

**THE BIG IDEA: The Gospel is a glorious wrecking ball.**

The Take-Off

In 2012, Disney introduced us to a character with freakishly large hands named “Wreck-It Ralph” Ralph was a character in an arcade game called Fix-It Felix, Jr and his job was to, well, wreck things. In the movie, he kind of gets treated badly by the other characters and starts wanting to be the hero. As you’ll see in this short clip, it’s hard to be misunderstood, and Wreck-It Ralph feels that burden during the 30th Anniversary party for the video game.

[Show clip]

Now, my goal isn’t to make you want to watch the rest of the movie (although if you haven’t seen it, you need to because it’s really good), but rather to introduce you to something else that wrecks things and gets misunderstood, because I think Wreck-it Ralph is a pretty good metaphor for...

The Gospel.

Let’s look together at the last half of Acts 19 and see how I came to that conclusion.

You’ll remember from the last 2 weeks that we’ve been spending time in the chapter voted “most likely to freak people out” and that to this point we’ve seen people speaking in tongues, fabric healing people, a demon turn 7 men into streakers and a town burn occult paraphernalia worth a bit over 7 billion dollars.

So we pick it up in verse 21 and see that Paul has decided to exit stage left.

He’s taking off for Jerusalem, and as the watchers of this movie, we’re starting to feel like this might be a good time for a popcorn run and a bathroom break.

Right. Check out verse 23.

“About that time there arose a great disturbance about the Way.”

If anybody had earned a day off, it was surely Paul, and yet he ran right into the very nature of the gospel. It is one beautiful and glorious wrecking ball.

In fact, let me give you 3 things that the Gospel wrecks:

**1. The Gospel wrecks our ideas about the gospel**

- a. While most of us probably don’t sit around thinking about it, most of us do have some ideas about what the Gospel is - or at least what it does
  - It makes God happy with us
  - It gives us peace
  - It makes things better
- b. But what we read in verse 23 wrecks that idea
- c. The Gospel didn’t bring peace, it instigated a riot
- d. And it didn’t make Paul’s life better, because he had already planned on leaving and now found himself getting insider information on how to avoid the angry mob (vv. 29-31)
- e. So what exactly is the gospel?
- f. Yes, the gospel is about God stepping into our world to free us from sin, but that means he has to confront us in our sin, and that isn’t always peaceful
- g. I need to give you plenty of Scripture for this idea, because it is so counter-intuitive to what we’ve been taught to think
  - The Gospel wrecks our thought life - Isaiah 55:8; 2 Corinthians 10:5; Romans 12:2
  - The Gospel wrecks our relationships - Matthew 10:34 (Jesus didn’t come to help us all sing Kumbaya and eat smores)
  - The Gospel wrecks the status quo - Matthew 11:12
- h. Never think for a moment that the Gospel is about us sitting back and chilling, or that the Gospel makes everything better
- i. Here, in Acts 19:23, it is clear: the Gospel disturbs things, and for many of us, that idea is disturbing
- j. We’ve said it numerous times during this trip through the book of Acts, but so many times it is the discomfort that pushes the church out to where God wants her to go
- k. The Gospel is not a call to safety. It is a call to surrender your life to a King so he can use your life to bring in his kingdom.

- l. Now that we've at least established that the Gospel wrecks things, let's talk about 2 very specific things it wrecks in the passage we're dealing with

