



2023 3Q Ephesians—Lesson 1 Paul and the Ephesians

by Tim Jennings

TUESDAY

Tuesday's lesson tells us that this letter from Paul was intended to be read out loud, in its entirety, to the Ephesians believers. The lesson suggests that we do the same, have someone read the entire letter to us.

I have asked Linda Ojala to read this letter from Paul to the Ephesians to us from *The Remedy* version.

Let's sit and listen, but as you are listening, consider that Paul is writing to you and me—because through God's providence and Holy Spirit the message from Paul to the Ephesians is a message to all Christians. And as you are listening, take note of what elements speak to you, because after Linda finishes reading, I am going to open it up for discussion of what is the message from God through Paul both to the Ephesians, but more importantly for us today.

What did you hear as the key points in this letter?

What aspects of this letter to the Ephesians did you find relevant for us today?

- The letter opens with praise to God and describes God as good, as for us, the One on our side who pours out all the resources of heaven through Jesus for our salvation.
- Paul notes that God foreknew and predetermined that He would save us through Jesus and restore us to children of God—God was not taken by surprise
- It is through the victorious life and self-sacrificial death of Jesus that we are won back to trust and experience the forgiveness that God freely offers
- The letter opens with a cosmic perspective, that we are blessed with spiritual blessings, that through Christ all things in heaven and earth are united. Paul is telling us that the conflict is bigger than just earth, it is a cosmic war and we are at the center and Jesus is God's champion who wins the war.
- Paul emphasizes that Jesus is God's agent to overcome sin, to restore unity, to heal from sin, to win the war
- But Paul also said that we are to somehow bring glory to God—how? (1:12)
 - By being healed, and revealing God's character in how we live holy and righteous lives.
 - How does that bring God glory? Example of a physician who cures someone of cancer—who gets the glory, the one cured or the one doing the curing?



- Even though Christ was not physically present with them, according to Paul God marks the believers with a seal as an evidence and guarantee of the future full fulfillment—what is that seal? (1:13,14).
 - The Holy Spirit who transforms our characters, settling us into the truth about God and His methods, both in understanding/comprehension but also in method/motive/attitude/heart/practice.
 - Is this seal the same seal or a different seal that the saint in Revelation are described as having placed on their foreheads?
- God’s power was described being used to accomplish what in chapter one?
 - Raise Christ from the dead—what kind of power is this? It is healing, saving, transforming, creation and recreation power—it is not the power of death—the Bible says in Hebrews 2:14 that, “Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil” (Hebrews 2:14 NIV84).
 - Satan is the murderer from the beginning. It is sin that causes death when we believe the lies about God and break away from Him who is the source of life the only outcome is death. Yet, how much of Christianity teaches God, in order to be just, must use His power to inflict death? Paul presents the Good News about God that God’s power is the power of life, not the power of death.
- And all power, authority, rulership is given to Jesus. In Revelation the heavenly scene has the angels and saints repeatedly saying of Jesus, worthy, worthy, worthy is the Lamb who was slain—He is worthy to wield all power because He has proven that He is safe with all power, that He NEVER uses power selfishly, to inflict harm, to cause death. That is Satan and Satan’s government.
- In Chapter Two (2:1-5) Paul confirms that we are dead in sin, dying of the terminal sin-condition.
 - How is it that every one of us became sinners? We are all born in sin and conceived in iniquity—is it our fault we are born this way?
 - Did we have a choice about this?
 - And what is the unavoidable result of this condition—what does this condition cause every person born with it to do? To sin, to choose behaviors and actions that are in violation of God’s design laws for life.
 - Can any sinful human cure or remedy or overcome this condition? No! Understand, we never had a choice in being born sinful, and on our own we can only live sinful lives. It is only through Jesus that we can receive a new life, a new heart and right spirit, a new set of motives and attitudes, and be reborn into God’s family and live victorious lives.
 - Understand, the choice in salvation is not whether we are sinners or not—we are all born infected with fear and selfishness. The choice we have is whether we accept the Remedy of Jesus Christ to cure us of this condition, to recreate us in righteousness, to purge the fear and selfishness, to write His law in our hearts and minds and recreate us to be like Jesus in how we live.
 - What this means operationally is that we can stop feeling guilty for being sinners, we never had a choice in that. We can feel guilty for purposely choosing to reject Jesus, for working against Him, for reject the truth, for choosing to say yes to sin rather than



turning to Jesus for victory. But we don't need to feel guilty for have the sin condition—that isn't our fault—that is the fault of Adam and Eve.

