

Letter to the EPHESIANS

(Reintroduced)

Sermon 1 Intro Acts Ch 19 & various scriptures 06-28-2020

Before we begin again in Ephesians I want us to take a recap of where we have been...

We are in the last part of chapter 3... It has been at least three months since we have engaged Ephesians.. so a little refreshing will help us see the entirety of the letter instead of just the section we will be dealing with..

Kinda help us to settle back in...

To do so let us first turn to the last chapter of the book of Acts being chapter 28 verse 16 where we read...

Wait a minute pastor I thought we were in Ephesians..

We are, but in the book of acts we see how Paul got to prison so he would have time to write it... Lot of good things can happen in prison if you allow God the Holy Spirit to empower you..

Of course Paul was there for the only good reason one should go... He was under house arrest and this was because of his faith in God...

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And when we (the Apostle Paul & Luke & company) came into Rome, Paul was allowed to stay by himself, with the soldier who guarded him. Acts 28:16 ESV

So when Paul got to Rome the Centurion (who himself was a Roman officer) delivered the prisoners to the Captain of the guard, but Paul was permitted to dwell by himself with the soldier who guarded him

Let continue reading... verse 17 on...

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Acts 28:17-31 ESV

After three days he called together the local leaders of the Jews, and when they had gathered, he (Paul) said to them,

“Brothers, though I had done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers, yet I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans.

(18) When they had examined me, they wished to let me go, because there was no reason for the death penalty in my case.

(19) But because the Jews (*in Jerusalem*) objected, I was compelled to appeal to Caesar—though I had no charge to bring against my people.

(20) For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.

(21) And they said to him, “We have received no letters from Judea about you, and none of the brothers coming here has reported or spoken any evil about you.

(22) But we desire to hear from you what your views are, for with regard to this sect we know that everywhere it is spoken against.”

(23) When they had appointed a day for him, they came to him at his lodging in greater numbers.

From morning till evening he expounded to them, testifying to the kingdom of God, and trying to convince them about Jesus both from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets.

(24) And some were convinced by what he said, but others disbelieved.

(25) And disagreeing among themselves, they departed after Paul had made one statement:

And the statement causing disagreement we find here of course, but it was a reading from Isaiah 6:9-10

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(26) "THE HOLY SPIRIT WAS RIGHT IN SAYING TO YOUR FATHERS THROUGH ISAIAH THE PROPHET: "GO TO THIS PEOPLE, AND SAY, "YOU WILL INDEED HEAR BUT NEVER UNDERSTAND, AND YOU WILL INDEED SEE BUT NEVER PERCEIVE."

(27) FOR THIS PEOPLE'S HEART HAS GROWN DULL, AND WITH THEIR EARS THEY CAN BARELY HEAR, AND THEIR EYES THEY HAVE CLOSED; LEST THEY SHOULD SEE WITH THEIR EYES AND HEAR WITH THEIR EARS AND UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART AND TURN, AND I WOULD HEAL THEM.' (*Isa. 6:9-10*)

And Paul being under inspiration of God holy Spirit finished saying...

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(28) ***Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen."***

Here in verses 30 -31 we believe is when he wrote Ephesians...

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(30) He *(Paul)* lived there ***two whole years*** at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him, (31) proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness *(confidence)* and without hindrance.

Traditionally we are told that Paul was executed by Nero, being the reigning Emperor of Rome .

The apostles Paul and Peter were executed in the year 65 AD... Peter crucified upside down and Paul beheaded by the sword...

This is important as this helps us date the letter Paul wrote to the Ephesians being around the year 60 -62 AD..

During these two years Paul was under house arrest in Rome awaiting trial was the time he wrote what we call the prison epistles..

Philippians- Galatians- Colossians- and the letter we are in now (being Ephesians), are the prison letters of the Apostle Paul.

This was the imprisonment prior the other imprisonment when he was executed...

This two-year house arrest we believe is the period the letters were penned by Paul **under inspiration** of God the Holy Spirit.

When I refer to the inspired nature of the Word of God, we look to 2nd Timothy 3:16 where the word **"inspired"** comes from... Paul was writing to Timothy saying..

Pp 3

2 Timothy 3:14-17 ESV

(14) ...continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it (15) and how from childhood you have been acquainted with **the sacred writings**, (Old Testament) which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

And here it comes...

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(16) ***All Scripture is breathed out by God*** and profitable for...

- ✓ Teaching,
- ✓ Reproof,
- ✓ Correction,
- ✓ Training in Righteousness,

Why? So...

Pp 5

(17) that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

The Word of God empowered by the Spirit of God becomes a living force in our lives as it is God breathed..

I love how Peter puts it under the inspiration of God the Holy Spirit

Pp 6

2 Peter 1:19-21 ESV

And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts,

(20) knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation.

