

LESSON 55

Paul's Work in Ephesus

ACTS 19:1-10; 20:17-24



BIBLE TRUTH

THE MESSAGE OF THE GOSPEL MUST BE PROCLAIMED AND PRESERVED

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week’s lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

2. BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read Acts 19:1–10; 20:17–24 from the Scriptures or read story 133, “Paul’s Work in Ephesus,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

3. OBJECT LESSON 1 15 MIN

Making Our Doctrine Right

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ one-quarter-inch diameter rope—enough for each student to have a two-foot length
- ✓ hole punch
- ✓ three-by-five index cards
- ✓ pencils

4. TEACHING/DISCUSSION 10 MIN

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

5. OBJECT LESSON 2 15 MIN

Sound Doctrine

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ a three-foot brass rod 3/16-inch thick or a straight piece of wire coat hanger
- ✓ vise-grip (locking) pliers

6. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

7. ACTIVITY TIME 10 MIN

Color a Picture

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ coloring page for NT Lesson 55—one for each child
- ✓ markers or crayons

8. CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

9. BONUS OBJECT LESSON 20 MIN

False Gods

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ costumes as needed (flat sheets or large towels, rope belts, and a few broomsticks)

TOTAL 95 MIN

PREPARING TO TEACH

TEACHING POINTS

Paul corrects wrong doctrine—Apollos was an eloquent speaker who came to Ephesus and taught about Christianity, but who did not know the complete gospel. When Paul reached Ephesus, he met some disciples of Apollos. They had been instructed on the ministry of John the Baptist and the need to turn away from their sins, but they hadn't been taught about the ministry of Jesus and trusting in his work on the cross. They didn't even know about the Holy Spirit. After Paul spoke to them, they believed and were baptized. Paul laid his hands on them and the Holy Spirit came upon them. Although this was only a small group, Paul saw an opportunity to serve them and spent three months in the synagogue laboring to teach them sound doctrine.

Paul trained the local leaders—After three months in Ephesus, teaching in the synagogue and meeting with opposition, Paul turned his attention to the local leaders to train them to minister in the local church. For two years he taught them daily.

It is reasonable to assume that as a result of Paul's work in Ephesus, local churches spread all over Asia. This occurred as a result of Paul's teaching those who came to hear him, and of those who took the gospel message throughout Asia Minor. By the time Paul returned to Ephesus (see Acts 20:17) there were elders and a thriving local church. The work of the apostle, in correcting false and incomplete doctrine, cannot be underestimated.

Paul planted local churches—Once the church in Ephesus was strengthened by having leaders who had an accurate understanding of the gospel, it was time for Paul to move on to continue his apostolic work. A quick survey of Paul's life reveals an amazing apostolic mission. The advance of the gospel to the Gentiles in his generation can be attributed largely to this one man's Spirit-empowered ministry. Paul's journeys through the Mediterranean area saw churches planted in Ephesus, Philippi, Thessalonica, and Corinth. From these key cities the message spread throughout the nations of that area.

Where Is the Gospel? _____

How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?

God used Paul to bring an accurate gospel message to the Ephesians. As a result, the work that began with a small group of disciples, grew into a thriving church. Paul left after working with the Ephesians for three years. After some time, Paul returned and paid a visit to Ephesus. He gathered the Ephesian elders

(Acts 20:17) and reflected back on the time he had spent teaching them. He said, "I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable...testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:20–21).

When Paul first arrived, the twelve disciples of Apollos seemed to be acquainted only with the first half of the gospel, repentance toward God. Paul corrected them by giving them the complete gospel message, teaching them to place their faith in Jesus Christ. It is good to repent of sins against God, but apart from placing faith in Jesus and what he did on the cross there is no salvation. Acts 4:12 says, "And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." The result of bringing the gospel to the Ephesians was that many repented and were healed, delivered, and converted.

THE LESSON

OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read Acts 19:1–10; 20:17–24 from the Scriptures or read story 133, "Paul's Work in Ephesus," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

OBJECT LESSON 1 **15 MIN**

Making Our Doctrine Right

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ one-quarter-inch diameter rope—enough for each student to have a two-foot length
- ✓ hole punch
- ✓ three-by-five index cards
- ✓ pencils

This exercise is designed to demonstrate that an apostle untangled the knots of false doctrine and straightened out the doctrine of churches so that they could carry on with the mission of the gospel.