- Eph 2:6,7: God through Jesus redeemed the human species. Jesus became a real human, partaking of the humanity that was damaged by Adam, but overcame all the obstacles, incumbrances, weaknesses and restored humanity to perfection. In the humanity of Jesus, the human species became what God intended for it to become in Adam—and even more.
- Eph. 2:8-10: It is God's grace, God's power, God's purpose, God's intention that humanity be a showcase of His law—which is the living law of love. Love does not function written upon stone. Love requires living beings. Human beings were created in the image of God to showcase God's glorious character of love.
 - As the Father, Son, and Spirit come together in love and create, human beings were created with the ability to come together in the blessing of marital love and give of themselves to create beings in their image. Humanity was given dominion to subdue and govern the earth—and it was God's intention that they would govern the earth in perfect love, as God governs the universe. All of this was subverted by Satan when Adam and Eve infected themselves with sin, and all nature groans under the weight of sin. In Jesus God's living law is fully and perfectly restored into humanity and humanity again becomes God's showcase to reveal His character, law, methods perfectly.
- Eph. 2:14-18: In Jesus divinity merged with humanity and as a human Jesus destroyed the infecting death-causing principle and restored God's life-causing principle and became the head of a purified and new humanity. He became the second Adam, and all who unite with Him, experience, via the Spirit, fear and selfishness replaced with love and trust in God. The divisions in human society become meaningless and we are united as one loving body in Christ.
 - What of this metaphor of a temple or sanctuary that Paul uses? We are God's temple, built together with Christ as the chief cornerstone and the apostles as foundations stones—and all of us together become a living temple where God dwells by His Spirit.
 - Have you ever heard of a heavenly sanctuary? Have you ever heard the idea of cleansing the heavenly sanctuary? Is what Paul is describing here something new, separate, and distinct from the Old Testament sanctuary service, or is Paul drawing from the imagery of the Old Testament sanctuary to teach an eternal truth, the reality of what God is accomplishing through Christ?
 - Is the cleansing of the sanctuary that God accomplishes through the ministry of Jesus as our High Priest the cleansing of non-living matter, silver, gold, boards, vellum, paper, books, records—or is it the cleansing of hearts, minds, characters of sinners so that we are purified people free from sin?
- Eph. 3:1: Paul connects sharing the gospel, the good news, the message of salvation with his imprisonment—what is he telling us?
 - Is this only true for Paul, or is it true that throughout all human history, those who are actively advancing the kingdom of God will come under attack by Satan and evil forces?
 - What does that look like today?



- Eph. 3:7-13: Paul describes a mystery that was hidden and even the Old Testament prophets didn't fully understand—what is that mystery?
 - That all humans are included in the promises given to Abraham, that the plan of salvation is for every human being. It is quite simple, God made one human species in Adam—Eve was taken from Adam's side, and every other human being is a descendant of Adam and Eve, we are all one species. Adam and Eve infected themselves with sin and thus we are all born with the same terminal condition we inherited from Adam. We are all dying of the same condition and we all need the same healing solution—which is Jesus Christ. Thus, the promise given in Genesis 3:15 is for the entire human race.
 - Is God the one who made this plan a mystery? Did He hide it? No, He repeatedly revealed that all nations will be blessed by Abraham's Seed—the Messiah. Then how did this truth get obscured? Satan's methods and principles of lies, fear, and selfishness cause division, confusion, hostility, and prejudice.
 - Satan led the Jews to believe that their calling to be the physical avenue through whom Messiah would be born, and their blessing with the prophets, the Scriptures, and the theater of the sanctuary service was a calling for exclusive salvation rather than a calling to be ambassadors of Jesus to the world. Thus rather than reaching out, they became exclusive and began to teach a restrictive religion rather than the freedom we have in Christ. They came to believe that one had to convert to Judaism to be saved. Was that true?
 - What about today, have any of these same ideas entered Christianity? Do any Christians believe that salvation is found in denominational affiliation? Do we miss that denominations can be called for mission, like the Jewish nation was called, but the mission is to evangelize the world with the truth about Jesus, to convert people to Christ, not institutional affiliation?
 - What does God want His true church to look like? How are we as His people to function?
 - We are to be united upon the methods, principles, and practices of God—truth, love, freedom!
- Eph 3:14-21: What is the power that Paul wants us to experience that surpasses all understanding—the love of God.
- Eph 4:1: Paul wants us to live lives that reveal the benefits of God's way of living, what would you say those benefits are?
 - Peace, love, joy, kindness, the fruits of the spirit, maturity, wisdom, freedom from being dominated and controlled by fear and selfishness, freedom from guilt and shame etc.
- Eph. 4:4-6: Paul says there is only one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father.
 - If there is only one, then why are there so many denominations that disagree?
 - What about one baptism, what does that mean?
- Eph. 4:9-10: What is the significance of Christ's ascension?
 - Isn't it true that before Jesus' incarnation, life, death, resurrection and ascension that God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit reigned over the universe?