(21) For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

And if anyone needed or needs to be guided by the Holy Spirit for teaching, correction, and growth in righteousness it was the Ephesians and now us!

So back to Ephesians....

Paul starts this letter out with giving his authority to represent Jesus and speak for Him or on his behalf in all things he does..

Look how he identifies himself...

Pp 6

Ephesians 1:1 ESV

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will (*desire*) of God,
To the saints who are in Ephesus, and are faithful in
Christ Jesus...

***Unlike the many disciples , an Apostle is one whom
Jesus himself selected thus the apostles were given
the authority to speak for Him and said of them..***

Pp 7

Matthew 10:40 ESV

“Anyone who receives you receives me, and anyone who
receives me receives the Father who sent me.

Why am I bringing this up?

***Because Paul was not chosen while Jesus was
going about His earthly ministry...***

***Paul named Saul at that time was ravaging the
churches , even witnessing and approving the
stoning of Stephen and trying to eliminate the
“Way.”***

Paul was chosen by Jesus while on the way to Damascus with letters in his pocket from authorities stating he had permission to plummet another church.

So Jesus met Paul on that road and Saul of Tarsus became Paul the apostle as Jesus personally appointed Paul as the Apostle to the Gentiles

In Galatians chapter 1 we can gather more information verifying this....

He begins in verses 11 and 12 of Chapter 1 by saying that the Gospel he preached was not devised by human wisdom, nor had he received it from the other apostles, rather, he was taught it directly by Jesus Christ Himself.

He continues by reminding them that he had been trained in and was passionately devoted to the erroneous traditions of Judaism.

When God called Paul on the Damascus road, he was commissioned to preach the Gospel of Christ.

Paul said that when Christ commissioned or called him, he did not go to Jerusalem to receive instruction from the apostles.

Rather, he retired into Arabia for a time and not until three years later did he go to Jerusalem.

Even then, the only apostle he met was Peter, and the only other leader he met was James who was the presiding elder of the Jerusalem church.

It has often been remarked that Paul clearly implied that he spent three years being taught by Jesus Himself... IN Galatians 1:12, Paul says

Pp 7

I (Paul) received my message from no human source, and no one taught me. Instead, I received it by direct revelation from Jesus Christ (Galatians 1:12).

So, like the other apostles, Paul studied with Christ for three years before beginning his ministry. See the parallel of the other apostles? 3 years?

Paul was commissioned to be the apostle to the gentiles.. The other apostles were commissioned to the apostles to Israel or the Jews...

This is important as many tried to discredit Paul's Jesus appointment as a true apostle as they knew his past..

I think we could all fit into that understanding... It would shock many (and probably has) that I am now a minister of the gospel.

They would remember how I was, not knowing the keeper of my heart is now God...

I have been born again.... and this is important, not only born again, but choosing to walk in the Spirit

and not the flesh..

What a battle right!

As stated, Paul had a specific task or calling to preform and it was to minister specifically to the gentiles and to reveal the mystery God handed to him being the new dwelling place of God..

God was now to dwell in the believer who accepted His son as Lord and Savior... What a beautiful plan we are now involved in as believers..

We get to see this ministry as most of the book of acts record the Apostle Paul's apostolic ministry to the non-Jewish world...

Paul was a missionary Apostle. He carried the gospel outside of Jerusalem and Samaria to other parts of the world particularly to Asia minor.

During this missionary activity he went to Ephesus and there he appointed elders and began a church.

Ephesus was one of the five most important cities in that part of the world.

It was a major Center for Commerce, but it also boasted one of the Seven wonders of the ancient world which was a temple to the goddess Diana.

There was a huge tourist trade established in Ephesus that focused on the cult of Diana.

The book of acts tells us of the encounter that Paul has with Demetrius, the silversmith, who was making images of Diana.

A tremendous upheaval occurred while Paul was ministering in Ephesus preaching Christ..

A substantial number of people having placed their

faith in Christ to Christ took their Pagan Literature and images worth thousands of dollars and burned it in a gigantic bonfire as an act of renouncing the cult of Diana.

This did not go unnoticed as the growing Christian community in Ephesus created economic problems for those that were cashing in on the cult of Diana..

We have an interesting account of what takes place in Ephesus in the 19th chapter of the book of Acts.

I would like to go back there to read that little episode so that we get some background to Paul's ministry to this city... We read in verse 23 of chapter 19 of acts this account. In fact, lets start with verse 1...

pp 8

Acts 19:1 ESV

And it happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the inland country and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples.

Paul asked them ...

Pp 9

Acts 19:2-10

"Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" he asked them. "No," they replied, "we haven't even heard that there is a Holy Spirit."

