

## INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture texts: **Acts 19:1, 5, 18-20; Ephesians 1:13-17; Revelation 2:1-7.**
- B. We know quite a lot about the church in Ephesus.
- C. The history of this congregation shows a great start, a good middle, but a poor ending.
- D. We can learn some good things and bad things for our life by looking this congregation.

## I. THE BEGINNING.

- A. Scripture texts: **Acts 19:1, 5, 18-20.**
- B. Paul found some disciples in Ephesus. This means a great attitude, that of wanting to **follow** and **learn**. The Israelites were condemned for not having this attitude (Hosea 4:6; 8:12).  
(**Hos 4:6**) My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being My priest. Since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.  
(**Hos 8:12**) Though I wrote for him ten thousand precepts of My law, They are regarded as a strange thing.
- C. The great commission tells us to go and find people who want to learn. We must take the gospel to everyone, but we are to make learners and followers out of them (Mt. 28:19).
- D. Luke 9:23 gives the three step formula for being a disciple.  
And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me."
- E. Notice also that these people were penitent. They completely left their old lifestyle when they became Xians (19:18-20).
- F. Their faith had become known everywhere.

## II. THE MIDDLE.

- A. Scripture text: **Ephesians 1:13-17.**
- B. The letter to the Ephesians contains little or no condemnation. This was a growth minded, maturing people to whom Paul wrote some beautiful things.
- C. Think of the difference between the attitude and remarks of this letter and First Corinthians!
- D. Some things that Paul wrote about:
  - 1. All spiritual blessings (**1:3**).
  - 2. JC head over all things to the church (**1:22-23**).
  - 3. We are saved by grace through faith (**2:8-9**).
  - 4. We have the unfathomable riches of X (**3:8-9**).
  - 5. Gifts have been given to the church (**4:11-16**).
  - 6. Always giving thanks (**5:19-20**).
  - 7. Stand firm with the armor of God (**6:11-14**).
- E. This congregation, at this time, is a good model for the church at any age.

## III. THE END.

- A. Scripture text: **Revelation 2:1-7.**
- B. I don't think that these words indicate that the church was about to die, but the city of Ephesus is now in ruins and there is no church there.
- C. Notice the difference of how John writes, as compared to Paul in Ephesians, and Luke in Acts.
- D. Not everything was bad. They were trying to be doctrinally correct (2:2), and persevering under stress (2:3).
- E. But something was missing--something that had been present earlier. What was missing was **their love for Jesus**. He was no longer the motivating force in their lives.
- F. These brethren were straight as a gun barrel doctrinally and just as empty spiritually!

#### IV. LESSONS TO BE LEARNED.

- A. The church in Ephesus had a great beginning, a good middle, and a bad end.
- B. Individuals can be the same way. We start off great when we are baptized, do well for a while, and then end up complacent and satisfied with something other than true discipleship.
- C. Marriages fail when the romance goes out of the relationship. Churches will fail **when the romance with X is over**. Is the excitement gone in your Xianity? Do you have enthusiasm to continue in all things?
- D. Do you feel more excited or less excited about your Xian walk than you did when you were baptized?
- E. Pep, power, program, games, gimmicks and tricks don't work in helping people to remain faithful. We need to fall in love with Jesus. Even doctrinal purity, if alone, is not enough to keep one faithful.

#### CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. May we resolve to do the following:
  - 1. Be truly penitent, ready to learn, and follow Jesus.
  - 2. Have peace and harmony one with another in the church.
  - 3. Never be satisfied or complacent in your daily walk.
- B. Because the Ephesians had left their first love, Jesus was threatening to remove His fellowship from them (the candlestick).
- C. Plan of salvation for non-Xians, erring Xians.