- So what is significant about Jesus going back to heaven to resume His governance over all God's universal creation?
- Does Jesus now being fully human have any significance? Is Paul pointing our attention to this?
- Eph. 4:11: What is the significance of Christ choosing some people for different roles?
 - Is this the philosophy of the world today that some are better suited for some positions than others? Or is the philosophy of the world, what is known as equity, is that gifting, talent, ability, and calling are irrelevant to who we put in a position? What is the result? Do things work best in any organization if people are advanced based on something other than ability, achievement, talent, qualifications?
- Eph. 4:12-15: What is the goal or purpose of the body of Christ and the work we are to do? Advance the kingdom of God in developing godly character in people so that we are united in love and trust with God and each other. And to individually mature so that we develop the ability to think and discern for ourselves and stop being children tossed about by all the various tricks and deceits put out by the schemers.
 - What is required of each of us to experience this? We must reason together, think for ourselves, be fully persuaded in our own minds, establish beliefs based on the evidences God has given, understand His design law and how reality functions. We must refuse to believe based on authority of office, declaration, proclamation, charisma, emotion, signs, wonders—we must believe because we know, understand, and love the truth because it is true.
- Eph. 4:17-19: In Paul's day he warned about believing things that don't make sense which darkens the mind. This happens because they reject the truth about God and His kingdom. And this results in corruption of character, the loss of kindness, love, and moral virtue.
 - What law is involved here? The law of worship, by beholding we are changed.
 - Are we seeing this happening in the world today?
- Eph. 4:20-24: But those who are Christian were called out of such wickedness into Christ who recreates new hearts and right spirits, replacing fear and selfishness with love, transforming our characters to be like Christ.
- Eph. 4:25-32: Paul describes how the new heart with new desires and motives that we receive from Jesus empowers us to choose to say no to the old ways and yes to God's way of living. Christianity is not about legal adjustment, but about heart, mind, soul recreation.
- Eph 5:1-2: Paul calls us to imitate Christ in living self-sacrificial lives of love.
- Eph 5:3-6: What does Paul mean that there cannot be even a trace of immorality or any impurity?
 - Does this mean we won't struggle with temptation, or won't have moments of weakness and slip? No, think of it just like recovery from any illness—when a person with an infection begins treatment they have left the path of death and entered the path of life. This is conversion to Christ. But at that moment are all symptoms resolved? No, there is a process of healing and improvement as the remedy works in the person. And the goal is complete eradication of all the infection. So, too, when we come to Christ we are reborn with a new heart and right spirit that now desires, longs for, wants holiness—however we have habits, conditioned responses, addictions, neural pathways



established when we lived in violation of God's design i.e. in sin. And those old habits, conditioned responses, and pathways are not in harmony with our new hearts and spirits and thus there is a journey, a struggle, and healing process. Our new hearts/spirits must be freed from the infection of fear, distrust, selfishness, but we will still struggle with old habits that were established before we were reborn. Thus, we grieve in our spirits that we are not fully perfected and glorified, but in our hearts we do not cling to rebellion and sin. So we have no trace of the old ways left in our hearts that we cling to and prefer.

