

THE DISCIPLE MAKING MINISTRY IN EPHEBUS

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.”

In preparation for the 2023 GLE Forum, today we want to learn about Apostle Paul's disciple-making ministry in Ephesus. After Paul had pioneered Asia Minor and Greece during the first two mission journeys and planted numerous churches, during his 3rd mission journey he focused on the ministry of making disciple. Disciple making through in-depth Bible study initiated a great work of repentance and changed lives in Ephesus. Eventually the word of the Lord was spread throughout the whole province of Asia. The disciple-making work is the answer to how we can serve the campus mission influentially, how we can mobilize the next generation spiritually, and how we can experience spiritual revival in Europe, America, Russia, Turkey and the whole world.

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

After Apostle Paul was called by the grace of God, his first missionary journey took him to Cyprus and Turkey, where he planted many churches. On the second missionary journey, by the guidance of God, he came to Europe, namely Macedonia and Greece, all the way to Corinth. He experienced the mighty working of the Holy Spirit, the beginning of the world mission, and that Europe was pioneered under many afflictions.

On his way back from Corinth, Paul had already been briefly in Ephesus. At that time, Ephesus was the capital in the Roman province of Asia and one of the largest cities in

the empire. It was most famous for the Temple of Artemis, which was one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. Artemis, or Diana in Greek, was the fertility goddess who was always depicted with 20 breasts. In this respect, idolatry and fornication were always very present in this city. How could God's work happen in this city? Paul first left Priscilla and Aquila there. This house church served the work of one-on-one Bible study very influentially. When a Jewish scholar named Apollos arrived, they were able to help him come to faith in Jesus Christ. He was raised as a powerful defender of the gospel and sent out to Corinth. Here we see that God works very powerfully through a house church that holds fast its mission in every situation and faithfully serves the work of one-on-one Bible study.

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." On his 3rd mission journey Paul came back to Ephesus. He first found some disciples there, about 12 young men, who had a great spiritual desire and potential. However, they had only been baptized into John's baptism, and had never heard of the Holy Spirit. In their testimonies, they repented of their sinful desires. But they had no joy nor confidence in faith. Therefore, Paul conducted a 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. John the Baptist had already testified to Jesus as the Lamb of God who bears the sin of the world. They should come to Jesus, accept the forgiveness grace through his death on the cross and the living hope through his resurrection, through his victory over sin and death. These young men were eager to learn. When they heard this, they accepted it 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, and gained spiritual inside. This incident shows the powerful effect of bible study, that leads to faith in Jesus.

Let's look at verse 8: "Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God." In Ephesus, 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 could enter the kingdom 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 audience hardened their hearts 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 from their sins and start a new life. But there are also those who stubbornly harden their hearts, even acting as enemies of the gospel.

These people not only excluded themselves from the kingdom of God, but they were also a hindrance to the disciples in the faith. They appeared publicly in front of the crowd and spoke evil of the doctrine. To justify themselves, they maligned and slandered the way

of Jesus. In conclusion, they were a bad influence. Jesus said that those who bring down a little one will receive a harsh judgment.

How did Paul react to the evil attacks? 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 did not fight with them. 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 step to protect the disciples from bad influence. Instead of dealing endlessly with the detractors, he took a positive step. He rented a room in the school of Tyrannus and began to teach the bible there. He focused on the disciples who were willing to grow as spiritual leaders. According to the Church Fathers, he spoke there for about five hours at a time during the heat of the day. While he worked as a tentmaker in the morning and evening, he served the disciple-making ministry through Bible study in the Tyrannus School during the hot noon time.

What was the ministry in the school of Tyrannus like?

1. Separation of the disciples

Paul deliberately separated himself from those who slandered God's work. He also set apart the disciples to create an environment where they could grow spiritually. The new work in Tyrannus' school was small, but here they could study God's word in a concentrated way and grow into global spiritual leadership.

Daniel was a man who was forced to live in a godless environment. But he deliberately set himself apart from anything related to idolatry. God blessed his faith decision for the sanctified life so that he could grow into a witness of Almighty God and even an advisor to kings. He became a spiritual leader who shone like a star in the dark night and was a role model to his people.