(3) "Then what baptism did you experience?" he asked. And they replied, "The baptism of John." (4) Paul said, "John's baptism called for repentance from sin. But John himself told the people to believe in the one who would come later, meaning Jesus." (5) As soon as they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. (6) Then when Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in other tongues and prophesied.

Look familiar? It should, we saw this in Jerusalem where the Jewish converts received the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues and prophesied to the Jews..

Now Paul being the apostle the Gentiles gets to perform the same on behalf of this commission showing the gentiles are also included in this gift

of the Holy Spirit..

This is not a second baptism but an indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The same indwelling you and I have..

We will have to do a dispensing or moving of God the Holy Spirit teaching in the future.. It is fascinating

Paul tells us in verse 7 there were about twelve men in all.

After this, Paul does what Paul does and hits the synagogue...

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(8) Then Paul went to the synagogue and preached boldly for the next three months, arguing persuasively about the Kingdom of God.

And trouble shows up...

Pp 12

(9) But some became stubborn, rejecting his message and publicly speaking against the Way. So Paul left the synagogue and took the believers with him. Then he held daily discussions at the lecture hall of

Tyrannus. (10) This went on for the next two years, so that people throughout the province of Asia—both Jews and Greeks—heard the word of the Lord.

I nearly didn't include this passage as I was focusing in on Paul's ministry and the on sewing pressure from the cult of Diana, but it shows what this fight is really about so here we go..

Pp 13

Acts 19:11-16

God gave Paul the power to perform unusual miracles.

Don't miss this... God gave Paul power to preform unusual miracles... What were they? Look with me at verse 12...

Pp 14

(12) When handkerchiefs or aprons that had merely touched his skin were placed on sick people, they were healed of their diseases, and evil spirits were expelled.

Look familiar again?

The use of pieces of material

which had been in contact with Paul for the healing

of the sick reminds us of the healing of those who touched the fringe of Jesus' cloak (Mark 5:27-34; Mark 6:56).

One may also notice a parallel here to the healing effect of Peter's shadow in Acts 5:15.

The pieces of material Paul was wearing were presumably those which Paul used in his tent making or leather working...

The sweat-rags for tying around his head and the aprons for tying around his waist.

Let me remind us that no intrinsic healing value is ascribed to these things; the healing lay in the powerful name of Jesus.

Do you see what is going on here? The inclusion of the gentiles provided all of what the Jewish converts had experienced...

They, the gentiles of Ephesus, were belonging to God in the same manner as the Jews who accepted

Christ in Jerusalem...

A new day and a new way.. The church was birthed, and God now lives in the believer.. A new temple for God to reside in and do His work from..

God had to clean us up with the righteousness of his Son to make a holy room for Him to dwell..

After this we see the passage I was going to skip over....

There was a group of Jews traveling from town to town casting out evil spirits. They tried to use the name of the Lord Jesus in their invocation, saying, "I command you in the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches, to come out!"

Scripture states that the Seven sons of Sceva and a leading priest were doing this.

Lets look in as to what happened...

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(15) But one time when they tried it, the evil spirit replied, "***I know Jesus, and I know Paul***, but who are you?"

(16) Then the man with the evil spirit leaped on them, overpowered them, and attacked them with such violence that they fled from the house, naked and battered.

Apparently news travels fast in Ephesus especially when the favored Cult of Diana is overturned by God as we see inverse 17

Pp 16

The story of what happened spread quickly all through Ephesus, to Jews and Greeks alike. A solemn fear descended on the city, and the name of the Lord Jesus was greatly honored.

As a result, of God giving Paul the power to perform unusual miracles at Ephesus...

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Acts 19:18-20

Many who became believers confessed their sinful practices.

(19) A number of them who had been practicing sorcery brought their incantation books and burned them at a public bonfire. The value of the books was several million dollars.

So we see in verse 20 the results of God working in Paul..

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So the message about the Lord spread widely and had a powerful effect (v 20).

There is a couple of lesson here for us...

First

As followers of Christ we must do as the Ephesians did upon receiving Christ...

WE too should be removing books, tapes, records, statues, charms, games, or whatever else might have connection with demonic spirits.

We too should also destroy them, so they are of no use to others.

I quote Charles Spurgeon

"We will have enough temptation in our own mind without going after these things.

Is there any habit, any practice, that you have got that defiles your soul?

If Christ loves you, and you come and trust in him, you will make short work of it.

Have done with it, and have done with it forever."
(Spurgeon)

Secondly,

Whatever you do, do it in the name and power of our Lord.. Doing so will have a mighty effect on the lives of others including yourself...

Next Sunday we will pick in verse 19 of Acts 19 where a riot occurs in Ephesus and... you guessed it, God places Paul right in the middle of it! Surprise Surprise..

Love ya..

Pastor mike

