

RADICAL DISCIPLESHIP (LESSON 58)

THE TYRANNUS VISION (CONTINUED). The Ephesian church became Paul's legacy for the church age. About fifteen months after Paul left Ephesus, he stopped at the port city of Miletus and called for a meeting of leaders of the church (Acts 20:17-32). It was a final strategic coming together of disciples Paul had raised up to be the new center for world-missions. These leaders in the church were called elders (17). They were also referred to as Pastors (28a) and overseers (bishops) (28b). These titles refer to the same office. They are ascribed to leaders in the church who possess the gifting and calling of Christ to lead the flock of God. These men are gifts to the church to assure the ministry of making disciples would be facilitated. These leaders were trainers (Ephesians 4:7-12). Their chief responsibility was raising up disciples to do the ministry. After years of missionary work, Paul assured that this church was the model for the future. The experience at the school of Tyrannus was the final paradigm for training disciples. Halley comments on this. "From the narrative in Acts 19, it appears that Paul had made a large number of Christian converts in Ephesus. In the years since his first visit, the number of converts had continued to grow, and in the next 50 years Christians became so numerous in Asia Minor that the pagan temples were almost abandoned. Within the first generation of the church, Ephesus became the numerical as well as the geographical center of Christendom, the region where Christianity won its quickest laurels." Paul's meeting with the Ephesian elders in Miletus was his final testimony. That testimony was a reminder that the discipleship principles were to be continued without compromise. These principles were the same as what Jesus taught the Twelve: (1) The Kingdom First Principle, (2) The Death Principle, (3) The Servant Principle, (4) The Authority Principle. They became a lasting part of the Tyrannus paradigm that has yielded maximum success throughout the church age. The church's only mission was (and is) to make disciples. Its goal was (and is) to build multiplying generations of trainers. Principles never change. They are the rules the church should be using today.