God blesses the faith decision of our next generation to separate themselves from the sinful spirit of the age. By sanctifying Sunday, and giving their best time to the Lord each morning, they are growing into spiritual leaders like Daniel for this generation. Some young people have set aside Wednesdays to meet together, despite the different time zones, to discuss the Word of God and pray for spiritual revival as responsible spiritual leaders.

2. *Intensive bible study*

The core of Paul's ministry was, above all, intensive Bible study. By studying God's Word inductively and discussing with Paul, the disciples grew in faith and then were raised as righteous and blameless workers of the gospel. Paul had a dialectical approach, asking many questions, similar to one-on-one Bible study. Not only did they talk about the Word of God, all the disciples wrote their personal testimonies about the bible passages, applying it to their own lives. They prepared messages and factual studies with a prayer topic to conquer the Jewish and the Greek world.

3. *Life together on a daily basis*

Luke uses the word "daily". In other words, Paul had life fellowship with his disciples on a daily basis. As we know, life fellowship was important to Luther. His daily table talks have become legendary. Francke had fellowship with his students during lunch time. God works through life together, or as one servant of God put it, "God's work is done in the kitchen." In Acts 20:31, Paul 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 served them on a daily basis.

4. *Through the disciples Asia Minor was pioneered*

Many Christians think like businessmen, focusing on the number of people attending

church services. But the spiritual mobilization and transformation of one person into a true disciple of Jesus is often not considered valuable. Paul, however, had changed his focus from preaching to the masses to disciple making. He no longer held large assemblies in Ephesus. He ministered to a handful of disciples, intensively studying the Word of God with them and personally encouraging 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 spot, the word of the Lord ran throughout the whole province through the disciples. For example, the cities of Colossae, Laodicea and Hierapolis was pioneered through Epaphras, one of the disciples of Paul in Ephesus. The province of Asia Minor was transformed from a haven of idolatry to a powerhouse of Christianity that was one of the most influential centers of Christianity for the next 1000 years. This shows that disciple making has the potential for exponential growth.

The UBF ministry is a ministry of disciple making. Dr. Samuel Lee did not try to build up a beautiful Christian community. His goal was to raise up students as disciples of Jesus and spiritual leaders through intensive bible study. As a result about 3000 lay missionaries could be sent out from Korea to 100 countries.

The aim of the Global Leadership Empowerment Forum is to make disciples and raise leaders, through the study of God's word. A young man lived a long time overwhelmed by his own lust. But through Deut. 5:6, he started to love God the most. Through the leadership training at GLEF, he grew into an excellent Bible teacher who is now a responsible leader of the next generation. Another young man was helpless because of the tick problem. Even Google's AI could not find a solution for it. But through Hebrews 5:8,9, he learned the obedience of faith from Jesus. He gratefully accepted the leadership training, not only was he able to graduate from school with the highest grade, but grew into

an excellent spiritual leader who always gives God the priority. An only son caused his parents many worries because he was occupied following his worldly desires. But through intensive Bible study, he made a decision to learn Jesus and grew into a Bible teacher who serves the work of God with priority and was even allowed to be used preciously as a minister of God's word.

Recently we could see how powerfully God is working through the work of making disciples. A young man who just graduated from high school accepted the leadership training and ministered to the Word of God twice this past Sunday. Two long-time bible students rose from their paralysis and preached heart-moving messages at the May Bible Conference. One young woman was mobilized through GLEF to live as a Bible teacher and invite her friends to Bible study. Now she travels 4 hours by train from Paderborn to Bonn every weekend to co-work for the work of God.

Influenced by the spirit of the times, I thought that believing in Jesus was enough. God was not satisfied with me somehow doing well. He helped me to experience the changing power of the Word of God through the intensive Bible study, to be changed from a cold-hearted and hurting egoist to a Bible teacher. Now, by the grace of God, I can serve the work of making disciples on a daily basis as a responsible shepherd in spite of full-time work and be used for spiritual revival in Europe.

