

## The Disciple Making Ministry in Ephesus

Acts 19,1-40

Key verse 19,9

"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."

We thank God for allowing us to close 2021 with the Year in Review. We have much to thank God for: for His work through His Word from Genesis and the Gospel of Mark in the hearts of the co-workers, for their decision to work together for the rebuilding of the spiritual walls in Germany and Europe, for mobilizing the next generation co-workers as excellent Bible teachers, for His work in the lives of the hopefuls who have begun to trust in God and obey His Word, and for the open doors for M-Mission.

Last week, through the clear message of Sh. Peter Schweitzer, we began the new year with God's vision from Ezekiel 37:10 that the dead, withered bones would be changed into God's army, so that we could choose to prophesy the Word of God like Ezekiel through the obedience of faith and form one-to-one BS teams on campus.

Through Acts 19, today we want to learn about the disciple-making ministry in Ephesus. God prepared for the conquest of the whole province of Asia and also Rome through the disciple-making ministry. Apostle Paul obeyed the counsel of God and served the disciple-making work by speaking daily in the school of Tyrannus for two years, and was able to experience how all who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord, Jews and Greeks. God has also called us for the disciple-making work. Let us learn from Apostle Paul and serve the disciple-making work so that all who dwell in Germany and Europe hear the word of the Lord, and Germany becomes the shepherd nation and Europe becomes the missionary-sending continent.

### 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." Ephesus was a port city on the west coast of Asia Minor, the seat of the Roman governor in the province, and one of the largest cities in the Roman Empire. It was also a stronghold of Greek culture and housed the Temple of Artemis, one of the seven "wonders of the world" of antiquity.

Apostle Paul had come to Ephesus for the first time toward the end of his second missionary journey. He had talked to the Jews there. They were so impressed that they had asked him to stay longer, but he had moved on. He had, however, left Priscilla and Aquila behind as pioneers. This house church worked hard and devotedly through Bible study and life fellowship, establishing a firm vessel of prayer (1 Cor. 16:19). They especially helped an eloquent, learned man named Apollos, invited him in, taught him the way of God even more accurately, and then sent him to Corinth as a fully empowered Bible teacher.

When Apostle Paul returned to Ephesus after two years, he immediately sought the opportunity to teach the Word of God. Verse 1 says that he found some disciples. These disciples had only been baptized into John's baptism and had never heard of the Holy Spirit. But they had a serious desire to follow Jesus. Paul saw great potential in them and taught them that John had baptized with the

baptism of repentance and told the people to believe in the one who would come after him, Jesus (4). Then they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, and the Holy Spirit came upon them. God began a new phase of the work of making disciples in Ephesus with these twelve disciples.

What did Paul do then? Let's read verse 8: "Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God." Paul now went into the synagogue and taught freely and openly for three months, convincing them of the kingdom of God. Paul did his best to teach the kingdom of God, namely Jesus' death and resurrection and His eternal reign. "Spoke boldly" means that he showed no false regard for skepticism and reservations of his hearers and was not intimidated even by dark, critical expressions, but proclaimed God's whole counsel with a burning shepherd's heart. In 20:20,21 he testified, "You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house. I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus." We can imagine that God worked mightily through Paul's preaching. The audience became convinced that repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus is the only way to salvation and the glorious kingdom of God.

For three months Paul preached freely and openly. But then some of the superiors hardened their hearts. Let's see verse 9: "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." Apostle Paul was eager to continue preaching. But some did not believe. They wanted to continue their selfish lives of sin and still be considered as part of the church. But Paul's preaching was too clear. That is why they became very restless. To justify themselves, they began to speak evil of the doctrine before the crowd. God helped Paul to realize that it was not possible to minister under these circumstances to

those who wanted to believe. These some disturbed every sermon. They brought their own opinions to every Bible study, claiming that God was not so strict about sin and that Paul was exaggerating his teaching of total surrender, obedience and cross-bearing. Paul also realized that there was no point in arguing with them. That they were "hardened" means that they did not want to believe and could not be convinced anymore. He drew the consequence. Let's read verse 9 again: "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 left the synagogue, leaving the obdurate rulers and the large crowd behind, and went to a nearby school building. There he rented some rooms and began speaking daily to the disciples. Not many went with him. Perhaps it was only the twelve and his close associates like Aristarchus and Timothy. It looked like a great loss. But in fact, God Himself was preparing the disciple-making work in Ephesus to bring about a great revival. Paul was just following God's guidance.

First, Paul set apart the disciples

Verse 9b says, "...He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus." Here we learn about God's sovereign counsel and His electing grace. God's plan was to change all of Ephesus from a stronghold of pleasure-seeking and ungodliness to a spiritual headquarters for all of Asia Minor by the power of the Word of God through the work of making disciples. But this would not be done by those whose life of faith consisted only of attending church services once a week - even if there were many of them - but by trained disciples of Jesus who would subordinate their whole lives to the Lord Jesus. God chose these twelve or so disciples and guided it so that Paul could train them for two years in the school of Tyrannus through the daily fellowship of the Word. Each one of these disciples was as precious to God as a whole city, a whole nation, and the whole world. Among them

was Epaphras, whom Paul held in high esteem and who later even went into captivity with him (Philemon 23). He became a shepherd to the churches in Colosse, Laodicea and Hierapolis (Colossians 4:12,13). In doing so, he never forgot God's grace and Paul's servanthood. Paul set apart each of these disciples and carefully helped them until they were changed into the co-workers, Bible teachers, pioneers, and even disciple-makers.

