

## Foundations

**Scripture:** Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To God’s holy people in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus: <sup>2</sup>Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>3</sup>Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. Ephesians 1:1-3

While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples <sup>2</sup>and asked them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” They answered, “No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.” <sup>3</sup>So Paul asked, “Then what baptism did you receive?” “John’s baptism,” they replied. <sup>4</sup>Paul said, “John’s baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus.” <sup>5</sup>On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. . . . <sup>8</sup>Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God. . . . <sup>10</sup>This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord. Acts 19:1-5,8, 10

The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. <sup>17</sup> Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. Romans 8:16-17

### Discussion Questions

1. Paul wrote to the Ephesians from a Roman prison between 60 and 63 AD to encourage and equip the church. Acts 19 describes how this church began. Why wouldn’t those first disciples in Ephesus have heard about the Holy Spirit before Paul got there? Can church goers today be ignorant about the Holy Spirit? If so, how can we do for them what Paul did for the Ephesians? Eph. 1:1; Acts 19: 1-5, 8, 10
2. Paul identifies himself as an apostle. “Apostle” is listed as a spiritual gift in I Cor. 12:28-30 and Eph. 4:11.<sup>1</sup> An apostle has the Spirit-given ability and authority to begin and minister to new churches. This includes bringing in converts, teaching, organizing, and discipling. From what you know about Paul, why was he an unlikely candidate to be an apostle? Why would it have been important for Paul to be recognized as an apostle? How can we know what our spiritual gifts are and why does it matter if we do?
3. Paul describes the Christians in Ephesus as holy and faithful and he refers to “Christ” five times in these three verses. What’s the connection between being holy and faithful and being in Christ? Why is understanding this foundational to a healthy relationship with God? Ephesians 1:2, Romans 8:16-17
4. In Ephesians 1:2 Paul writes, “Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” How would you describe grace and peace? Why are they important to our relationship with God?
5. Ephesians 1:3 says we have been blessed in the heavenly realms with spiritual blessings. What are some spiritual blessings? Can they also impact our earthly life now? If so, how? Romans 8:16-17
6. Praise is the sole response Paul identifies with the revelation of who God is, what He has done and who God has made us in Christ. What makes other responses inadequate or inappropriate? Ephesians 1:3

**Wrap Up:** To say that the first-century church was a growing church would be a major understatement. It didn’t just grow—it exploded! So how did Paul and Ephesus fit into what was happening? Paul was an apostle who explained in person and in letters that Jesus is indeed the Christ. As we go through his letter to the Ephesians, we’ll see that his message is logical and inspires faith that produces obedience. The result? Untold millions have come to Christ and understood what it means to live for Him.

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<sup>1</sup> While some believe this gift was only given only to the 12 disciples; others believe it continues to be given. For example, Paul, Barnabas, James (Jesus’ brother), Silas, Timothy, Andronicus, and Junia are identified as apostles.