

# 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 150: Ephesians - Jesus and Ephesus

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These show notes were created and edited by Stephan Caraway and Ayo Shosanya of Figtreewatchers

**Episode Summary:** In this episode we will focus on the warning Jesus gave Ephesus. We will examine why Jesus needs to be our foundation guided by the Holy Spirit through the truth of God's word. Through the warning Jesus gave the church of Ephesus, we can understand how the church is to live up to its role of being a light in the darkness. It needs to be a burning lamp, never hiding the truth, or it will be removed by Jesus Himself.

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### Review

In past episodes we have been covering the city and church of Ephesus and its foundation. We examined how the early Christians engaged pagan society, while abiding in Christ. We discussed the importance of living out

a sanctified life separate from paganism, so that we can keep our selves from being polluted by the world. Then we dug into five successful keys that the church incorporated into their faith as they actively engaged the city of Ephesus. In the last episode we investigated the hostility of the city towards the believers and the dangers of being apathetic and how we as christians should respond.

In each podcast we are asking a question. This question is to self examine our heart before God.

### **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 warning Jesus gave Ephesus. We will examine why Jesus needs to be our foundation guided by the Holy Spirit through the truth of Gods word. It is through the warning Jesus gave the church of Ephesus, that we can understand how the church is to live up to its role in being a light in the darkness. It needs to be a burning lamp, never hiding the truth, or it will be removed by Jesus Himself.

Let's begin in Revelation 2.

***1***“***To the angel of the church of Ephesus write,***

***'These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands: 2***“***I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; 3***and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary. ***4***Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. ***5***Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent. ***6***But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

***7***“***He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.***”

As we unpack this passage we will focus on how Christ see's the role of the church in the life of the believer and where its authority comes from. It comes from Jesus. In the very first verse we learn that the Church is subject to Jesus. Christ is the head of the Church. For it was Paul who wrote, ***“For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.”*** (Ephesians 5:23) The Church should have four key roles as being under the headship of Christ:

1) The Church is an assembly of believers, who assemble together in the name of Christ. In Christ alone we gather and not in any other name. We don't gather together because of a celebrity pastor, or because of the pope or even Mary. ***“Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.”*** (Matthew 18:19-20) See also Revelation 1:12-13 for another verse where Jesus states this.

2) The second role of the Church is to obey everything Christ commanded us through His Word, the scriptures and the Holy Spirit. **“And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.”** (Matthew 28:18-20 NKJV) When a doctrine of a church differs from what Jesus taught in the scriptures, then we know that the church doctrine is wrong. For example did Jesus ever instruct a believer that it was ok to seek guidance, prayer or intercession from a dead person? The answer is clearly “No!” In fact Jesus instructed us to go directly to the Father invoking only His name. We can rely on Christ and His instructions because of the Holy Spirit. We don’t need the aid of dead saints or even “Mary” because we have a Helper. Jesus promised us this, **“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.”** (John 14:26 NKJV)

3) The third role of the Church is to be a witness of the truth, to hear the truth that comes from the Holy Spirit and Scripture and to declare it. Jesus described John the Baptist as one who bore the witness of Christ. (John 5:32) Jesus also gave the description that John was a “burning and shining lamp.” (John 5:35) Later Jesus, states that the scriptures are a witness which testify of Jesus, who is our eternal life. (John 5:39-40) Paul understood this role for the Church to be a witness, a burning lamp, when he wrote in Hebrews, **“Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”** (Hebrews 12:1-2)

4) The fourth role of the church is to await the return of Christ with eagerness, holding on to our faith; while stirring up love and good works, never forsaking our assembly together before God in the name of Jesus. Hebrew tells us this, **“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”** (Hebrews 10:23-25)

Peter also instructed the church in a similar manner, when he wrote, **“But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers. And above all things have fervent love for one another, for “love will cover a multitude of sins.” Be hospitable to one another without grumbling.”** (1 Peter 4:7-9 NKJV)

In the last episode we mentioned that if you were a follower of Jesus, you followed the "Way". Today Christianity has been so corrupted by wicked individuals who have entered the church, that the church is no longer a witness. As Jude warns us, **“For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.”** (Jude 1:4)

A church should reside in the midst of Christ, bound by prayer, devoted to love, living in the righteousness of Christ, based upon His works on the cross not on ours. Being a follower of Jesus, should always cause disruptions because it is a witness to truth. This is in conflict with the world. The Gospel shakes us, it convicts us of our sin, our self righteousness and our impending judgment, leaving the sinner confused and outraged over his own guilt.

Today we live in a world of rage and hostility towards the Gospel. Churches are compromising the truth with man made doctrines that lead you away from Jesus, pointing elsewhere. So what is a Believer in Jesus to do? What do you do when your pastor, bishop or pope is leading you astray by corrupting the message of the Gospel? Jesus Gives us the answer.

Jesus is holding the seven stars, the angels, the ones bringing the message to the churches, in His right hand. He tells the individual believer within the assembly of the Church, **“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes...”** (Revelation 2:7a, 11a, 17a, 29, 3:6, 3:13, 3:22)

Over and over again Jesus tells the individual to listen to the Holy Spirit. he does not tell them to listen to the corrupt church or the false teacher or the bad doctrine. This is consistent with what Jesus told his disciples, **“However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you.”** (John 16:13-15)

So many individuals have left the church because of “church hurt”. They fail to recognize the truth because they don't know the word of God, thus they can't hear the Holy Spirit. They lack discernment. Today so many self proclaimed christians walk in weakness, not realizing that they can walk in the power of God.

Paul tells us the solution,

**“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”** (Romans 10:17)

**“This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh? Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?—”(Galatians 3:2-3, 5)**

**“Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience. For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”** (Hebrews 4:11-12)

In the last episode I mentioned that, “The Holy Spirit is God and works powerfully in the lives of those who believe and are filled with the Spirit. Spiritual warfare is engulfing every large city today, so we must then walk according to the Spirit and not according to the flesh.”

This is why I urge you to put aside all fear and cumbrances, put aside all worry and let your life be saturated with the fruits of the Spirit, strengthened in the knowledge of Gods word and stained with the preciousness blood of Jesus that has given us freedom.

**“For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”** (Galatians 5:13-14)

Jesus knows our works, our labors and our struggles. He even knows that which is bothering us and afflicting us. We cannot abandon the struggle, we must press on and do so, in love and in the truth of Gods Word.

The disciple of Jesus must continue to engage the darkness with the light of Christ not fleeing from it. We don't fear violence or the darkness, as Christians we boldly engage it. We flee from false doctrine but plant our

selves where satan sits shining the light of gospel message wherever his lies and hate prevail.

Why? Because Christ is the way the truth and the life. We must be active in hope, Love, and doing good works of discipleship and ministry. We must be active in the Holy Spirit. Finally, we must be active in breaking down the strong holds of satan through corporate prayer and the engagement of spiritual warfare through the gifts of the Holy Spirit.