- Eph. 5:8-14: In Christ, while we still struggle with temptation, we live new lives that purposely seek to uplift Christ and advance God's kingdom and methods and our lives of light and truth expose the lies and false ways of the enemy.
- Eph. 5:15-21: We are to live in harmony with God's design laws for health, and live lives that actively grow and develop in the things of God and live God's love in how we treat others.
- Eph. 5:22-23: How are Christian husbands and wives to relate?
 - What is the big lesson from marriage that Paul wants us to learn in regard to Christ and the church?
 - What is the lesson from Christ and the church that Paul wants husbands and wives to learn in how they relate to each other?
 - What does it mean wives are to submit to their husbands?
- Eph. 6:1-4: What is the relationship that children are supposed to have to their parents? And parents to their children?
 - Are children to obey their parents in all things?
 - Is there an age when children need to stop obeying their parents?
 - What does it mean to honor one's parents?
 - Why is there blessing of long life for those who honor their parents? Is this an arbitrary use of God's power to perform a miracle to keep alive people who honor their parents or is this some outworking of one of God's design laws?
- Eph. 6:5-9: Does Paul's instruction to slaves and slave-masters mean Paul or God supports and promotes slavery?
- Eph. 6:10-18: What do you understand the armor of God to be?

What do you think of this letter? Does it have application to us today?
What would society be like if every person lived out these principles?

SABBATH

Read second paragraph,

“Paul has a profound purpose that motivates his letter. Partly because of his imprisonment (Eph. 3:13, Eph. 6:20), and partly because of ongoing persecution and temptations, the Ephesians are tempted to lose heart. Paul reminds them of what happened when they were converted, accepting Christ as their Savior and becoming part of the church. They have



become Christ's body (Eph. 1:19-23), Eph. 4:1-16), the building materials in the temple (Eph. 2:19-22), the bride of Christ (Eph. 5:21-33), and a well-equipped army (Eph. 6:10-20). They play a strategic role in fulfilling God's grand plan, to unite everything in Christ (Eph. 1:9, 10). Paul write to awaken the believers in Ephesus to their full identity and privileges as followers of Christ." (Adult SS Guide Third Quarter 2023, Ephesians p. 6).

When we are converted we become part of the church, the body of Christ, the bride etc., What does this mean? Is this a denomination?

How can one tell if they are a part of the true church of Christ?

Jesus said,

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (John 13:34-35 NIV84).

How is this a new command? Is it because they had been raised to believe God's commandments are imposed rules, that God's kingdom is a legal kingdom and Jesus revealed that God's law is design law and His kingdom is reality built upon love? Thus for the disciples this was a new idea, a new way of conceiving of God's kingdom, law, and methods?

So how do we recognize if we are part of God's church, the body of Christ, the bride of Christ?

John also wrote:

Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. **He who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous.** [What determines what is right or wrong? This is all about the moral decision making, the seven levels. If we have a legal view, an imposed law view, then right and wrong is about behavioral conformity—rule keeping. We will refuse to heal on Sabbath because it is breaking the rules and if we see someone doing it, even the Son of God, then we, in order to be just, need to lead the people to stone him. This is Pharisaism, in which rule keeping and law enforcement is used as a measure of righteousness, rather than living out God's living law of truth, love, and freedom in how we treat others.] He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. [And what is sinful? Transgression of the law, what law? A list of rules, or deviating from the design laws that God built reality to operate upon? And what are those, love, truth, freedom—which results, when followed in trust, loyalty, devotion, reliability. Thus, sin would be breaking trust with God, and that is what Paul says in Romans 14:23, whatever is not of faith or trust is sin. Lucifer in heaven didn't start his rebellion by breaking a rule; he started his rebellion by betraying his faith and breaking trust with God.] The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. [What has the devil been working to accomplish? He has been working to destroy the image of God in humanity and make human beings become the image bearers of Satan. Look at what is happening in the world. Can you see Satan's image being



