

# FIG TREE WATCHERS

*Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender  
and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. Even so,  
when you see all these things, you know that it is near, right at the door.*

*Matthew 24:32-33*



## Figtreewatchers Podcast Episode 138: Ephesians - Victory In Christ Jesus - Introduction Part 3

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**Episode Summary:** In this episode, which is part three of our introduction, we learned five keys to how Paul planted the church in Ephesus. These keys are: a church starts with believers, is spirit filled, baptizes new believers, makes strong disciples, and has sound biblical doctrine. It is in these guiding keys that Paul writes his letter to the Ephesians.

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### The Question of Ephesians:

***So the question to ask yourself is this: Can you as a Saint, made Holy by the blood of Jesus, live sufficiently under the blessings of God; while boldly proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus with incorruptible love, in a hostile pagan world?***

In this Episode we will focus on the Church of Ephesus. We will focus on the biblical formation of it as a Church. So lets go back to Acts as we continue in our Introduction of Ephesians.

Let's begin in Acts 19:1-10 NKJV.

After Paul left Ephesus on his second missionary Journey, Aquila and Priscilla stayed behind to tend to the small flock of Christians residing in Ephesus. In this time, according to Acts, God guides Apollos to come to Ephesus. Apollos a disciple of John the Baptist listens to the truth of Jesus and accepts it. Apollos is sent to meet up with other disciples and is quickly recognized for his zeal for the truth of Jesus Christ. For the disciple who fully puts his trust in Jesus, they should never live in fear; but in the victory of what God has already, futuristically, accomplished. Paul leaves Apollos in Corinth to nurture the Church and to shepherd it spiritually, trusting its growth to God.

This is part of what is commonly called Paul's 3rd missionary Journey. The Dates for this Journey are around 52 AD to 57AD. Paul most likely arrived in Ephesus in 53AD and stayed for a little over two years. ((ESV Study Bible by Crossway 2008)) In this passage we will learn several keys to effectively planting a church. In it we will understand the foundation of the Church of Ephesus and how the Gospel spread so rapidly.

### **1ST KEY: START WITH A CORE OF BELIEVERS**

Paul quickly finds believers, just like Apollos. They are not perfect in their understanding, but they are committed. He questions them very carefully, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" Notice that Paul is not questioning their belief in Jesus, but if they received the Holy Spirit, when they believed. So many people miss this importance. John had prepared them to believe on the Messiah for Salvation, but the Holy Spirit is the one who had to come to seal them for the day of redemption. (Ephesians 4:30)

(Luke 3:16)

Jesus is our salvation, but the works of our faith are dead if our lives are not filled with the Holy Spirit.

### **2ND KEY: ENSURE THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT IS PRESENT IN YOUR FAITH**

The way the disciples responded was clear that they did not know that the Holy Spirit had come. As disciples of John the Baptist they knew about the Holy Spirit and they understood that He was coming. What they did not know was if he had come. "We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit." F. F. Bruce argues that the correct translation articulates, "whether there is a Holy Spirit *given*." ((Commentary on The Book of The Acts by F.F. Bruce 1954. WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co Pg. 385))

What these disciples did not understand was, whether or not, the Holy Spirit had come. Today many so called, "Christians" are denying the Holy Spirit in their lives. They have no fruits of the Spirit in their lives. Paul in his earliest letter understood this when he wrote:

(Galatians 5:5-6)

Our faith is built upon the word of God in which the Holy Spirit guides us to all truth and convicts us of sin, righteousness and judgment. Please read John chapter 16 to understand this. Love is a fruit of the Spirit, so is the patient endurance of our faith. It comes from being filled with the Spirit. The Christian walks in the spirit and learns according to the Holy Spirit.

(Galatians 5:16-17)

The most important part of a Christian life is to walk out ones faith in the fruits of the Spirit. Many people today emphasize the gift of the Spirit, but have no visible fruits. They seek vain glory for themselves, and so bring disaster to other believers. The one who walks in humility desires the fruits of the Spirits more than the gifts. Paul is ensuring that theses disciples will walk out the fruits of the Spirit.

(Galatians 5:22-26)

### **3RD KEY: NEW BELIEVERS NEED TO BE PROPERLY BAPTIZED**

What is interesting about this passage is that it is the only place in all the New Testament in which a second baptism takes place. Paul is planting the church of Ephesus with a solid foundation, according to the commission of Jesus. It is this great commission that we are instructed the following:

(Mathew 28:19-20)

A sound, Biblically correct baptism is done by the authority of the Godhead (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) in the name of Jesus. It is in conducting baptisms this way, that we can obey both the mandate of Christ, and the examples given in Scripture. Every place we look in the New Testament, we find all converts baptized in the name of Jesus. This makes sense for our salvation is in Christ, when we pray its to the Father through the Holy Spirit in the name of Jesus. In fact the phrase "In Christ" is used 27 times in the book of Ephesians.

(Ephesians 2:18)

Why does this matter? Because we are adopted as Children by God our Father through the Holy Spirit, who leads us and seals us, in the name of Jesus.

(Romans 8:14-17)

### **4TH KEY: A SPIRIT FILLED CHURCH MAKES DISCIPLES**

Today many churches are obsessed with evangelism but not with discipleship. Churches have huge numbers of lukewarm "Christians", but have nothing to demonstrate a maturing and disciplined faith in Jesus. The first part of the mandate of Mathew 28:19 is "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations". Dr. Kieth Philips describes discipleship as such, "*Christian discipleship is a teacher-student relationship, based on the model of Christ and His disciples, in which the teacher reproduces the fullness of life he has in Christ in the student so well that the student is able to train others to teach others.*" ((The Making of a Disciple by Dr. Kieth Philips 1981. World Impact Press, Pg. 15))

A disciple follows the command of Jesus, "Follow me". They choose to repent, abandon sin, renounce self-seeking pursuits and to become obedient to the doing of Gods word. To be a disciple is to pick up ones own cross and to deny self. "Christianity without self death is only an abstract philosophy. It is Christianity without Christ." ((The Making of a Disciple by Dr. Kieth Philips 1981. World Impact Press, Pg. 17))

The disciple believes he is crucified with Christ, "***It is no longer I who lives, but Christ who lives in me***" (Galatians 2:20) The evidence of repentance is discipleship. Paul preached repentance and created disciples.

(Acts 26:19-20)

Repentance is always the work of God in us done by the conviction of the Holy Spirit.

(2 Corinthians 7:9-10)

## **5th KEY: A CHURCH BUILT ON JESUS IS SOUND IN BIBLICAL DOCTRINE**

(1Corinthians 9:14)

Paul Instructs Timothy that faithful men of God must be able to teach others the Gospel.

(2Timothy 2:1-3)

Notice the endless strategy of discipleship it flows generational. The victorious life of Christ spreads generationally to the faithful. The foundation of the Church is a shared citizenship of believers, *"having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord... indwelled by the Holy Spirit"*

(Ephesians 2:19-22)

Today we learned from this passage 5 Keys to growing a church biblically. A biblical church encourages us on how to live a victorious life in Jesus while engaging a pagan world.