Hand out a two-foot length of rope to each student, along with a three-by-five card with a hole punched in the center. Have each student write the word “Scripture” on their card. (Write the word on the board for a younger class to copy.) Tell the class that Scripture is the test of sound doctrine. Have them pass their ropes through the hole in the index card. Explain that if our teaching is tested by the truth of Scripture, it is called sound doctrine. Tell them that one of the things apostles did was ensure that local churches were being taught sound doctrine.

Now tell the class that you are going to have them introduce doctrinal error. With the rope out of the card, have each student tie a knot in it, and then show them how it will not pass through the hole in the card. When we compare doctrine with the Bible we can tell whether it is true or false.

Now explain to the children that you are going to have a contest to see who can play the role of the best apostle by untangling the false doctrine represented by the knots. First, give each child one minute to tie their rope into as many knots as they can. Then have them pass their rope to the person next to them. When you say go, everyone should try to untangle the knots of error on their rope of teaching. The first person to untangle the knots and pass their doctrine (rope) through the test of Scripture (the hole in their index card) is the winner. Have them stand as soon as they complete the exercise.

Use this exercise as a way to talk about Paul’s role in the Ephesians’ church to preserve and promote sound doctrine.

TEACHING/DISCUSSION 10 MIN

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

OBJECT LESSON 2 15 MIN

Sound Doctrine

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ a three-foot brass rod 3/16-inch thick or a straight piece of wire coat hanger
- ✓ vise-grip (locking) pliers

Explain to the children that one of the roles of an apostle in the early church was to preserve sound doctrine. Point out how Paul, in Acts 19, corrected the error of those who had learned about John’s baptism but didn’t know the gospel of Christ. Paul was committed to sound doctrine. Explain it as keeping your truth straight and not allowing false teaching to make it crooked.

Read aloud Paul’s instructions regarding sound doctrine 2 Timothy 4:2–4 and Titus 1:9–11. Then explain to the children that Paul wanted to keep Timothy’s and Titus’s doctrine straight and protect it from becoming false and crooked.

Recruit two volunteers and have them stand side by side facing the class. Show the class the brass rod and explain that it represents the straight way of sound doctrine. Point the rod at the class so they can see it is straight. Tell them that sound doctrine can be corrupted and made crooked very easily if we are not careful. Stand behind one of the volunteers and have her grasp the rod at both ends and hold it in front of her. Then invite her to bend the rod. It should bend rather easily.

Give the rod to the second volunteer and ask him to straighten it. It will be very difficult. Explain that we need special tools to help fix false doctrine. Pull out the pliers and with a firm grip straighten the rod or wire. (Practice straightening the rod or wire at home before class so that you get the hang of it.)

Explain that the apostle Paul was sent by God to help straighten false doctrine. Today, we have God’s Word as a tool to help straighten our false doctrine. It is easy to stray from the straight path of sound doctrine, but when we do, the clear teaching of Scripture can bring us back to the truth.

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITY TIME 10 MIN

Color a Picture

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ coloring page for NT Lesson 55—one for each child
- ✓ markers or crayons

While the children are coloring, engage them by asking the following questions:

- **Who did Paul tell the people in the picture about?**
(Paul told them about the Lord Jesus. He told them to believe. They believed and were baptized.)
- **What did Paul do for the people from Ephesus after they were baptized?**
(He prayed for them and laid his hands on them to receive the Holy Spirit.)
- **What happened to them when Paul laid his hands on them?**
(The people Paul prayed for were filled with the Holy Spirit and started speaking in tongues and prophesying.)

CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

Pick several children to pray prayers based on the day's Scripture passages.

BONUS OBJECT LESSON 20 MIN

False Gods

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ costumes as needed (flat sheets or large towels, rope belts, and a few broomsticks)

Act out the story of the idol craftsmen in Acts 19:23–27. This need not be the whole riot, but just the speech of Demetrius. This conversation reveals the shallow faith of these idol worshippers. They knew the idols were worthless; their concern was to protect their business.

They were motivated by greed. Once the children have learned the skit, take the show on the road to a preschool classroom.

Lead your class in a discussion by asking the following questions:

- What effect did the spread of the gospel in Asia Minor have on the idol craftsmen?
(These men were losing business as people converted to Christianity and the truth about their idols was revealed.)
- Were these craftsmen trying to protect their god or their money?
(They were trying to protect their money. If people stopped buying their idols, they would lose a lot of money.)
- How was the God of the Christians in Ephesus different from Artemis of the Ephesians, their local god?
(Jesus rose again from the dead. He is alive and he is the Creator of the universe. Artemis of the Ephesians was a made-up false god who could do nothing.)

LESSON 55 - PAUL'S WORK IN EPHESUS