God shows His love and grace for this world through the disciple-making ministry. God chose one man, Abram, and raised him in the faith for 25 years to make him a blessing to all the generations on earth. Abraham grew to become the father of many nations and the friend of God, and became the blessing through whom God fulfilled His promise and eventually sent the Messiah.

In order to take the gospel to the interior of Africa and bring about revival among those who were trapped in the deepest darkness of the sin of sorcery and cannibalism, God chose one man, Charles Studd (1860-1931), and educated him for many years through the predecessors of the faith, through missionary life in China and India, and through numerous internal and external challenges. Charles learned not to be a Chocolate Christian, but to devote his whole life to God's flock of sheep, no matter what the cost. Through this one person, God stopped the advance of Islam in Africa and changed a field of dead former cannibals into the army of God.

God also shows His hope for a campus, a nation and a continent through the disciple-making ministry. God chose a young man who had dropped out of school after tenth grade and never attended a university for his work of world campus mission. He led him to the renowned Bonn UBF University and raised him as a man of the Spirit who prays from his heart for the young people at the Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University of Applied Sciences, in East Germany, Eastern Europe and to the ends of the earth and leads them to follow Jesus without compromise and fear.

When Apostle Paul separated the disciples according to God's guidance, he was not bitter because of the separation from the crowd or the synagogue, but full of vision and eager to see how mightily God would work through the disciple-making ministry. When he saw the disciples who were willing to learn and grow and follow Christ even in the midst of slander and affliction, he became joyful and grateful for God's wonderful counsel. Let us thank God for His counsel in calling us for the disciple-making work. Let us, like our Lord Jesus, see in one person the hope of God for the whole world and, like Paul, follow His counsel with clear determination.

Second, Paul spoke daily in the school of Tyrannus.

What did the disciple-making ministry in Ephesus look like in practical terms over the next two years? Let's read verse 9 again: "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 spoke daily in the school of Tyrannus. "To have discussions" here means much more than just communicating something once a day such as through a circular email. It means as much as "having conversations" and includes listening, asking questions, teaching, and sharing what has been taught.

This takes a lot of time. Paul took the time from early morning until late evening, forgoing a private life. He had fellowship with the disciples over breakfast. He met with them individually, listened to them, gave them the Word of God, and prayed with them. At lunchtime he taught them, and later he called to him those whose concerns he had learned and to whom he wanted to give advice and instruction. He listened to the opinions of the disciples and taught them to preach and lead Bible study. He also sent them out to surrounding towns to implant God's vision in them. He visited them and wrote letters to them. There was not one of them whom he did not think of daily, for whom he did not

pray, and to whom he did not give a word from God. In Acts 20:31 he himself testifies, "So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears." With all this, he still worked with his own hands as a tent-maker to provide for himself and his own (20:34).

Paul's speaking in this was always based on the Word of God. He prayed for them with the Word of God. Each of their communities was under the Word of God. Even when Paul played sports with them, talked about everyday things, politics or philosophy, laughed and ate, the standard for their lives was the Word of God. God's word is the word of life and the most important discipline in making disciples. Through the word of God, step by step, their way of thinking and their mindset changed. God's Word opened their spiritual eyes to the truth about sin, death and judgment and about Jesus Christ, who is the way, the truth and the life. They learned to subordinate their lives to the Word of God and to obey the Word of God. 2 Tim 3:16,17 say, "For all scripture, inspired of God, is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, fitted unto every good work." God's Word cast out their unspiritual dispositions and changed them from selfish, cowardly and unfit people to good soldiers of Christ Jesus, sent to all good work.

The Disciples' Education Work is the work of daily speaking, in other words, the community of life and the Word of God. Martin Luther lived in the former monastery after his return to Wittenberg. With him, however, were not only Katharina and his children. Rather, orphans from his relatives, nephews and nieces, friends, acquaintances, students, co-workers and always guests, often 30-40 people, lived there. Luther spoke to them daily in the "table talks" that have become famous, caring for each one with complete attention, while Katharina took care of the household. One young man was very talented but too weak to study. He came to live with Luther and heard him speak daily for eight years. Then he went to Saxony as a

lecturer and had a beneficial effect on the Reformation there. The Reformation consolidated and spread not only through theses and declarations, but in the power of God's Word through the work of making disciples.

