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...and Paul wants to raise up another church, but he doesn't want Barnabas with him, and he doesn't want Silas with him, and here, brothers and sisters, to me, is the greatest genius ever revealed in the Holy Scripture that had to do with practical things. Every time I do this, I thrill to my toes, so let me do it.

When Paul finishes his 18 months in Corinth, he's going to go back home to Antioch again, but he says to Priscilla and Aquila...have we got a married couple in the room, both of you present...okay, Paul comes to Priscilla and Aquila. Here's the Sherman tank, y'all, and this is a very quiet brother, and he says, "Priscilla and Aquila, I've never done this before. I want to go to Ephesus and raise up a church, but I've got a very special purpose. It's the raising up not only of a church but Gentile workers. I'm going home to Antioch for a short time; I'm going to bring some men back with me. Would you go to Ephesus first? Get there ahead of me and start a tent business, a tent repair business, so that when I come, I can join you and we'll expand it a little bit. I've got to support these men that I'm bringing with me. Would you go do that for me?"

Now, wait a minute, y'all. Listen, I have to do a little advertising here. Are you willing for a little group of you to leave here as they did in Jerusalem and go to another city, and be a seedbed? Are you willing to see men go out of here as workers to other places and back them, to raise up churches? Are you willing to be left alone and go through the struggles that that is? Are you willing for some half-crazed madman like Paul of Tarsus to walk up to you and ask you to leave and go to another city to make preparation for his coming? Are you willing to do that? These ought to be the kind of things that are in the hearts of all of us.

But now comes—here comes genius, here comes genius of the highest order. I don't know how Paul ever thought this up I don't know how God ever got it in his head. It is so beautiful. Paul is now going to raise up Gentile workers. Antioch, you've got a history that's unique, totally unlike any other church anywhere. Pisidia, you got a unique history because you're the first truly heathen Gentile church—no Jews, nothing, never saw Jerusalem. Iconium, you have a wonderful history. Lystra, you've got a wonderful history and a real firebrand of a church. Derbe, you do too. And so do you, Thessalonica. You're Greeks, you're not like these people; you don't even look like them, and you don't speak their language. You're Greeks. Thessalonica, you have a wonderful upbringing, and you had a lot of problems, and you got off course, and you got back on, and you learned some lessons. Berea, you're a wonderful fellowship of believers, and you've got some really neat brothers. Corinth, you're a bunch of drunks, but you've got one really—one class act here. One.

Do you know what the word cross-pollinate means? Do you know what it means when you take parts and put them together, and the whole is greater than the parts? Sometimes we speak of the parts being greater than the whole. There's a situation where the whole is greater than the parts. Those of you in Thessalonica have never been to Antioch. Those of you in Iconium have never been to Berea. Those of you in Derbe have never been to Thessalonica. You don't know what a Greek church looks like or a Galatian church looks like, and you don't know the difference in your experiences and the lessons God has taught each of you uniquely. And

none of you have ever been to Antioch for the wonderful, unique situation there—and of course, none of you have ever been to Jerusalem.

Paul of Tarsus, if you please, let me use this term to communicate. Paul wants 12 Gentile apostles, and he wants to send those men out to the ends of the world. Now, this is what the Lord Jesus did, and then this is what Paul did to raise up workers; it's exactly the same thing—just a different setting and a different time. This is what should be instead of seminaries, and this is what must be instead of Bible schools, but what has to come before you can have this is that you've got to have about eight Gentile churches. And this is what he did. He went back to Antioch, and he said, "Titus, you've been here from the beginning, haven't you? Do you understand this word, 'from the beginning'?" Titus, I'm headed for Antioch, and the Lord has called you. You come with me. He then goes to Pisidian Antioch, followed by Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. Now, may the Lord help me here—I can't tell you where each one of these people comes from. He gets Timothy from Lystra. Who's going to be Timothy? Come on, Timothy from Lystra. Now we have this intimate relationship. Yeah, he was one of the first converts in Lystra. He was there from Titus. We got Timothy. We got Gaius coming from Derbe. Secundus from Thessalonica. Could someone open to Acts 20 and help me here, please? Somebody's coming from Berea, and I can't remember who it is. I don't know why I can't remember these names right now. Sopater? Where's he from? Berea? Come on, Sopater of Berea. Aristarchus is from Thessalonica. I need Aristarchus, but I want to remind you, I want to warn you right now; you're going to be dead in about four years. Who wants to die in four years? Who wants to be Aristarchus? Okay, come on, brother. Praise the Lord. Aristarchus does not know he's going to be one of the first Christian martyrs. Praise the Lord.

