world, let’s pray to a living God, and pray that we come to know as we endure our persecutions the amazing things that God has in store for us.

When the world goes on attack, and the church is persecuted, God is about to do AMAZING THINGS! And that is as true for us today as it was for Ephesus 2000 years ago.

[PRAYER]

[CALL TO OBEY]

Elder -

Church, remember the Words of our Savior in the Gospel of Luke, “Blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!” Today, do not just be hearers of the word, but be those who keep the word!

[COMMUNION]

Pastor Jody explains The Bread and the Wine
Followed by Family prayer over the Bread and the Wine – led by heads of households.

[CONFESSION OF FAITH]

* The Congregation will stand

Elder – “Christians, what do you believe?”

Congregation - recites (maybe?) Q. 111. What do we pray for in the fourth petition? A. In the fourth petition, which is, “Give us this day our daily bread,” we pray that of God’s free gift, we may receive a competent portion of the good things of this life and enjoy His blessing with them. (Matt. 6:11; Prov. 30:8,9; 1 Tim. 6:6-8; 4:4,5)



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[OFFERING+LAST SONG]

[BENEDICTION]

Go in the name of the Father, that uses the consternation of this world, and the persecution of His people, to do amazing things.

Go in the name of the Son, that was victorious over His accusers, and removed the ability of the devil to accuse us of unrighteousness.

Go in the name and power of the Holy Spirit, that opens our eyes to the schemes of man, empowering our rebellion against the enemy, now go and tell others of God’s amazing power.