



Week 1- "Ephesus And The Influence Of Idols"

In this series we dive into a beautiful and powerful description of what Christianity is and how it impacts our lives through a letter Paul wrote that is found in the book of Ephesians. In this week's message we go back and look at the history of Ephesus and how the context of what was happening in their culture brings clarity to what Christianity meant to them then, and how it can bring clarity to what Christianity means for our lives today.

1. How can reading the Bible within the context in which it was written help bring clarity to what it means for you today?
2. What happens when scripture is taken out of context?

To understand the letter Paul wrote to the Ephesians we need to know the History of Ephesus. The Ephesians worshiped a Greek goddess idol housed in the temple of Artemis. The worship of Artemis was at the center of their culture. They strived to appease this idol in order to have wealth, and live fruitful lives. Paul showed up with the good news of Jesus: that He came and fulfilled all the requirements of the law and has made a way for anyone to find life, hope, and peace with God. Not through works of their own, but through grace.

Read Acts 18:19-23, Acts 19:8-11, and Acts 19:17-29

3. In what ways would you say that you treat God like an idol?
4. In what ways do you believe that in order for God to love you must strive to be good enough, be enough, give enough? Where do you think this comes from?

5. In what ways do you think that God is disappointed in you when you sin?
6. What do you think it looks like to rest in the truth that God's love for you doesn't go away when you mess up?
6. Do you ever think that if you do enough good things, that good things will happen to you, that somehow God owes you? Where do you think this comes from?
7. What does it practically look like to trust that Jesus has accomplished everything through His death and resurrection, and through faith in Him you don't have to strive to find favor with God?

As we begin this series let's ask ourselves: Do I treat God like an idol? Over the next week we can begin to read the letter of Ephesians and discover that though our culture is different we have similar tendencies, and Christianity offers us the peace, hope and joy that we need to navigate the reality of our own broken world