

How To Start A Riot

Acts 20:17–21

INTRO – CELEBRATE & CONTEXT

- 15-Year Anniversary weekend → God gathered 1200–1500 people as one church.
- Momentum brings **responsibility**—favor requires faithfulness.

Acts 19 Recap

- Paul proclaims Jesus in Ephesus → lives changed, idols lose power.
- People burn demonic books; culture begins to shift.
- *“The word of the Lord increased and prevailed mightily.”*
- When idols are threatened, they fight back → a riot erupts.

Acts 20 Setting

- Paul leaves Ephesus; stops in Miletus (30 miles away).
- Calls the church leaders for final words—he knows he won’t see them again.
- These are **legacy instructions for leaders**.

Leadership = influence.

If someone watches your faith, you are leading.

TEXT – Acts 20:17–21

Paul reminds them how he lived, served, and preached:

- With humility
- With tears
- Through trials
- Publicly and house to house
- Calling all people to repentance and faith in Jesus

1. GODLY PEOPLE TAKE INITIATIVE

Acts 20:17

- Paul doesn't wait—he **initiates**.
- Following Jesus means stepping forward:
 - Reaching out
 - Reconciling
 - Inviting
 - Speaking first

Gospel Pattern

- God initiated with us:
 - *While we were sinners, Christ died.*
 - We love because He first loved.

Application:

Initiate reconciliation, pursue the drifting, apologize first, take the step.

2. YOUR LIFE PREACHES LOUDER THAN YOUR WORDS

Acts 20:18

- Paul appeals to how he **lived**, not just what he taught.
- The greatest sermon you'll ever preach is your **character**.

People Are Watching:

- How you handle stress
- Conflict
- Correction
- Integrity at work and home

Application:

Get close to people whose lives you want to model—don't follow voices, follow fruit.

3. SLAVERY TO JESUS IS TRUE FREEDOM

Acts 20:19

- Paul calls himself a **servant/slave** of Christ.
- The Kingdom is not a democracy—Jesus is King.

This Means:

- Jesus rules:
 - Time
 - Money
 - Relationships

- Future
- Sexuality & career

We don't ask Jesus to bless our plans;
we lay our plans at His feet.

Romans 6:22 – freed to serve the right Master.

1 Cor 6:19–20 – bought with a price.

4. GODLY PEOPLE SHED TEARS

Acts 20:19, 31

- Paul served with tears—emotionally invested.
- Scripture shows tender leaders:
 - Jesus wept
 - David, Jeremiah, Moses, Paul

Truth:

- Tears aren't weakness—they are evidence of love.
- If you can't feel, get curious—not ashamed.

Application:

Ask God for a soft heart toward people and their pain.

5. CHRISTIANITY IS CONVERSION, NOT SELF-HELP

Acts 20:21

- Same gospel for all—Jews and Greeks alike.

- Message:
 - Repentance toward God
 - Faith in Jesus

Christianity Is Not:

- Behavior improvement
- Moral therapy
- Better version of you

It Is:

- Becoming **new creation**
- One cure for one disease

Romans 1:16 – 2 Cor 5:17 – John 3:3

CLOSING CHALLENGE

- The gospel shapes cities when it first shapes leaders.
- Depth must match growth.
- Say with Paul:
“**Here I am, Lord—send me.**”