

The background of the slide is a sepia-toned photograph of a church interior. In the background, several people are visible, some standing and some kneeling, suggesting a worship service. The architecture features a prominent pulpit on the left and a balcony or upper level on the right.

The Early Church, Our Church

A seven-week worship series

3. Passionate Purpose & Plan



Ephesus

- City in Asia Minor that predates Greek empire
- Mentioned in Acts, Paul's epistles & Revelation
- Port city next to Aegean Sea
- Ancient ruins are an archeologist's paradise
- Large city—civic theater seated 25,000
- Temple to Artemis (Diana) was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world

Paul Travels to Ephesus

Acts 19:2-4 NLT

2 “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” he asked them. “No,” they replied, “we haven’t even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.”

3 “Then what baptism did you experience?” he asked. And they replied, “The baptism of John.”

4 Paul said, “John’s baptism called for repentance from sin. But John himself told the people to believe in the one who would come later, meaning Jesus.”

Acts 19:5-7 NLT

5 As soon as they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. **6** Then when Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in other tongues and prophesied. **7** There were about twelve men in all.

Acts 19:8-10 NLT

8 Then Paul went to the synagogue and preached boldly for the next three months, arguing persuasively about the Kingdom of God. **9** But some became stubborn, rejecting his message and publicly speaking against the Way. So Paul left the synagogue and took the believers with him. Then he held daily discussions at the lecture hall of Tyrannus. **10** This went on for the next two years, so that people throughout the province of Asia—both Jews and Greeks—heard the word of the Lord.

Signs of the Kingdom

- vs. 5 baptisms in the name of Christ
- vs. 6 visible manifestations of Holy Spirit
- vs. 8 bold preaching of the Good News
- vs. 11-12 miracles and exorcisms
- vs. 18 confession of sinful practices
- vs. 19 burning of occult-related books
- vs. 20 message spreads quickly

Resistance in Ephesus



And the crowd shouted,
“Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!”

Acts 19:23-41 NLT
The Riot in Ephesus

Paul, Ephesians 1:1-5 NLT

3 All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ. **4** Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. **5** God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure.

Ephesians 1:6-8 NLT

6 So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son.

7 He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins. **8** He has showered his kindness on us, along with all wisdom and understanding.

Ephesians 1:9-11 NLT

9 God has now revealed to us his mysterious plan regarding Christ, a plan to fulfill his own good pleasure. **10** And this is the plan: At the right time he will bring everything together under the authority of Christ—everything in heaven and on earth.

11 Furthermore, because we are united with Christ, we have received an inheritance from God, for he chose us in advance, and he makes everything work out according to his plan.

Ephesians 3:3-5 NLT

3 As I briefly wrote earlier, God himself revealed his mysterious plan to me. **4** As you read what I have written, you will understand my insight into this plan regarding Christ. **5** God did not reveal it to previous generations, but now by his Spirit he has revealed it to his holy apostles and prophets.

Ephesians 3:6-7 NLT

6 And this is God's plan:

Both Gentiles and Jews who believe the Good News share equally in the riches inherited by God's children. Both are part of the same body, and both enjoy the promise of blessings because they belong to Christ Jesus. **7** By God's grace and mighty power, I have been given the privilege of serving him by spreading this Good News.

Ephesians 3:8-9 NLT

8 Though I am the least deserving of all God's people, he graciously gave me the privilege of telling the Gentiles about the endless treasures available to them in Christ.

9 I was chosen to explain to everyone this mysterious plan that God, the Creator of all things, had kept secret from the beginning.

Ephesians 3:10-11 NLT

10 God's purpose in all this was to use the church to display his wisdom in its rich variety to all the unseen rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. **11** This was his eternal plan, which he carried out through Christ Jesus our Lord.

Paul's Purpose-Driven Life

Paul, 2 Corinthians 11:23-25 NLT

23 I know I sound like a madman, but I have served him far more! I have worked harder, been put in prison more often, been whipped times without number, and faced death again and again. **24** Five different times the Jewish leaders gave me thirty-nine lashes. **25** Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked. Once I spent a whole night and a day adrift at sea.

2 Corinthians 11:26-27 NLT

26 I have traveled on many long journeys. I have faced danger from rivers and from robbers. I have faced danger from my own people, the Jews, as well as from the Gentiles. I have faced danger in the cities, in the deserts, and on the seas. And I have faced danger from men who claim to be believers but are not. **27** I have worked hard and long, enduring many sleepless nights. I have been hungry and thirsty and have often gone without food. I have shivered in the cold, without enough clothing to keep me warm.

2 Corinthians 11:28-31 NLT

28 Then, besides all this, I have the daily burden of my concern for all the churches. **29** Who is weak without my feeling that weakness? Who is led astray, and I do not burn with anger?

30 If I must boast, I would rather boast about the things that show how weak I am. **31** God, the Father of our Lord Jesus, who is worthy of eternal praise, knows I am not lying.

Paul, 2 Timothy 4:6-8 NLT

6 As for me, my life has already been poured out as an offering to God. The time of my death is near.

7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, and I have remained faithful. **8** And now the prize awaits me—the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on the day of his return. And the prize is not just for me but for all who eagerly look forward to his appearing.

Last Words to Ephesians

Paul, Acts 20:18-38 NLT

18 “You know that from the day I set foot in the province of Asia until now **19** I have done the Lord’s work humbly and with many tears. I have endured the trials that came to me from the plots of the Jews. **20** I never shrank back from telling you what you needed to hear, either publicly or in your homes. **21** I have had one message for Jews and Greeks alike—the necessity of repenting from sin and turning to God, and of having faith in our Lord Jesus.

Acts 20:35

35 And I have been a constant example of how you can help those in need by working hard. You should remember the words of the Lord Jesus: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"



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