

Ephesus: Compassion of the Christians

DAYLIGHT PREVIEW

The Rescuers

Serving Jesus has a joy all its own, but imagine the absolute thrill the believers in Ephesus were able to experience as they demonstrated Christlike love in the most profound way. As you will hear from this session with Joe Stowell, they provided a service that is almost indescribable in its altruism and love: They rescued unwanted babies from the brink of death. While confused and misinformed parents were attempting to subject their newborns to an ignominious death, Christ-followers were seeking to provide them with life as a testimony to Him.

COME TOGETHER

Icebreaker Questions

1. This session begins at the Agora, the major marketplace of Ephesus, where throngs of people would have been shopping. Where is your favorite place to shop?
2. Joe Stowell notes that the silversmiths who crafted small statuettes of the goddess Artemis for visitors to take home represented one of the major industries of Ephesus. How much are you into souvenirs? What are your favorite collectibles?

3. In this session Joe focuses on the way the Christians in Ephesus showed compassion to babies. Who showed you compassion as a child?



FINDING DAYLIGHT

Experience the Video

Feel free to jot down Video Notes as you watch the presentation by Joe Stowell. Use the space below for those notes.

VIDEO NOTES

The Agora: Main Street

Christians and the Agora

The shops of the Agora

Brothel in the neighborhood

The sad story of the city dump

Christians to the rescue

How could this happen?

And why would Christians care?



WALKING IN THE DAYLIGHT

Discussion Time

DISCOVER GOD'S WORD

Discussion/Application Questions

1. Why did the Agora, the marketplace of Ephesus, represent some serious challenges for the early Christians?

2. **In the last session, we looked at the riot in Ephesus that is recorded in Acts 19. Read Acts 19:23–27 again.**

Demetrius, no doubt, was the leader of the silversmiths who made silver shrines and statuettes of the goddess Artemis. He called together his guild, along with the guilds of related trades.

How does this incident illustrate Joe Stowell’s observation about the pressures on the early Christians and the choices they had to make as to whether they would follow Christ or be true Ephesians in the marketplace?

3. **This session takes us to the ruins of a brothel in Ephesus—the largest known brothel in the world at the time.**

What was surprising about the location of this brothel?

4. **The backdrop of the last section of this session is the city dump of Ephesus.**

a. How do you respond to hearing about the Roman law of death by exposure, which permitted the citizens of the empire to throw their unwanted babies away in places like the city dump of Ephesus?

b. What reasons does Joe mention for this practice?

c. What reasons does Joe mention for the Christians rescuing these babies?

d. What effect do you think the actions of these Christians had on others?

5. **As Joe says, it’s really hard to imagine why people in the ancient Roman Empire would bring their babies to the city dump and leave them there to die.**

This was obviously a blind spot in their culture. Can you identify similar blind spots in our culture, particularly in regard to how “little ones” are treated?

6. **What grade would you give Christians today for rescuing “little ones”—children and others who are the most vulnerable among us?**