manifest in more and more people and in society? Lies, propaganda, control, coercion, manipulation, exploitation, abuse, hate, perversion of all kinds, and much of it promoted under the banner of love for others, of tolerance, of compassion.] No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; [What does this mean? If we are part of God's church we will not continue to sin, not go on sinning? Are you comfortable with this idea or does it cause you anxiety? It is quite simple. Paul wrote that whatever is not of faith, or trust is sin (Romans 14:23). Remember, lies believed break the circle of love and trust and result in fear and selfishness, which results in acts of sin—the acts are the symptoms that result from the heart no longer operating upon love and trust. John is telling us that when we have been restored to trust then we stop living rebelliously, we stop living to gratify self, we stop living distrustfully...we do what we do out of faith or trust in God. It doesn't mean we don't make mistakes, we are finite, we can make errors, our driving to the supermarket can still result in an accident in which someone is hurt—but we don't seek to cause harm, we don't seek to break away from God and our healing or soul remains in His hands. So we don't go on living in selfish independence from God.] he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God. [We simply don't want to live outside of our love relationship with God any more. We run to Him with every care, concern, mistake, and also victory and celebration.] This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother. [How do we know who is a child of God and/or the devil? By whether they live in harmony with God's design laws of love, truth, and freedom in how they govern themselves and treat others or not. Those who claim a faith in God and perhaps promote the same doctrinal beliefs as you, but do so through imposed law, and therefore are willing to use power to coerce consciences and punish others on matters of conscience, are of the devil, just like those Jews who belonged to the right organized religious system and claimed to be children of God but crucified Christ.]

This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another. Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous. Do not be surprised, my brothers, if the world hates you. [There are two antagonistic powers at war—God's principle of love, truth, freedom versus Satan's principle of fear-driven survival of the fittest selfishness, lies, and coercive control. God's people love others to the point of self-sacrifice, Satan's people force others to do what they want and will even kill others to advance themselves. And Satan's people hate the light, the truth, and those who live the truth because the light itself, the truth itself, condemns them and they want to destroy the light and all light bearers. This is why certain groups in our society today are so aggressive in their intolerance of those who hold to Christian values and are always seeking to force their perverse lifestyles onto others—all under the name of being tolerant. Understand there is a difference between a person choosing what they do in governance of their life, and using force to make other people live and act in ways that praise, validate, and support what they believe is wrong. If a person wants to change their pronouns that is up to them, but the evil in this world cannot live with that, instead they want to use governmental coercive power to force other people to act and speak in ways that affirm them—in other words they want to coerce in order to promote their delusional worldview. And those who do not, they want to destroy and remove from society. Why? Because the truth is authoritative and regardless of the lies they tell themselves, the truth



still condemns them and rather than repenting and pursuing objective truth, they want to silence their own conscience and thus all sources of truth to which their conscience is sensitive.] We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death. Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him. [What does this mean? How is it that we pass from death to life if we love others? What does it mean that if we don't love we remain in death? Does this mean we were terminal, already dying, rather than we were healthy and alive and that death must be inflicted as a legal penalty?]

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. (1John 3:7-16 NIV84) [Does it make sense that we get life by dying, by laying down our life? Aren't we supposed to kill others to protect our life? Do you see the two antagonistic principles here?]

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well. This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God. (1 John 5:1-5 NIV84).

What does it mean to obey God's commands? Is it rule-keeping, or do the commandments mean something else?

What law lens do you understand it through?

To live in harmony with His commands means to live in harmony with His design for life, to be truthful and love the truth, to love God and others and live out other-centered giving, and to leave people free.

When we love God we:

- Do not place anything before Him in our hearts or priorities
- Do not follow the ways of the world and worship things made by us
- Do not misrepresent God's character by claiming to be a Christian but then using Satan's methods in how we live and treat others—in other words we don't take God's name in vain
- We remember the Sabbath as God's gift to us and cherish all that it reveals about God and we keep ourselves holy by living out God's principles that the Sabbath is a sign of, and we trust God by not pursuing our own business on the Sabbath

If we love others:

- We honor our parents by treating them with respect and applying God's principles of truth, love, and freedom to our relationship with them



- We do not murder
- We do not cheat or betray our spouses
- We do not bear false witness against others
- We do not steal
- We do not covet what others have

And this is not burdensome because when the heart is reborn to love it actually hurts, causes pain, is distressing, upsetting, hard, a burden to do any of these selfish things. It is much easier and joyful to not do these things.

