

"The Second Missionary Journey"

Part 20

Acts 15:41-18:22

Introduction: Last week in our study of Acts we watched as Paul was protected when he stood before the judgment seat in Corinth. The unbelieving Jews had dragged him to the judgment seat because he was preaching Jesus Christ crucified. They took him before Gallio with the plan to get him punished and then put him out of the city. But God had promised Paul that he would be protected and therefore Paul never had the opportunity to speak. But instead Gallio stepped up and put an end to the plan of the unbelieving Jews.

Notice Acts 18:9-16

Proverbs 21:1

The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.

➤ **Paul leaves for Ephesus**

Notice Acts 18:17

Sosthenes was the man who experienced the pain in all of this. He had replaced Crispus because Crispus had been saved under the teaching of Paul.

Notice Acts 18:8

When Crispus accepted the Lord, he lost his position as the chief ruler and this is when Sosthenes was made the chief ruler of the synagogue. Why was he beaten by the Greeks? We are not told but it was most likely to keep the Jews from stirring up any trouble in Corinth under the Roman law. The city wanted no problems with the government and so this was a way to keep the Jews in check. They took the chief ruler and they beat him. This would have been an example to the rest. It also may have been plain antisemitism. This group of Greeks may have just despised the Jews and this was a way of carrying out their hatred. Either way it was Sosthenes who felt the pain. Now there is something interesting to consider with this.

1 Corinthians 1:1-2

Paul called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother.

² Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both their's and our's:

It is believed that sometime after Sosthenes was beaten that he was saved. We are not given the details but possibly the beating was so severe that he was brought close to the point of death and this then made him consider eternity far more. Possibly after the beating Paul was there to care for him and to show him the compassion of Jesus.

Application:

The beating that Sosthenes experienced would have been extremely painful and difficult to go through but if it brought him to the place of salvation then it was well worth the pain. Times of pain and suffering in the lives of people are often used by the Lord to get them to focus upon that which is important, namely eternity. There have been many people who have been diagnosed with a terminal illness and the shadow of the illness they have been saved. It is far better for someone to experience a time of suffering and get saved than it is to live a life of comfort and ease and one day die in their sins and go to hell. God has allowed the suffering in this world so that people will turn to Him.

Genesis 3:17-19

¹⁷ And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;

¹⁸ Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;

¹⁹ In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

The earth is cursed for the sake of man. There is pain and suffering, tears, and sorrow, and eventually death. God brought the earth under the curse so that life would not be easy and so that we would never be satisfied here. Then after we struggle through life, we come face to face with death. This was all part of the plan to get man to turn to God. Life is hard and painful because of sin, but God promises something far better if man will turn

to Jesus Christ for salvation. Life is still difficult but we know that what we are promised is so much better.

Revelation 21:1-5

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

² *And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*

³ *And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.*

⁴ *And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.*

⁵ *And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.*

Revelation 22:3

³ **And there shall be no more curse:** *but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:*

Notice Acts 18:17 again.

Gallio cared for none of those things. This statement is so sad! Here is a man that held a great position was known to be very friendly and fair and he heard the Truth about Jesus Christ as the accusations were brought against Paul, but he cared for none of it. Gallio is a picture of many people in our world. They may be well educated, they have good jobs, they are very respectable to others, they are fair and friendly but they have no concern for the things of eternity. They have friends that are believers but they do not care for things that are "religious." So, they live their lives on this earth and they die in their sins and go to hell. How tragic is this???

Notice Acts 18:18

The 18 months were now over and Paul would begin to make his way back to Antioch. We see in this verse that Paul had taken a vow but we are not given the details. Notice the words of Barclay concerning this vow.

"When a Jew specially wished to thank God for some blessing, he took the Nazirite vow (Numbers 6:1-21). If that vow was carried out in full it meant that for thirty days, he neither ate meat nor drank wine; and he allowed his hair to grow. At the end of the thirty days, he made certain offerings in the Temple; his head was shorn and the hair was burned on the altar as an offering to God."

John Whitcomb believed that Paul took this vow because he did not want any Jew to question his appreciation of Jewish traditions and customs. Such customs had nothing to do with salvation or sanctification, but they had a lot to do with building bridges to the Jewish people whom Paul loved in the Lord and wanted to win to Christ. Paul was serious when he said, "And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews." We see Paul love for the Jews in Romans 9.

Romans 9:1-3

I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost,

² *That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.*

³ *For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:*

Notice Acts 18:19

Paul now sailed to Ephesus with Pricilla and Aquilla. This would have been a city he had desired to get to in order to preach the Gospel. Notice the words from the New American Commentary.

"Located on the main highway connecting the Aegean with the rich trade routes in the east, Ephesus was the main commercial center of Asia. It had a natural harbor with access to the Aegean by way of the Cayster River. According to Pliny, the original city was built on the sea; but because of silting from the Cayster, the city lay several miles inland up the river in the first century. The ruins of the city are some five miles inland today. To the north of Ephesus lay the city of Smyrna at the mouth of the Hermus River, and to the

south was Miletus at the mouth of the Maeander River. The coastal plain connected Ephesus with both these cities and the commerce that traveled through them. In fact, no better site could have been picked for the evangelization of all of Asia Minor than Ephesus. The seven churches of Rev 2-3 may well have owed their origin to Paul's Ephesian ministry."

The first time Paul passed through Asia he was forbidden to go to Ephesus.

Acts 16:6-10

⁶ Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia,

⁷ After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.

⁸ And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas.

⁹ And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.

¹⁰ And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them

Why was Paul forbidden the first time? Most likely it was because of the need of the Gospel in Macedonia at that time.

Application:

When I step back and look at this overall picture, I can see that Paul was given his desire to preach in Asia but in order to get there he had to go the long way around because the Lord had plans for him in other cities.

Psalms 37:3-5

³ Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.

⁴ Delight thyself also in the LORD: and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

⁵ Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.

We often read these verses when we have a desire for something and we claim them but we see no movement in the direction we desire. Let us keep in mind that sometimes God takes us the long way around before we get to where we think we should be.

Acts 7:22, 25-30a

²² And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds.

²⁵ For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them: but they understood not.

²⁶ And the next day he shewed himself unto them as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another?

²⁷ But he that did his neighbour wrong thrust him away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us?

²⁸ Wilt thou kill me, as thou diddest the Egyptian yesterday?

²⁹ Then fled Moses at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of Madian, where he begat two sons.

³⁰ And when forty years were expired,

Conclusion:

Notice Acts 18:20-22

Paul did not stay long in Ephesus but departed and ended the second missionary journey. He promised to return if it was God's will.

James 4:13-15

¹³ Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain:

¹⁴ Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

¹⁵ For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.