I thank God for His sovereign and unilateral grace in calling me for the disciple-making work according to His counsel. I was a typical cultural Christian, baptized and confirmed, but without the Word of God. In UBF, I saw God's work through His Word in the lives of the disciples and not only came to study the Bible, but also started the life fellowship. My Bible teacher spoke to me daily through the fellowship and testimony listening and encouraged me to trust in God and obey His word. After four years I accepted Jesus as Lord, and later with Genesis 19:5,6 God's hope for Germany and Europe. When a servant of God considered me, an imaginary cultural Christian and weakling, so precious that he gave all his time and effort and spoke daily, I was changed to a co-worker. The disciple-making work is God's counsel. I still work full time at my job, but the hours are limited and the work ends at the latest when I retire. The true full-time work is the Disciple Making Ministry. I started to work together for the Disciple Making Ministry and follow the example of the forerunners in the faith: to set apart some disciples, form one-on-one Bible study teams, and speak daily and thus be used by God in His revival work.

What happened through the disciple-making work in Ephesus? Let's read verse 10: "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." When Paul served the disciple-making ministry in the school of Tyrannus for two years, speaking daily, the entire province of Asia heard the word of the Lord. The disciple-making work of God is not small, but has the power to conquer an entire province. God will also work through the disciple-making work in the Kösters School, in the Schweitzer School, in the Chang School, in the Ryu School, so that all Germany hears the word of the Lord, humanists and atheists, Buddhists and Muslims. The Disciples Making Work is working

miracles. May God help us to form the life fellowship and conduct one-on-one Bible study this year and thus serve the disciple-making work.

## 2. I must also see Rome (11-40)

Verses 11 to 22 describe how mightily God worked through His word while Apostle Paul served the disciple-making ministry. First, God worked no small deeds through his hands. So they even held sweatcloths and other cloths that he had worn on his skin over the sick, and the diseases departed and the evil spirits went out. Then some who went about as conjurers were greatly put to shame. There were seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Skevas, who took upon themselves to call the name of Jesus above those who had evil spirits. But they had no authority, but were overpowered and beaten by the possessed man, so that they had to flee naked and wounded. Spiritual authority cannot be copied. It comes from prayer and obedience to the counsel of God.

Finally, many who had practiced sorcery came and gathered their sorcery books and burned them publicly. Books were worth a lot because they were copied by hand and ornately decorated. But for those who had become believers, these books had lost their value. They even saw them as harmful. Through the Word of God, they had come to realize that salvation is in Jesus alone, and that everything else is an empty deception of the devil. They wanted to protect their fellow citizens and burned everything. Verse 20 says, "In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power." The word of the Lord that Paul spoke daily spread and became powerful. The Word changed those who had been practicing sorcery into shepherds and Bible teachers. The Word healed the sick and delivered the possessed. The Word changed Ephesus from a stronghold of pleasure-seeking and ungodliness to a priestly city and spiritual headquarters.

How did Paul respond? 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 in Ephesus, Paul was filled with vision for world missions. He saw that what was happening in Ephesus would also happen in Rome. He saw that from Rome the whole world would be reached with the gospel of Christ. "Seeing Rome" means that he wanted to serve the disciple-making work in Rome as well. Paul was no longer a young man. But God's vision gave him strength so that he would accept the even greater challenge and bring even more glory and honor to his Lord.

Sometimes we are influenced by the unbelieving, calculating spirit of the age and live without vision. Christians also succumb to this spiritual danger, losing vision and sinning greatly by abandoning their prayer and devotion for the world mission. Visionlessness is godlessness, because our God, who worked through the work of making disciples in Ephesus, is also working here and now. His Word has the same life-giving and life-changing power. We may confess with Paul: If I have been there, I must also see all the other 1,700 colleges in Europe. If I have been there, I must also see Istanbul, Cairo, Dubai, Pyongyang and Beijing. The God who changed me can also change Germany. The God who mobilized workers of the next generation as soldiers of Christ last year can also make a whole generation of young students, who are now still rebelling against God and His will, His exceedingly great army for the world mission.

Verses 23 to 40 tell about the rebellion of Demetrius. When Paul gave himself for the work of making disciples, the word spread by the power of the Lord and became mighty. The magic books were burned. The images of the goddess Diana were also no longer valued. As a result, the goldsmith Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen were threatened with great loss. Demetrius incited a great riot, and the crowd shouted for two hours, "Great is the Diana of the Ephesians!" Paul was ready to go among the people, but his time had not yet come. God used the chancellor of the city to calm the crowd. Paul was

courageous because he knew that God holds everything in His hand. God's work always causes opposition and unrest, sometimes with great shouting. But we need not be disturbed because God holds His work in His hand. Unlike those who shout so loudly, we know what we are doing. God protects and preserves us so that we may move on unhindered in the work of making disciples. We will not perish until our time comes.

Today we have seen that the disciple-making work is God's wisdom and God's counsel. God had the vision to let the whole province of Asia hear the word of the Lord through the disciple-making ministry in Ephesus. Paul obeyed the counsel of God and spoke daily for two years in the school of Tyrannus. The word spread and became powerful. In this year 2022, let us separate the disciples and speak the Word of God daily, so that Germany and Europe will be renewed spiritually.