Leadership training is the key for the mighty work of God in our post Christian generation. God always works where a spiritual leader gives himself for leadership training. When I was in Chicago, Dr. Samuel Lee encouraged us to engage in deep Bible study by studying one lesson a day and writing testimonies in English. The disciples in Ephesus sacrificed their siesta every day and studied the Word of God for five hours straight, next to their busy schedules and their full-time jobs. Our Josiah team currently comes to the Center every day to study God's Word and prepare their Factual Studies. Some friends asked:

Why do you go to church every day? Then they answer: I am a spiritual leader. I learn from Jesus and pray for the spiritual awakening in Europe every day. Let us serve the disciple-making ministry through the intensive study of the Bible and thus experience the mighty changing work of God at every campus and in our next generation that they are raised as spiritual leaders like Daniel.

2. I also need to see Rome (11-40)

Verses 11 to 22 describe the mighty work of change through Apostle Paul's Bible study and disciple making in the school of Tyrannus. Paul took care of the disciples intensively. God did extraordinary miracles through Paul. But also, the disciples went out taking Paul's cloths with them and prayed for the sick by faith. Many got well and evil spirits came out. On the other hand, there were some would-be exorcists who used the name of Jesus and Paul, but had no faith. They were laughed at by the evil spirit. 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, but wanted to abuse the power of Jesus for their own purpose.

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 started a new life through earnest repentance. Many people from the whole city came and brought their sorcery books, with which they had previously practiced black magic and spirit conjuring. Although these were traded for millions, they publicly burned them to indicate that they were free from this addiction and were only following Jesus. God's Word has power to change a person so that

he can start a new life. God's word has power to free a whole city from all dependencies and make them a new creature in Christ. Let us confess everything that hinders our course of faith and the sin that constantly entangles us and burn them publicly and live a new changed life of God's mission.

It is God's wonderful work of change that a seller of light bulbs and washing machines, who wanted to let his own name shine, now lets the name of Jesus shine at the Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University. Through him, starting with Olaf, many intellectual students are growing into Bible teachers and the Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University is used as a Tyrannus School. A next generation missionary was mobilized by Ezra 7:10 to live not for his career as a clinic director but as a Bible teacher. Now he is exploring God's Word through inductive Bible study, and God is using him to raise up many spiritual doctors at the medical school.

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.'" Experiencing the mighty work of God through the disciple-making ministry, Paul was filled with the vision for world mission. He received the vision that he wanted to go to Rome, the largest and most important city in the world at that time. The Roman Empire seemed to be too big and impregnable. But he believed that by making disciples, first a person, then a city, and then the whole empire could be changed. So he was able to pray for Rome mission and eventually get there. In the last chapter of Acts, we see that Paul was serving the disciple-making ministry in Rome, through one-on-one Bible study in his own apartment.

We may also see the great vision of God through disciple making. Many people think that Christianity in Europe is on the verge of extinction and would no longer have any importance. But through disciple making we see that spiritual revival is possible. We see

young people repenting, obeying the Word of God and growing into global spiritual leaders. We may have the vision to see Istanbul, Cairo and Dubai, building base camps for M-Mission, where disciples of Jesus will be raised up, who will penetrate their society and bring about a mighty work of change.

Finally, verses 23 to 40 tell us about the rebellion of Demetrius. Although Paul only ministered to a few disciples, the whole city of Ephesus was challenged and changed in a way that some businessmen feared for their income. They could no longer sell their silver temple of Diana because people realized that the Greek gods cannot help them. These profiteers started a big riot. 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 with the parole, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians". God protected Paul during the riot through some friendly minded officials, but he eventually had to leave the city and move on. Even if some enemies make a riot because of their fear and envy, we believe that God is in control of everything and is using His disciple-making work for spiritual revival.

Today we learned about the Tyrannus School in Ephesus. God's work is the work of making disciples through intensive Bible study. Through bible study a great change took place and finally the whole province of Asia was pioneered. God used GLEF in the past 5 years to raise up young people as SEBTs, as messengers, as coaches, as facilitators, and as global spiritual leaders. Through the transformation of some young people, the Word of God is spreading among their friends, in their college, and even in their whole country. This year God will use our next generation as the outstanding servants of God's word from the book of Daniel. We pray that God will use each of them as Bible teachers like Daniel, shining like stars in the sky, and through them spiritually conquer Europe, America, Russia, Africa, Asia, even M countries.