

THE DISCIPLE MAKING MINISTRY IN EPHESUS

Acts 19:1-40

Key Verses 19:9, 10

"But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord."

Last week we studied Genesis chapters 8 through 11. God was greatly pleased by Noah's burnt offering and made a covenant with Noah, promising never to send another flood upon the earth. Although man's thoughts and actions are evil from his youth, God keeps His covenant and finally sent Jesus into the world. Let us embrace the long-suffering, unchanging love of God and enter into His covenant. With Noah's patience, obedience and faith, let us serve God's salvation work in this generation.

In preparation for the 41st Memorial Worship Service, today we want to learn about the disciple-making ministry of Apostle Paul in Ephesus. After Paul pioneered Asia Minor and Greece during the first two missionary journeys and planted numerous churches, he devoted himself to the disciple-making work in Ephesus during the 3rd missionary journey. The disciple-making ministry through in-depth Bible study initiated a great work of repentance and changed lives in Ephesus, and eventually the word of the Lord was spread throughout the whole province of Asia. The disciple-making ministry is the answer to influentially serve the campus mission in Europe and experience God's revival work. Let us devote ourselves to the work of making disciples with God's vision that Germany and Europe may be spiritually revived and we may also see the M-mission, and fulfill Jesus' world mission command.

1. Paul spoke daily in the school of Tyrannus (1-10).

Let's look at verse 1: "While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples." Apostle Paul had already been to Ephesus briefly at the end of his 2nd missionary journey, leaving Priscilla and Aquila as pioneers at that time. They were a God-centered house church. They were excellent Bible teachers who helped a Jewish scholar named Apollos so that he came to faith in Jesus Christ. He was changed into a gospel worker and sent out to Corinth. When Paul came back to Ephesus on his 3rd missionary journey, he first found some disciples there, about 12 young men. They had been baptized into John's baptism, but they had not yet heard of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, Paul did Bible study with them. Let's look at verse 4: "Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." Paul began with John the Baptist and taught them faith in Jesus. These young men were eager to learn. When they heard this, they accepted God's word and were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Thereupon they were filled with the Holy Spirit, spoke in tongues and prophesied. They were full of great joy, just like the disciples on the day of Pentecost. This incident shows what a powerful effect Bible study has.

Let's look at verse 8: "Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God." Paul first went into the synagogue of the Jews. For about three months he preached there freely and openly about the kingdom of God. Paul did his best to bring the kingdom of God to the Ephesians, that through repentance and faith in Jesus they might enter and receive true blessedness. However, even though Paul preached with all his heart, the result was not as he had hoped. Verse 9a says, "But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way." Some of the hearers remained hardened and would not believe. They deliberately shut their eyes, ears and hearts, just like the people in Isaiah chapter 6 who did not want to be saved. As we know, where God's word is clearly preached, there is always polarization. There are some who gratefully accept God's word, repent and start a new life. But there are also those who stubbornly harden their hearts, even acting as enemies of the gospel. We should not be surprised that it is no different nowadays.

However, these people not only excluded themselves from the kingdom of God, but they were also a hindrance to the faith of others. They appeared publicly before the crowd and spoke evil of the doctrine. In order to justify themselves, they became very loud and publicly slandered the way of the Christians. In this way they were a bad influence. Jesus said that the one who brings down a little one will receive a very harsh judgment.

How did Paul react to the rejection? Paul did not deal with the hardened for long, but drew a clear consequence. Let's read verse 9 together, "But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus." Paul made a decision to separate himself from those who did not believe and spoke evil, and also to separate the disciples. It was a necessary measure to protect the disciples from bad influence. Instead of dealing endlessly with the

detractors, he took a positive step, rented a room in the school of Tyrannus and began to serve the disciple-making ministry there, focusing on the disciples who were willing to learn from him.

What did the disciple-making ministry look like?

1. The school of Tyrannus

Paul held daily meetings with the disciples in the school of Tyrannus, talking to them about the Word of God. According to the Church Fathers, he spoke there for about five hours during the hot noon hours. While he worked as a tentmaker in the morning and evening, he did not take a health nap during noon time, but served the disciple-making ministry by studying the Bible in the Tyrannus School. It is very encouraging to see our Next Generation comes together every morning at an unusual time and grow as disciples of Jesus through the Word of God.

2. Intensive Bible Study

The content of making disciples was mainly intensive Bible study. By studying God's word deeply and personally, the disciples grew in faith and were raised up to be righteous and blameless workers of the gospel. We must not think of the Tyrannus School as frontal teaching. Paul had a more dialectical approach, asking many questions. Not only did he teach the Word of God, but all the disciples wrote and shared their personal testimony about the Word of God. Perhaps they also prepared their own messages and lectures, e.g. on history and philosophy, so that they could conquer the Greek world.