Here it is from The Remedy:

Everyone who trusts Jesus—God's healing Remedy—is recreated in heart and mind and is a child of God. And everyone who loves the Creator loves those he created. This is how we know that we love the beings God created — by loving God and living in harmony with his methods and principles of self-sacrificing love. Those who genuinely love God will live lives that reveal him—lives that are in harmony with his commandments. And his commandments are not a burden placed upon us which we must perform, but the natural outgrowth of love—the victory over this selfish world that everyone who is healed by God experiences; and this victory over fear and selfishness is achieved when we trust God. Who is it that overcomes the survival-of-the-fittest principle of this world? Only those who recognize and accept that Jesus is God's Son. (1 John 5:1-5 REM).

So we can know that we are part of the church, the body of Christ, if we have been reborn to have hearts that love God and others and live that love in how we treat others. Do you agree? Can a person be part of the body of Christ, have a renewed heart and live out God's design law regardless of what denomination they belong?

Then what is the purpose of denominations or organized churches?

- Mission—denominations are important for mission to pool resources, organize people, and develop resources that can be used to advance the gospel.
- Join the denomination where God has called you to use your talents, abilities, and resources for the mission God has called you for.
- Paul was not called to stay in Jerusalem and worship with and minister to the Jews. Paul was called as a minister to the Gentiles. We each must go and advance the true kingdom of God in the field where God calls us.



SUNDAY

The lesson asks us to read Acts 19:13-20, but let's start with verse one and unpack it. This is from *The Remedy*

While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul journeyed inland to Ephesus. There he found some of the Lord's interns and asked them, "When you accepted Jesus as Messiah, did you receive the Holy Spirit who applies into your hearts and minds what Jesus achieved?" They replied, "No, we didn't even know there is an inner working of the Holy Spirit." [What is this talking about? Can we be saved through Jesus' sacrifice without the inner working of the Holy Spirit? Is salvation the process of cognitive acceptance of the facts, the truth, that Jesus is God, that Jesus is our substitutionary sacrifice, that Jesus achieved all that is necessary for salvation? Can one be saved by cognitively accepting this and making a legal claim for the blood of Jesus to pay the price and erase from the record books in heaven the list of sins they have committed? Or does salvation require the inner working of the Holy Spirit to transform the heart from fear and selfishness to love and trust?

In the book *The Desire of Ages* it describes the work of the Holy Spirit in our salvation this way—do you agree?

In describing to His disciples the office work of the Holy Spirit, Jesus sought to inspire them with the joy and hope that inspired His own heart. He rejoiced because of the abundant help He had provided for His church. The Holy Spirit was the highest of all gifts that He could solicit from His Father for the exaltation of His people. **The Spirit was to be given as a regenerating agent, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail.** The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of men to this satanic captivity was amazing. **Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead,** who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power. **It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature.** Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church.

Of the Spirit Jesus said, "He shall glorify Me." The Saviour came to glorify the Father by the demonstration of His love; so the Spirit was to glorify Christ by revealing His grace to the world. **The very image of God is to be reproduced in humanity.** The honor of God, the honor of Christ, is involved in the perfection of the character of His people. (The Desire of Ages 671.3)

This is countering the work of Satan who wants to reproduce the satanic image in humanity, and we are called to give glory to God and we do that by having His character reproduced in us.



“When He [the Spirit of truth] is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.” **The preaching of the word will be of no avail without the continual presence and aid of the Holy Spirit.** This is the only effectual teacher of divine truth. **Only when the truth is accompanied to the heart by the Spirit will it quicken the conscience or transform the life.** One might be able to present the letter of the word of God, he might be familiar with all its commands and promises; **but unless the Holy Spirit sets home the truth, no souls will fall on the Rock and be broken.** No amount of education, no advantages, however great, can make one a channel of light without the co-operation of the Spirit of God. The sowing of the gospel seed will not be a success unless the seed is quickened into life by the dew of heaven. Before one book of the New Testament was written, before one gospel sermon had been preached after Christ's ascension, the Holy Spirit came upon the praying apostles. Then the testimony of their enemies was, “Ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine.” Acts 5:28. (The Desire of Ages 671.4)

We need the Holy Spirit in our hearts to renew, enlighten, enable, and empower us. It is not sufficient to proclaim belief in a list of doctrines, to go through ritual water baptism, to stop working on the Sabbath each week, to pay tithes, to join a denomination—all of this can be done from a heart driven by fear, the fear of death, and the desire to save self and to advance oneself above others—Pharisaism. Salvation is means to be healed, to be transformed, to be renewed, to become like Jesus in character having the law written upon the heart. This is not a legal process it is a reality process. And the penal legal theologies based on the human law construct obstruct the real healing that God freely offers all of us.

