



Repentance Tabernacle Church

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Reminders from Ephesians

Lesson Text: Acts 20

Focus Verses: Acts 20:28-31 -²⁸Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. ²⁹For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. ³⁰Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. ³¹Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

Truth About Covenant: Covenant calls us to follow the example of our Spirit-led, Spirit filled leaders.

Covenant Context: Paul taught throughout the letters he wrote, such as the letter to the Ephesians, how to live in covenant with God and with each other.

The Christian community in Ephesus was established when Paul came and found some disciples of John the Baptist in Acts. 19. After Paul shared the gospel, those disciples were baptized and received the Holy Ghost. Paul preached and taught in Ephesus for three years, converting both Jews and Gentiles (Acts 20:31). Much of the Book of Acts was the church preaching to sinners to teach them how to be right with God. But in Ephesus we see Paul preaching to the church, teaching them how to live now that they had been made right with God. To be fully mature disciples of Jesus, we must have both: preaching to saints and to sinners.

Paul warned the Ephesian leaders that false teachers would come from within and without, making false disciples. Paul called the leaders to watch out, not only for themselves, but also for the church. Preserving the doctrinal integrity of the church involved keeping an eye out for “**wolves**” who taught lies as the Ephesians leaders fed God’s flock the true Word of God.

A prophet named Agabus warned Paul that he was facing imprisonment if he traveled to Jerusalem. Paul realized he would never see the Ephesians again after his journey. Paul finished his farewell by reminding the leaders of Jesus’ words: “*It is more blessed to give than to receive*” (Acts 20:35). Let us follow Jesus’ and Paul’s instruction to give of our finance, time, and talents to help disciple other new believers.

Paul prayed that the church would be strengthened by the Spirit in their inner being. Christian strength is more than a show because it works within us, enabling us to endure in the faith and faithfully witness despite difficulties. **Spiritual strength is only produced when we abide in the Spirit, obey God’s Word, and live in harmony with God’s church.** Paul recommended the gifts of spiritual leaders that prepare the church for ministry and build up the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:11-12). **Present-day believers are strengthened through spiritual disciplines, examples of leaders who live and teach the gospel, and examples of leaders scribed in Scripture.** When we strengthen and cooperate with one another, we are not easily swayed by deception.

Living in restored relationship with God means we are called to live holy and above the dregs of sin. Paul told the Ephesians not to walk “*as other Gentiles walk,*” pursuing vanity and uncleanness (Ephesians 4:17-19). Instead, they were to “*put off . . . the old man*” and “*put on the new man,*” which is to take off the old identity as children of darkness and put on the new identity as children of God (Ephesians 4:22-24). Family privileges include direct access to God and strength through His Spirit, a growing knowledge of His love, a new purpose for living, and communion and connection within the body.

Paul’s message in Ephesians and still God’s message today: The wall has come down. The wall that separated the Jews from the Gentiles in the Temple in Jerusalem has come down. The 4-inch-thick, 60-foot-tall veil that separated all humanity from our holy God has come down. **The wall between Jew and Gentile, rich and poor, bond and free, male and female has come down because of the gospel, and everyone is invited into covenant relationship with Jesus Christ.**

As God’s church, let us live faithful to our covenant relationship with God. Let us be faithful to our spiritual disciplines, to worshiping with our brothers and sisters, and to looking for people like us and not like us because everyone is welcome in the kingdom of God.