

"The Second Missionary Journey"

Part 16

Acts 15:41-18:22

Introduction: Last week in our study we were in Corinth with Paul as he entered the city. This was a very immoral city and the people were certainly in need of salvation. This was a very busy city that sat at a crossroads for travelers. Both mariners and those on foot. In the city there were many temples for the false gods which these people worshipped. There was on temple to the goddess Aphrodite and connected with the temple were thousands of prostitutes who infiltrated the city every night. Corinth was considered the "pleasure capital of the world" by many. Satan was highly active in Corinth. Paul would spend 18 months in this city and would plant a church right at the crossroads. Last week we also looked at the Divine meeting that took place when Paul arrived at Corinth.

Notice Acts 18:1-3

There is discussion among many students about whether or not Aquila and Pricilla were saved when Paul met them. The Bible does not tell us either way but we do know that they were saved sometime either before they met Paul or after they met him. Paul's common ground with this husband-and-wife team was their trade. Aquila and Priscilla earned a living making tents. Jewish tradition tells us it was required that every Jewish boy be taught a trade. Paul was trained by his parents to be a tentmaker or a leatherworker, a very useful trade. The province of Cilicia, where Paul was from, was known for its cloth made from goats' hair called cilicium. It is possible that Paul made such cloth as part of his trade. As he stayed with Aquila and Priscilla, they worked together at their common trade to earn money.

The interesting point in these verses is that God arranged the events in both of their lives to bring them together. Aquila and Pricilla had to leave Italy due to antisemitism and Paul left Athens due to a lack of interest in the Gospel. God allowed their paths to cross and from this came a lasting friendship.

➤ **The Ministry in Corinth**

Notice Acts 18:4

As was common with Paul he went directly to the synagogue. There he used the Scriptures to persuade/convince the Jews and the Gentiles that Jesus was the Messiah. Paul did not

go there to sing or to tell stories. He went to the synagogue to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with those of Corinth. Let us notice what Paul said about his preaching in Corinth.

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.

² For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

³ And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.

⁴ And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:

⁵ That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

Paul did not go to Corinth with the wisdom of man in an attempt to impress the Greeks. Paul went to Corinth and he preached Jesus Christ crucified. He presented Jesus as the Saviour of the world and he pressed them that they needed saved. In verse 3 we are told that he was with them in weakness, fear, and trembling. What does this mean? He did not come in his own strength expecting that with his own skill he could win them to Jesus Christ. Paul came in the power of God because he knew that only God could save the sinner. He came in fear and this fear very well could have been twofold. He may have feared persecution especially after what happened at Philippi. He may also have been fearful of facing the people. All of this was good because it forced Paul to lean upon the Lord. Jeremiah struggled with this fear when he was called to go to the Jews.

Jeremiah 1:4-10

⁴ Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

⁵ Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.

⁶ Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child.

⁷ But the LORD said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak.

⁸ Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD.

⁹ Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth.

¹⁰ See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant.

Application:

Fear has kept many people from stepping out for the Lord. But it did not stop Paul nor did it stop Jeremiah. Both men pressed on and trusted the Lord to give them the words to speak and they trusted the Lord to use His Word in the lives of those who heard. Let us keep in mind when God puts opportunities before us to use what He has entrusted to us He also gives us the grace to be obedient.

Ephesians 4:7

⁷ But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

Notice Acts 18:5

Paul had requested that Timothy and Silas join him in Athens.

Acts 17:15

¹⁵ And they that conducted Paul brought him unto Athens: and receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timotheus for to come to him with all speed, they departed.

We see no hint in Acts 17 that Timothy and Silas joined Paul in Athens but there is a verse in 1 Thessalonians that helps us to understand that they did join Paul.

1 Thessalonians 3:1

Wherefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone;

The word "WE" helps us to understand that Paul was not alone at Athens and therefore it is believed that Timothy and Silas came to Athens. Then from Athens Timothy was sent back to Thessalonica and it is believed that Silas went to Philippi.

1 Thessalonians 3:1-3

Wherefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone;

² And sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellowlabourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith:

³ That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto.

Notice Acts 18:5 again.

Here we see that Timothy and Silas returned while Paul was in Corinth and when they did return, they brought financial support for Paul which enabled him to give his time to sharing the Gospel. Notice what Paul wrote to the Corinthians and Philippians.

2 Corinthians 11:9

*⁹ And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me **the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied**: and in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep myself.*

Philippians 4:15-16

*¹⁵ Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, **but ye only.***

¹⁶ For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity.

The saints at Philippi had sent finances to Paul many times and possibly one of those times was while he was in Corinth.

Notice Acts 18:5 again.

The phrase "pressed in the spirit" means he was "wholly absorbed in the Word." The idea here is that in Paul's heart all he desired to do was preach the Word of God and when the monetary gifts came, he was free to do that. He did not need to labor and raise his own support but now he could fully give himself to prayer and the Word. Now he was free to preach on every day of the week and not just on the Sabbath.

Application:

It is so important for a church to provide for a pastor so that he has time to pray and study the Word of God. As we have said many times, the Word of God is to have top priority in the church for it is through the study of the Word that saints are strengthened.

Acts 6:1-4

And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration.

² *Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.*

³ *Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.*

⁴ **But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.**

Notice Acts 18:6a.

When it says that they "opposed themselves" it means that they opposed Paul and his teaching or to be more specific, they opposed the Truth of God's Word. They would not allow the Word of God the proper place in their hearts to bring about salvation. They were hearing the Word but they were not receiving it as the Truth. We are also told here that they blasphemed. This means that they were denying that Jesus Christ was God. They were not denying God they were denying that Jesus Christ was God in the flesh. Since Jesus was God, they were then guilty of blasphemy.

John 1:1

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and **the Word was God.***

1 John 5:20

²⁰ *And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. **This is the true God,** and eternal life.*

Application:

I need to bring an important point to your attention here. No one can be saved who does not believe that Jesus Christ was and is God. The Jehovah's Witness' believe that Jesus died for their sins but they do not believe that He was God. They believe that He was "A GOD" but they do not believe that He was "THE GOD." Therefore, the Jesus that they believe in is not the same Jesus of the Bible because the Jesus of the Bible claimed to be God in the flesh and was God in the flesh.

John 5:16-18

¹⁶ And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day.

¹⁷ But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.

¹⁸ Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.

Conclusion:

Notice Acts 18:6

I want to help you to see that these people were guilty because they had rejected the message and it was not because these people were not chosen. Paul told them, "Your blood be upon your own heads." In other words, they were given the Truth and when they rejected it, they were committing spiritual suicide. Notice the words of Lenski.

"Since they rejected Jesus as the Christ, damnation must follow. Whose is the fault? It is that of these Jews alone. To speak of blood coming upon one's head is to say that the guilt for shedding someone's blood rests upon the murderer and cries to God for punishment. Here the blood of these Jews who are destroying themselves rests upon their own heads."

Application:

There are several applications here but the one we need to see is that it is our responsibility to proclaim the Truth. We cannot make people believe no matter how much we desire. It is their responsibility to believe on Jesus Christ. But they cannot believe if they do not hear. Therefore, let us pray for a burdened heart so that we might share the greatest message ever told.