Now then, he is going to take these men with him, as Jesus took 12 men to Galilee. Paul of Tarsus, would you come, please? You are on your way to Ephesus with Paul of Tarsus. They are here waiting for you. Alright? They're waiting for us, and here's what's going to happen. As the Twelve lived with the Lord and watched how He worked, learned from Him, and raised up the church, you will now watch Paul from the beginning in Ephesus. You were from the beginning, and you were from the beginning in each of your locales. Are you following me? Now you're going to be from the beginning again. It's important you be there from the beginning. Barnabas was in the church in Jerusalem from the beginning. The apostles were with the Lord Jesus when? That's the only way you could be an apostle. You had to be there from the beginning. The Lord Jesus Christ has been there from before the beginning.

Alright, so we have the apostles from the beginning in one situation, Barnabas from the beginning in another. He passes on to Paul. He passed on to Paul what the Lord did and said that went to the apostles, that was passed on to Barnabas. Barnabas gives all that to Paul, who was in Antioch from the beginning. And each of these men can tell you exactly everything that the churches went through that they were in, because they were there from the beginning. Now, all the mass of the heritage in the past is going to come together in Paul and in these men, and that's not all. Here's what's the genius of it. Timothy is going to tell Secundus what it was like. Wow, Secundus is going to tell Gaius what it was like in Thessalonica from the beginning. Where are you from? Aristarchus is from where? Also, from Thessalonica. Where are you from, brother? I was Berea. Yes, the brother in Berea, who is a Greek, is going to tell

Timothy what it was like in Berea from the very beginning. Where are you from, brother? Titus is going to tell these brothers all about the work in Jerusalem. He's going to tell Secundus about Antioch and all the stories you heard about Jerusalem. Secundus is going to tell you the wonderful way the church in Thessalonica got raised up and all the mess it went through, and it got back on track, and each one of these brothers is going to cross-pollinate.

Paul is bringing in the riches of the Lord through the apostles by way of Barnabas into Paul's life. Paul has all of Antioch with him; so does Titus. Now these brothers from Galatia are going to tell all the Greeks about what it was like in Galatia. These Greek brothers are going to tell the brothers from Galatia all about what it was like in Greece. Now the Galatian brothers are going to tell the Greeks what it was like in Gaul. All of the richness of this, plus they are going to watch Paul raise up a church from nothing—from the beginning. Praise the Lord. Isn't that brilliant? Isn't that inconceivable? Isn't that great? Isn't that wonderful? The Lord showed me this. You've never read that in a book. You've never heard this from anybody else in the world but me. I am telling you the truth. It's not anywhere else, and it's in the Scripture, and you can't get it. I want to do it too, I really do, and one of these days, if the Lord lets me live long enough, there are going to be six or eight Gentile churches, and I'm going to find some brothers who are called of God, who won't back up for hell, they won't back up, who will go through anything. I want to go somewhere, and I want to take all the rich heritage the Lord has given me and has given them. I want to raise up a church, and I want them to be with me, and then I want to curl up my toes and die. Not really, but for the first time, I will be willing to. I will be willing to. Then I want to say to those brothers, the planet belongs to you. It's yours, go take it. Thank God for Priscilla and Aquila, who are willing to go to Ephesus and prepare the way. Say Praise the Lord.

So, we have the Ephesian line born in Ephesus, and I want to tell you what happened. Alright, you brothers are going to watch Paul raise up the church in Colossae, Laodicea, and all sorts of small towns around Ephesus. For two years, you will watch Paul. This is in the Scripture. For two years, you will watch Paul raise up the church in Ephesus. Then Paul will say, "Here, you and I are going to go to Colossae. We're going to stay down there for about two months. You and I are going over here to Laodicea. You and I, we're going over to Philadelphia." Take them in twos. And then he gets to Colossae, and he says, You two brothers there in Colossae, I'm here to help you—go do it. And they do it.