3. Making disciples through common life

Luke uses the word "daily." In other words, Paul had life fellowship with the disciples by deeply studying God's Word on a daily basis. As we know, life fellowship was also important to Luther and his daily table talks have become legendary. Francke also had fellowship with his disciples every lunch time. God works through the community of life, or as one servant of God put it, "God's work is done in the kitchen." In Acts 20:31, Paul himself testifies, „So be on your guard!

Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears." Paul led life fellowship with the disciples and exhorted them day and night.

4. By making disciples Asia Minor was pioneered.

Many Christians, like businessmen, think only of the number of worshipers or whether someone has been converted. But the spiritual mobilization and change of one person into a true disciple of Jesus is often ignored. Paul, however, had changed his focus. He no longer held large meetings in Ephesus. Nor did he preach in the marketplace. He ministered to a handful of disciples, intensively studying the Word of God with them and also personally exhorting them day and night. The result of his ministry was overwhelming. Verse 10 says, "This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord." Although Paul stayed in only one place, the word of the Lord ran throughout the province through the disciples he raised, reaching all groups of people. For example, as we have studied, the city of Colosse was pioneered by Epaphras, a disciple of Paul, just at this time.

The UBF ministry is a ministry of making disciples. Dr. Samuel Lee did not try to build a beautiful Christian community. His life's work was to raise up students as disciples of Jesus through deep Bible study, so that about 3000 lay missionaries could be sent out to 100 countries.

God's work in Bonn UBF is a work of making disciples. M. Peter's focus from the beginning has not been to attract many people or to gather a big assembly, like many megachurches in the USA or Korea. Rather, he has been concerned with raising up some young people to be Jesus' disciples through intensive Bible study and life fellowship, and raising them up as spiritual leaders who are capable of teaching others as well. In order to mobilize the next generation as well and raise them to be disciples of Jesus, he has developed some programs in recent years, such as the Global Leadership

Empowerment Forum (GLEF), where we studied God's Word and various topics intensively every summer and through which our next generation has grown as Bible teachers and preachers. He also developed the master classes and leadership seminar for this purpose. In fact, through Factual Studies, our next generation learned to study entire books from the Bible, also to prepare and deliver excellent lectures. Thus, as blessed people, they learned not to walk in the way of the wicked, but to have their delight in the law of the Lord and grow into great trees of faith that will bear many good fruits of faith in their time.

God has helped us to set our hearts on the deep study of the Bible instead of dealing with those who spoke evil. So we studied the whole Bible once in the last 3 years. God helped us to overcome the time of pandemic through the intensive Bible study and equip ourselves with God's word so that God can use us for His work of revival.

Our baptized children were trained through intensive Bible study. Challenged by 1 Peter 4:13, they made a decision of faith, not only for baptism, but for discipleship and participation in the suffering of Jesus.

Influenced by the spirit of the age, I thought that believing in Jesus was enough. But God showed me through Genesis 12:1 that He desires for me to leave my home land and go to the land that God wanted to show me. In this case it was life fellowship with God's people, through which He wanted to raise me spiritually as his disciple. In this way, God helped me to live not just as an ordinary believer. Through the intensive Bible study starting with the Daily Bread, I experience the transforming power of the Word of God, which changed a cold-hearted egoist into a Bible teacher. Through spiritual training, I could grow as a servant of the Word of God. Before, I could not speak at all in front of other people, but through the His training, God helped me to preach the Word of God even on the international level.

Some people ask why we live the life of faith so intensively and do a lot of lectures, for example. But Paul served the work of God much more intensively. The disciples in Ephesus sacrificed their siesta for five hours every day to study God's Word, even though they were probably working full time. This must have been exhausting, and some may have dozed off at times. But they were mightily changed by it, and the whole province of Asia was pioneered by the disciples, speaking to Jews and Greeks the word of the Lord.

Making disciples is the key to the mighty work of God. If we just create a beautiful environment and hope that somehow God would work, then it is guaranteed that nothing will happen. God always works where a spiritual leader gave himself for the work of making disciples. When I was privileged to be in Chicago, Dr. Samuel Lee encouraged us to engage in Bible study by studying a lesson every day and writing testimonies in English. The leaders' meeting lasted about five hours by hearing over 20 testimonies from all the leaders without break. The Friday leaders meeting was full of gracious testimonies and very long. Nevertheless, we were not tired but mobilized and afterwards we played soccer outside until 24:00.

