

February 24, 2019

Morning Overview

Lesson: *Ephesians: Chosen Before the World Began*

Lesson Objective:

Today we look at Paul's visit and letter to the Ephesian church. These two parts happen at different times. Paul's visit is a long visit where he builds up and trains the church leaders in Ephesus. Paul will revisit Ephesus at least once before his imprisonment in Rome and the writing of his letter, however, we do not cover that occurrence in our story today. Try to help the kids understand the visit happened first, and then some time lapsed to where Paul is in prison, and then he writes to the Ephesians to encourage them to keep trusting Jesus.

Teaching Summary:

- God's promises do not change despite circumstances, people and even our inability to believe them. God keeps His promises even when we do not trust Him or follow His commands.
- God has promised to always be with His people. He is with us through the presence of the Holy Spirit.
- The Church is growing, but also experiencing persecution. Because of the persecution, followers of Jesus scatter.
- The scattered Church takes the Good News and tells others about Jesus.
- Paul visits and writes a letter to Ephesus.
- Paul's visit is encapsulated by lots of teaching to the Ephesians, but also includes controversy and riots.
- Paul trains up lots of leaders in Ephesus to lead the church there.
- Eventually Paul leaves Ephesus, but later writes a letter to them while he is in jail in Rome.
- Paul wants to encourage the Ephesian church to remember to trust Jesus.
- Paul tells the Ephesians to remember they are God's beloved, called, from long ago, into God's family by grace, and live at peace with one another.
- Paul reminds his Ephesian friends to put on God's armor to defend themselves against Satan's attacks.

Scripture: Acts 19:1-40; Ephesians 1:3-6, 2:8-10, 14-22; 6:10-20

Story: The Gospel Story Bible, Pages 282-283

Scripture Memory for February: Acts 16:31 (ESV)

Believe (*point to your heart – trusting/believing in your heart*)
 in the Lord Jesus, (*point upwards*)
 and you (*point to kids/crowd*)
 will be saved, (*fold arms around yourself, like a self-hug*)
 you (*point to kids/crowd*)
 and your household. (*make a pointy top, like a mountain, over your head to show a "house"*)

Craft: Trophy

Supplies: Cardstock trophy, jewels, googly eyes, verse sticker, magnet, marker, glue

Instructions: 1. Glue on googly eyes.

2. Draw smile.

3. Add jewels.

4. Place verse sticker and magnet on back.



If child has already done craft first hour, have them work on a coloring sheet

Story

Transition

Boys and girls, have you ever received a letter or card from a friend or relative in the mail? Isn't it exciting to get those in the mail? Well in our story today Paul writes a letter to the church at Ephesus. Let's find out what he tells them in his letter...

The Church Is Growing

The Church was growing. The Bible tells us every day more and more people believed the Good News! They believed that God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to rescue us from our sins and He rose from the dead! This was called the Good News. More and more people believed in Jesus and the Church was growing!

Followers of Jesus went to tell others about the Good News. The Good News was spreading far and wide. Some people, however, did not teach the right things. But the Apostles taught that good works were a result of believing the Good News.

Paul and Silas continued to travel. They traveled to many cities to tell others about Jesus! Paul and Silas would go into a city and there preach the Good News and encourage other Christians while they were there. But some people did not like what Paul and Silas had to say.

Paul's Visit to Ephesus

Paul continued to travel to many places. He eventually came to a city called Ephesus. As Paul spoke to the followers of Jesus in Ephesus, he discovered they did not know about the Holy Spirit. Paul helped these followers to understand who the Holy Spirit is and how the Holy Spirit helps followers of Jesus.

The Bible tells us that Paul stayed in Ephesus for three months. Paul would go into the synagogue and tell others about Jesus and God's kingdom. But some people did not like what Paul was saying and refused to believe him. These people said evil things about following Jesus. They lied to other people about it. When this happened, Paul took some followers with him and left Ephesus. Paul would teach these followers and others for two years about what it meant to follow Jesus and have the Holy Spirit living in them. Because of this, the Bible tells us, every person living in Asia heard the word of the Lord.

God used Paul to do some very special miracles. Many people in Ephesus believed in Jesus. The Bible tells us the people of Ephesus gave great honor to the Lord Jesus. Many of the followers of Jesus confessed to sin and all the evil things they had done! So, in a powerful way the word of the Lord kept spreading and growing.

Paul Writes to The Ephesian Church

Paul would soon leave Ephesus and travel on to other places to meet more Christians and to start more churches. Paul however would eventually end up in prison in Rome. Rome was the most powerful city in the world at that time. While Paul was in prison, he wrote to different churches to encourage them to love Jesus and follow Him.

Paul was curious how the church in Ephesus was doing? "Were they still following Jesus?" he wondered. Then one day a good friend of Paul's told him that the church in Ephesus was doing well and still following Jesus! This made Paul very happy. So, he wrote them a letter to encourage them. Paul wanted to make sure they kept trusting Jesus and following Him.

When Paul wrote his letter, he started off praising God. It was God at work in their lives at Ephesus. Paul tells his friends that from the very beginning God had chosen them. God chose them not because they are special, but because God is loving and kind. Paul told his friends that God did this before the world began. In Jesus, God had

made a very special people for himself. God wanted his people to be blameless. This means that no one can find fault with them! But we mess up and sin a lot. How can we be children of God and still sin? Well we know that God forgives us because of Jesus dying for our sins and rising from the dead (Ephesians 1:3-13).

Paul wanted his friends to know about God's grace. He would tell his Ephesian friends that God was merciful and kind to bring them, and us too, into His family. But the only way to come into God's family was by grace. God had to bring us into His family. We couldn't buy our way in, or work our way in. We had to trust that God would do it and it isn't up to us (Ephesians 2:8-9).

God had all kinds of people in mind when bringing them into His family. Some people might have been enemies! But because of God's grace and because they are in His family, they cannot be enemies any longer. Paul told his Ephesian friends that Jesus had brought peace to them. Peace means everything is good and well. There's no fighting, pain, or hurt. Jesus brought peace between God and us, and Jesus had brought peace between people who followed Him.

Paul finished his letter to the Ephesians by telling them to put on the whole armor of God. This did not mean "real" armor, but spiritual armor and weapons to defend themselves against Satan. Satan did not want the Ephesian church to trust Jesus or to follow Jesus. Satan wanted the Ephesians to do evil and sinful things. So, Paul warned his friends to put on God's armor and to stay alert!

Sadly, Paul never got to visit Ephesus again. He stayed in prison in Rome for a long time.

Questions for Review with Younger Children

Have children answer "yes" or "no."

- The Church is growing – adding more and more people. (Yes)
- The Holy Spirit is growing the Church. (Yes)
- Did Paul visit Ephesus? (Yes)
- Did God do miraculous things in Ephesus through Paul? (Yes)
- Did Paul write the Ephesian church a letter to encourage them? (Yes)
- Did Paul tell the Ephesians to start taking baths? (No!)
- Did Paul tell the Ephesians God loved them? (Yes)
- Did Paul tell the Ephesians the only way they came into God's family is through Jesus? (Yes)
- Did Paul tell the Ephesians to trust in God and His promises? (Yes)
- Did Paul tell the Ephesians to put on God's armor and to stay alert? (Yes)
- Did Paul ever make his way back to Ephesus? (No, he stayed in prison in Rome)

Questions for Review with Older Children

- Name some of the people in our story today.
- What do you think it means to be in God's family?
- What is the Good News?