Opportunities and Adversaries

Joe Slater

Paul wrote the book we call First Corinthians about AD 56 or 57 while he was in Ephesus. Toward the end of that letter, he told the Corinthians he planned to “tarry in Ephesus until Pentecost. For a great and effective door has opened to me, and there are many adversaries” (16:8, 9).

What door (i.e. opportunity) was opened to Paul in Ephesus that would relate to the Jewish feast of Pentecost? Ephesus was the center of worship of the goddess Diana. About the same time of year that Pentecost was observed in Jerusalem, Diana-worshippers from all over the world gathered in Ephesus for a festival. What an opportunity for Paul to evangelize! He could reach people from numerous cities and countries in a short time; when they returned home, they would leave their idolatry behind, carrying their new-found faith in Christ home with them.

Along with opportunity, however, came opposition. Paul encountered “many adversaries” indeed! His success in converting Diana-worshippers resulted in a severe decline in revenue for Demetrius and his fellow silversmiths, who sold shrines of Diana to festival-goers. (Hint: If you want to get someone’s attention, hit him in the pocketbook!) They stirred the entire city into a riot (Hint: If you want to get someone’s attention, hit him in the pocketbook!) They stirred the entire city into a riot (Hint: If you want to get someone’s attention, hit him in the pocketbook!) They stirred the entire city into a riot (Hint: If you want to get someone’s attention, hit him in the pocketbook!) They stirred the entire city into a riot (Hint: If you want to get someone’s attention, hit him in the pocketbook!) They stirred the entire city into a riot (Hint: If you want to get someone’s attention, hit him in the pocketbook!) They stirred the entire city into a riot (Hint: If you want to get someone’s attention, hit him in the pocketbook!) They stirred the entire city into a riot (Hint: If you want to get someone’s attention, hit him in the pocketbook!) They stirred the entire city into a riot (Hint: If you want to get someone’s attention, hit him in the pocketbook!) They stirred the entire city into a riot (Hint: If you want to get someone’s attention, hit him in the pocketbook!) They stirred the entire city into a riot (Hint: If you want to get someone’s attention, hit him in the pocketbook!) They stirred the entire city into a riot (Hint: If you want to get someone’s attention, hit him in the pocketbook!) They stirred the entire city into a riot (Hint: If you want to get someone’s attention, hit him in the pocketbook!) They stirred the entire city into a riot (Hint: If you want to get someone’s attention, hit him in the pocketbook!) They stirred the entire city into a riot (Hint: If you want to get someone’s attention, hit him in the pocketbook!) They stirred the entire city into a riot (Hint: If you want to get someone’s attention, hit him in the pocketbook!) They stirred the entire city into a riot (Hint: If you want to get someone’s attention, hit him in the pocketbook!) They stirred the entire city into a riot (Hint: If you want to get someone’s attention, hit him in the pocketbook!) They stirred the entire city into a riot (Hint: If you want to get someone’s attention, hit him in the pocketbook!) They stirred the entire city into a riot (Hint: If you want to get someone’s attention, hit him in the pocketbook!) They stirred the entire city into a riot (Hint: If you want to get someone’s attention, hit him in the pocketbook!) They stirred the entire city into a riot)

God’s Desire and Grace

God is looking for a reason to save us, not for an excuse to condemn us.

-- Randy Medlin

Heaven goes by favor; if it were awarded by merit, you would stay out and your dog would go in.

-- Mark Twain

To Heal and to Care

“Tend My sheep” (John 21:16).

After W.W.II, my Navy friends, veterans who depended on the national veterans’ facilities, complained about how difficult and uncaring it was for them. There was the distance that had to be driven, the long hours waiting for service, and the abrupt attention given by those appointed to render aid.

Nearly seventy years later, accounts coming from such facilities remind us that our country's defenders, injured and incapacitated, now die after long waits for attention. Even illnesses determined by private doctors at a veteran's own expense are not seen in proper time. It is our country's promise not kept, and ignored.

One veteran's wife told of writing her Senator asking that he intercede for her quadriplegic husband, desperately needing help, no longer able to make the trip on his own nor the wait therein. The Senator responded, "Madam, these days I am so busy and involved in many matters of importance to the nation, I no longer have time to direct my attention to the concerns of individuals."

Fortunately, we learn in the New Testament, that we can have access to God, the Father, through Jesus, the Son, for it was He who associated with friends, and often foes, meeting needs on an individual basis, not through those supposedly responsible for the less fortunate.

Jesus reached out to touch and to heal, and was available for those seeking assistance or to touch Him. His was a manner of comfort, providing re assurance, and guiding the lost. And yes, there were periods when He took time to bring the dead back to life (Mark 5:4). Our God is a God of total access, never too hurried or busy to direct His attention to the living . . . and the dying. His efforts are always one on one, and it is to that responsibility leaders need to adjust themselves.

--Gordon V. Herrmann (deceased); Santa Maria, CA