2. I must visit Rome also (11-40)

Verses 11 to 22 describe the mighty work of change through the Apostle Paul's Bible study and disciple making in the school of Tyrannus. Paul concentrated on the disciples. But some went to the needy with Paul's cloths and prayed for them with spiritual authority so that they got well. On the other hand, there were some would-be invocers who made a lot of noise but had no spiritual authority. The evil spirit laughed about them. Verses 15 and 16 say, "One day the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and I know about Paul, but who are you?" Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding." This is what happened to those who had no faith in Jesus, but wanted to abuse Jesus' power for their own glory.

Let us read verses 18 and 19: "Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed their evil deeds. A number who had practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly. When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to fifty thousand drachmas." There was a mighty work of repentance in Ephesus. Many came confessing their past deeds and beginning a new life through earnest repentance. Some brought their magic books, which were worth millions of Euros, burned them publicly to indicate that they were free from this sorcery and addiction and loved only Jesus and the Word of God. God's Word has power to change a person so that he can start a new life. Let us confess to Jesus everything that hinders our course of faith and the sin that constantly ensnares us and burn them publicly and live a new changed life of God's mission.

Philipp Jakob Spener, the father of Pietism, always encouraged people to study the Word of God in house churches and through the Bible meetings and then to put it into practice in practical life. People were changed through repentance so that they left their selfish lives, obeyed God's Word, and became sources of blessing for their generation. They establish orphanages, schools, missionary societies through which the Word of God was spread into the whole world.

It is God's wonderful work of change that a salesman for light bulbs and washing machines, who wanted to have his own name shine, now lets the name of Jesus shine at the Bonn-Rhein-Sieg campus and serves many intellectual students with the Word of God. It is the miraculous work of God that a next generation missionary was mobilized by Ezra 7:10 to live not for a career as a clinic director but as a Bible teacher. Now he is exploring God's Word deeply through Factual Study, giving excellent lectures, and ministering to the next generation. It is God's changing work that a young man who was repeatedly overwhelmed by his own lust now loves the Lord according to Deut. 6:5 and

lives as a responsible leader for the next generation.

Look at verse 21: "After all this had happened, Paul decided to go to Jerusalem, passing through Macedonia and Achaia. "After I have been there," he said, "I must visit Rome also." Through the mighty work of God through the disciple-making ministry, Paul was filled with the vision for world mission. He received the vision to go to Rome, the largest and most important city in the world at that time. The Roman Empire looked too big and impregnable. But he believed that by making disciples, first a person, then a city, and then the whole world could be changed. So he prayed for the Rome mission and eventually get there. At the end of Acts, we see that Paul served the disciple-making ministry in Rome, through the one-to-one Bible study in his own home.

We may also see the great vision of God through the work of making disciples. Many people think that Christianity in Europe is on the verge of extinction and would no longer have any meaning. But through disciple making we may see that spiritual revival is possible. We may see young people repenting, obeying the Word of God, and growing into global spiritual leaders. God is currently working in Olaf, Joshua, Samuel, Dasom, so that the whole province of Rhineland hears the word of the Lord, Christians and Muslims. We may have the vision to see Istanbul, Cairo and Dubai, each building a base for M-Mission, where disciples of Jesus will be raised, who will penetrate their society and bring about a mighty work of change.

Finally, verses 23 to 40 tell of the turmoil of Demetrius. Where there is the work of God, there is always the work of Satan. Although Paul ministered to only a few disciples, Ephesus was so changed that some profiteers started a big riot. They could no longer sell their silver temple of Diana because people realized that these were not gods and they would not help them. Demetrius' motive was greed for money, but he appealed to the religious and patriotic feeling of the Ephesians. A great riot broke out in the

amphitheater. God protected Paul during this time through some officials, but he eventually had to leave the city and move on. There is turmoil and persecution at all times, but we may believe that God is in control of everything.

Today we learned about the disciple-making ministry in Ephesus. God's work is the work of making disciples through intensive Bible study, through which the whole province of Asia has been pioneered. God has been working mightily through the disciple-making ministry in Bonn for the past 41 years. Through the transformation of a few young people, the Word of God spread to a college, to a society, eventually to a whole nation. Let us serve the disciple-making ministry with the vision of God, and experience how mightily God is working in the next 10 years, spiritually conquering Europe, CIS countries, Africa, Asia, even M countries through this work. Let us devote ourselves to intensive Bible study and raise spiritual leaders who will revive Europe and be capable of raising spiritual leaders in turn.