Continuing with Acts 19:

So Paul asked, "What immersion in water did you participate in?" They answered, "The immersion by John."

Paul explained, "John immersed people in water to symbolize repentance, which is the preparation of the heart to receive the Remedy. He told people to trust the One coming after him, the One with the Remedy—that is, Jesus." When they heard the truth about the Remedy of Jesus, they were immersed into the character of the Lord Jesus. Paul placed his hands on their heads, and they were filled with the Holy Spirit. They began presenting the truth about God, and the Remedy of Jesus, in many languages. There were about twelve people in all. **[We can only be effective in advancing God's kingdom to the degree we are submitted to God and transformed and empowered by the Holy Spirit.]**

For three months Paul went to the synagogue and spoke out powerfully. He persuasively presented the evidence revealing God's kingdom of love, but some of them hardened their hearts, dug in their heels, and refused to believe the truth. They publicly ridiculed the Remedy as the only way to be healed, so Paul left them. He took the interns with him and began instructing them daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. He continued teaching there for two years, so that all of the Jews and non-Jews living in the province of Asia heard about the Remedy of Jesus. **[What happened here? Paul went to the Jews in Ephesus presenting them the**



truth of God's kingdom of love and Jesus Christ our Savior. But they rejected it—and what happens when people reject the truth? Their hearts harden. Consider who the Jews were—were they people without the blessings of God, or were they part of a group especially called by God for a mission to evangelize the world and given the prophets and inspired Scripture to assist them in evangelizing the world?

Could the Jews rightly say that they as a people were called by God and blessed by God? Yet, when Paul presents the advancing truth, what happened? Do we see this happening anywhere today? A people who have been blessed by God with a mission to evangelize the world to prepare it for the second advent, who have the inspired writings of God yet who reject the advancing truth of God's design law and refuse to return to worshipping the Creator and insist on worshipping the imperial dictator who makes up rules and uses his power to torture and kill? And when we present the advancing truth to them how do many of them respond? By hardening their hearts and telling those with this design law message that they cannot present such a message in their church and even telling people to leave, or they have a devil.]

God's healing love flowed through Paul in amazing ways. Scarves, napkins, or other pieces of cloth that had touched Paul were taken to the sick, and when the fabric touched the sick, their illness was cured, and any evil influences departed. [What do you think of this? Is this magic? Is there anything here about the sick proclaiming a faith in Jesus? We can assume they were taking it to sick believers, but it doesn't say so. What was the purpose of these miracles? Are miracles reliable evidence to who has the truth? Can Satan also perform miracles?]

Some Jewish exorcists who went around driving out evil angels thought they could use the name of Jesus like a magic incantation to free those whose minds were dominated by demons. They would say, "In the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches, I command you to leave." Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, had seven sons who were doing this. One day, they were trying it when an evil angel mocked them: "I know Jesus, and I know Paul, but who are you?" Then the man whose mind was possessed by an evil angel attacked them, and overpowered them all. He beat them so badly that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding. [What happened here? Why didn't the demon, the fallen evil angel, leave when Jesus' name was spoken out loud? Is it because they said Jesus and not Joshua or Yashua? Or is it because Jesus' name is not a magic incantation, to speak or pray in the name of Jesus means having a heart renewed to be like Jesus in character and that means one is filled with the Holy Spirit? Notice the evil angel spoke the name Jesus and it didn't harm it. This isn't magic, it isn't incantations, it isn't legal claims. One cannot claim the name or blood of Jesus in a legal mechanical or magical way to achieve some spiritual outcome. One must be renewed by the life of Jesus, which is symbolized by the blood of Jesus, so that they have the character of Jesus and then they will have the Holy Spirit and the power of God in their ministry.]