Praise the Lord. Read the story. It's always at the end of the little epistles, those little notes that he sends down there. He sends Titus all over creation. He sends Timothy wherever he can. And you know what? He picked up two more. He picked up two more in Ephesus. Do you understand? Two more young men. You guys come up here. I would like to introduce you to Tychicus and Trophimus. Now, if I've done this right, there are eight of you. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight. The Father gave the Lord Jesus twelve; the Lord Jesus gave Paul eight. There they are. Those, praise the Lord, those are the men, those are the men who took the gospel to the world, not the twelve apostles. The twelve apostles took the gospel to the Jews; these men took the gospel to the Roman Empire. When you trace your lineage back, you won't come to Peter. You'll come to these men. If it hadn't been for these men, there would have been no freedom in the gospel. They came from three churches, free of legalism—heathens, like you and me. These are not Jews; these are Gentiles going out to

preach to their own people. This is where our heritage as non-Hebrews begins—right there. Amen, amen. All that you read about what happened in the Roman Empire during the first three centuries—trace it back to these men, to these men. Praise the Lord.

Now, are you impressed with this? Brother, be impressed. Sisters, be impressed—and raise your eyes to the hills. Now, that's genius number one, and now I'm going to tell you about genius number two. Now, what is the Ephesian line? The Ephesian line of raising up the churches is very much like what the Lord Jesus did. It's an apostle, a church planter, taking some young men, showing them how by demonstration, watching. This is what you call on-the-job training—and then taking those young men out to small towns and showing them how to raise up the church, letting them do it. Young Gentile kids, young men.

Now, will you please notice that every one of them has church life in their background? Every man who is ever going to be a worker ought to have church life in his background. Don't be so proud and start at the top; start at the bottom. Start in the church. We have too many men who want to start off being apostles. We need men and women who grew up in the body of Christ and took their hard knocks, learning how the church functions—not that you are a leader, a dictator, a god, or a demigod—but you gain an experience of the church. You were there from the beginning. You've been called of God to preach the gospel, and you have sat under a church planter. These men sat under Paul, right? Paul sat under Barnabas. Barnabas sat under the twelve, and the twelve sat under the Lord Jesus. Each of them sat under church planters. And that's not all—there will be two or three more men added. One of them will be Epaphroditus, my favorite among them all. One will be Epaphroditus. Later, there will be Apollos, who never could get his act together, but there will also be a young man named Zeus, who will be added to this illustrious, glorious crowd. Say, "Praise the Lord!"

Sit down, and I will tell you about...now we come to the book of Romans. Now, isn't that wonderful? Look at it. What have we got? Now comes the Roman line of churches. Now, did you notice what Paul did? He extracted young men from the churches he raised up who had been called of God to the gospel—called men. Do you understand? They're very rare. They don't happen very often. He has been in Ephesus for two years. He has been with Priscilla and Aquila. He walked in there with six or seven men, with eight men. Well, six men, and added Tychicus and Trophimus. He walked in there with six men from churches he raised up - called men. For two years, he preaches in Ephesus, and they watch him raise up a glorious church. Then guess what happens—the ban on Jews living in Rome is lifted. Now, he's still doing his job in Ephesus and in the surrounding areas with these young men, but at the end of two years, he comes up with the most incredible...and this whole evening has been for this...he comes up with the most incredible idea that's as great an idea as this one you just saw. He wants a Gentile church in the city of Rome, and the ban has been lifted, and Jews can go back.

Now, who has just been really brainwashed? Name me two Jews who have just been brainwashed with Gentile church life. They are Jews, and they are friends, and they've got the picture. Here's what Brother Paul does: he wants a Gentile church in Rome, and he wants it according to Paul. Now, there may have been believers gathered there previously; they must have been Jewish people. The ban is lifted. He hears it's lifted. As soon as he heard it was lifted, he swung into action. He wants to beat Peter to Rome. He's heard a tale that Peter also

said he'd like to go to Rome, you know, and some of the others, and Rome is the largest city in the world, and it's the capital of the world. It's the most influential city on this earth, and he wants a church raised up, and he wants it raised up right.