## 2. The Gospel wrecks our value systems

- a. In all of Acts there are only 2 times that Paul finds himself the target of a Gentile mob (usually it's the Jews that get made at him)
  - One time is in Acts 16:16-24 and the other time is here
  - Both times it's about the potential loss of money because of the Gospel that Paul is preaching
- b. Let's not kid ourselves, ok? If we truly yield our lives to Jesus, we'll yield our wallets, too
- c. Our buying habits will change
- d. Our jobs could change
- e. It isn't because our view of money changes as much as the fact that the Gospel wrecks our value systems
- f. And just like in Ephesus, there are people making money on sin and the last thing they want is to see people's value systems changing because that eventually leads to their spending habits changing, as well
- g. Here a man named Demetrius "brought in no little business" from the sale of idols (v. 24)
- h. But he was going out of business due to the extensive (and successful) preaching by Paul (v. 26)
- i. Now, just like then, sin is a profitable industry
  - In Nevada, almost 13% of their state revenue comes from sin, with gambling being the obvious leader. What would happen in Nevada if the Gospel changed the hearts of men like what we see here in Acts 19?
  - How would the alcohol industry respond to losing out on the almost 100 billion dollar annual revenue if people suddenly didn't have as many sorrows to drown?
  - And do you think the porn industry would be happy if men and women got a healthy Jesus-centered identity and it cost the industry more annual revenue than the NFL, NBA and Major League baseball combined?
- j. Make no mistake about it, there will be an uproar in these industries as the Gospel ushers in revival
- k. Don't be surprised when the Gospel wrecks your value system, either
- l. When suddenly time spent with your children becomes much more valuable than time spent with a gaming system
- m. When your family vacation is a mission trip to Peru
- n. When the dollar you were going to give becomes a ten
- o. When all that seems to matter in your life is knowing Jesus more
- p. Philippians 3:7-11 is a picture of a value system wrecked by the Gospel

## 3. The Gospel wrecks our religious practices

- a. verse 27 mentions something else that gets wrecked by the Gospel
  - the temple of the false god would lose its fame
  - the false goddess would lose her goddess status
  - people would no longer come to the temple to worship her
  - they would no longer buy the idols to build personal shrines
- b. Can we just sum this up by saying that the Gospel wrecks our religious practices?
- c. Religion is a great thing until you meet Jesus
  - It doesn't ask for your life, just parts of your life
  - It doesn't require your heart, it just requires your actions
  - It doesn't even really require your agreement, just the appearance of your agreement
  - In short, religion is great because it allows us to look and feel changed without actually being changed
- d. The Gospel, thankfully, wrecks that
- e. Religion is about us; the Gospel is about Jesus
- f. Religion points others to our good works; the Gospel points others to Jesus' work on the cross
- g. Religion validates me; the Gospel vilifies me
- h. Religion comforts me; the Gospel challenges me
- i. Matthew 16:21-25 is a picture of religious practices being wrecked by the Gospel
  - Peter and the gang have a good thing going (popular leader, no worries)
  - Jesus starts talking about a cross (the Gospel)
  - Peter rebukes Jesus (because the cross would wreck what they had going on)

- Jesus calls Peter the devil (that would wreck you!) and then calls them (and us) to follow him through total surrender
- History reveals the lives of the disciples were wrecked by the Gospel
- From this point forward, it was less about the disciples (religion) and more about Jesus (the Gospel)

### The Landing

Have I helped you see the truth of our Big Idea? **The Gospel is a glorious wrecking ball.**

And if I have helped you see it clearly, then right about now you feel about the Gospel the same way those characters in Fix-It Felix, Jr. felt about Ralph

He's just a big goon that always gets in the way and wrecks things

But in the end (spoiler alert!!), because Ralph wrecked everything, he ended up restoring things to the way they were intended to be all along

And that is exactly what the Gospel does!

In Jeremiah 1:10 we find that God appointed Jeremiah to tear down so that God could build up

Jeremiah 31:28 shows us that God faithfully watched over the entire process

Finally, Hosea 6:1 says that God is faithful to heal even when he afflicts

Don't forget this...EVER!!!

The Gospel wrecks us to rebuild us!!

But John 10:10 reveals something different about our enemy, doesn't it? He wants to wreck us, too.

The devil wrecks us to remove us.

Sometimes the only difference between being removed and rebuilt is simply who holds the hammer and who holds the pieces.

When we give both to Jesus, he is able to rebuild us the way we were intended to be all along

The Gospel according to Ralph, and it all starts with accepting the fact that **the Gospel is a glorious wrecking ball.**