When news of this spread throughout Ephesus, both Jews and non-Jews were overcome with fear, and the name of the Lord Jesus was given much more respect. Many people who believed the truth about Jesus confessed their evil deeds publicly. A large number of people who had practiced witchcraft, black magic and sorcery brought their books of magic and burned them



publicly in a large bonfire. When they calculated the value of the books burned, it totaled fifty thousand silver coins (and one coin was a day's wage). With events like this, the message of the Remedy of Jesus spread widely and kept growing. (Acts 19:1-20 REM). [What happened here? How was it that people repented because of the actions of an evil angel? Because God's kingdom is the kingdom of reality, of truth, and this event revealed truth, revealed reality, and the Holy Spirit convicted hearts.]

MONDAY

The lesson asks us to read Acts 19:21-20:1, we will start with verse 23:

But before Paul left Ephesus, a great uproar arose about the Remedy. Demetrius, a silversmith who made a lot of money making silver shrines of Artemis, employed a large number of craftsmen. He called them together, along with others whose income depended on their business, and said: "Friends, you know what a good income we make from this business. And you have heard that this fellow Paul has come along teaching people that the gods we make with our own hands are not gods at all. He has convinced large numbers of people of this — here and all across the province of Asia. This is not only an attack on our livelihoods, but more so, it threatens to destroy the temple of the great goddess Artemis; and the goddess herself, who is worshiped all over the world, will be robbed of her glorious majesty." [What is happening here? What is the motive of Demetrius? Do you see selfishness interfering with the gospel? Do we see this today? Do we see people and organizations making decisions that coerce and violate consciences in order to not be sanctioned by the government, to keep their Medicare and Medicaid money flowing?]

They became so agitated upon hearing this, that they began chanting, "Ephesus, the state of Artemis the Great! Ephesus, the state of Artemis the Great!" The uproar spread throughout the entire city. A mob seized Gaius and Aristarchus, two men traveling with Paul from Macedonia, and marched as a group into the amphitheater. Paul wanted to go and speak to the crowd, but the interns would not allow it. Even some of the city officials, who were friends of Paul, sent messages, warning him not to go to the amphitheater.

The mob was frenzied. People were yelling many different things all at once, but most didn't even know why they were there. The Jews pushed Alexander to the front, and some people in the crowd began shouting at him, telling him what to say. He held up his hands, trying to silence the crowd in order to present a defense. But when the mob realized he was a Jew, they began chanting, "Ephesus, the state of Artemis the Great! Ephesus, the state of Artemis the Great!" This went on for about two hours. [Have we seen this over and over again when voices of truth want to speak a mob of protesters will scream and shout and get violent seeking to silence the speaker? Anyone with eyes to see should recognize such activity is not the work of the Holy Spirit but of a satanic spirit and realize they should not be a part of such movements. Satan has no truth on his side, thus those who advance satanic positions must use every means to silence voices of truth for the truth exposes the lies and sets hearts and minds free. But those



with truth lose nothing by challenge, investigation, questioning all such honest inquiry only bring more truth to light. Do you think that today when such mobs arise and shout and protest like this there are many people who join in, and just like in Ephesus, most don't even know why they are yelling?]

Finally, the city clerk managed to quiet the mob, and said, "People of Ephesus, the entire world knows that Ephesus is the state of Artemis the Great, who came down from heaven, and that we guard her temple. Since these facts are irrefutable, you should quiet down and not do anything rash. Why have you brought these men here? They have done no wrong. They have not robbed temples nor spoken against our goddess. If Demetrius and his trade union have a complaint against anyone, then they should file charges in court and let the matter be settled there. If you have any other issues, they too need to be settled in a legal assembly, not by mob action. What you have done has put us in danger of being charged with rioting, and if we are charged, we won't have any defense, for there is no reason for this uproar you have incited." After saying this, he sent them home. Once the protests died down, Paul met with the interns, gave them some departing words of encouragement, and left for Macedonia. (Acts 19:23-20:1 REM) [In this case the government was not in charge of or supporting the rioters. Sadly, today, many of the government officials support the rioters and will not intervene to stop them.]

THURSDAY

The second paragraph says,

“As Ephesians 1:9, 10 proclaims, the unity God has in mind is centered in Christ.” (SDA Adult SS Guide Third Quarter 2023, Ephesians, p. 11)

Why do you think the Christian world is divided into over 41,000 groups if they all claim Jesus and that following Jesus leads to unity?

Could the law lens people believe about God and His kingdom have any bearing on the divisions?