And that's not all. He has a real sense that his life on this earth is very—is coming to a close because he's getting death threats constantly, and he's not sure he'll ever get to Rome. And you remember, he picked up men called of God to the ministry and took them with him to Ephesus. Well, he doesn't do that this time. He goes back to his churches—his Gentile churches—among people who've never been anywhere, and he says, “Would you two ladies move to Rome?” “Where's that?” “Would you go with Priscilla and Aquila?” “I'd go anywhere with Priscilla and Aquila.” “Would you go to Rome? Would you move there?” “Would you move to Rome? Would you? Would you pick up and move there? Oh, hey, we need some single brothers in Rome. Would you, and you, and you, and you, and you, and you, and you, all move to Rome, get a house in Rome, and start a single brother's house? Would you do that?”

Do not tell me Paul of Tarsus did not raise up the church in Rome! He did the most unique thing in this world. He did basically what he did in Ephesus, not with men called of God, but with ordinary Christians. And he brought them out of his churches everywhere—Gentiles who know what it is to be free, who have wild, wonderful meetings, who've never been in a Jewish synagogue, who have never memorized the law, have never heard of the Torah. And he sends out letters everywhere: “Is there anybody in the church in Lystra who's willing to move to Rome? Is there anyone in the church in Thessalonica or Berea? Any place, every place.” And then...he's fair...he writes the freest people he knows in Jerusalem and says, “Don't tell anybody I'm writing this letter, but would you mind moving to Rome? I'd like to see you come up there.”

And Paul of Tarsus, who has been in Ephesus for two years, gets a small army headed for the city of Rome to begin meeting there in hopes that he will one day arrive. Tomorrow night, we will meet the brothers and sisters to whom the church, the letter of the Romans, was written. They have come out of his ministry, plus the two or three years after that, the people they've led to the Lord, and the little handful that might have already been there. He gets one brother from Ephesus. He gets Priscilla and Aquila. He gets...I'm not going to tell you who else he gets. We'll find out tomorrow night who it is that goes to Rome, and very, very quickly, he stays in Ephesus and in the country around Ephesus for two more years with his eight young men, and then he starts making a trip everywhere where he has preached before, and he is literally telling everybody goodbye. He is sending his eight men out everywhere.

He sends Titus to Crete. He sends—I think he sends Timothy to some town I can't pronounce, Illyricum or something like that; I'll tell you what it is tomorrow night. He's sending these men everywhere, and he sends one or two of them to Rome. Then he starts visiting all of his churches like one great goodbye, and wherever he goes, he is told that if he dares to go back to Jerusalem, he will probably be killed, but he feels he must go to Jerusalem before he goes to Rome. He's got a bunch of Christians in Rome waiting for him. He returns to Corinth and stays with the Corinthians for three months, and there's a growing sense on the part of all the churches and all the people that Paul should not return to Jerusalem. He will surely be killed,

or something terrible is going to happen. He is in Corinth for three months on a short visit, and all those people have gotten to Rome, and they've won a lot of new people to the Lord. And Paul of Tarsus sits down and writes the greatest letter ever penned. And that's not my opinion; that is the opinion even of secular history. That is the most influential single piece of literature that has ever been penned by the hand of man: the Book of Romans, if you please.

He writes that letter to his friends and to people he's never met. It's a deliberate letter, meticulously written, and it covers everything about the Christian life and church life. We have met in Chicago to see that part of the letter that was written concerning church life. It was written from Corinth by a man who felt he might never write another letter as long as he lived. This was, probably from his viewpoint, the last thing he would ever pen. Tomorrow night, we will find out that a sister in one of the churches, nearby Corinth, is going to put that in the folds of her dress and get on the ship and take it to Rome to deliver it to that little body of people who Paul sent there, who got there before Peter got there. And that's tomorrow night. Now, do you think you understood all that? I doubt it.

Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. And to the brother who is the cameraman, we apologize to him. He's probably not used to four-hour meetings, but I think most of us are, are we not? Long meetings—that's typical of the Lord's house. Brothers and sisters, I'm very excited. Tomorrow night, we will dwell only on the people who received the letter. We will meet them. They are absolutely wonderful people. Then we will dive into chapters 12, 13, 14, and 15, and seek to find out what was going on in Rome, and what probably was the kind of thing going on in all churches in the first century, because Paul writes this out of the riches and the sorrows of his whole life, so we can come to it knowing that it's got a message for everybody who's seeking to experience church life. Praise the Lord. I hope this turns out to be as good as I hope it will be.