

"The Third Missionary Journey"

Part 1

Acts 18:23-21:26

Introduction: Last week in our study we came to the end of the second missionary journey of Paul and he was on his way back to Antioch where he had started.

Notice Acts 18:21-22

Paul left Ephesus and sailed to Caesarea and he went from there to Jerusalem to keep the feast. When Paul went to Jerusalem, he saw something that would greatly burden his heart. He saw the poverty of the Jewish believers. Because of their faith in Jesus Christ, they were ostracized. They were starving and struggling and were not able to get jobs because of their faith in Jesus Christ. How do we know that Paul saw this and that his heart was burdened? On his third missionary journey in almost every city he entered he made a plea for help for the saints at Jerusalem.

1 Corinthians 16:1-8

Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye.

² Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

³ And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem.

⁴ And if it be meet that I go also, they shall go with me.

⁵ Now I will come unto you, when I shall pass through Macedonia: for I do pass through Macedonia.

⁶ And it may be that I will abide, yea, and winter with you, that ye may bring me on my journey whithersoever I go.

⁷ For I will not see you now by the way; but I trust to tarry a while with you, if the Lord permit.

⁸ But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost.

Paul wrote 1 Corinthians on his third missionary journey from Ephesus when he would stay there three years. This was after he had been at Jerusalem at the end of the second missionary journey. So, the trip to Jerusalem to attend the feast brought Paul to a place where he was made aware of the suffering of the saints in Jerusalem.

➤ **Leaving Antioch**

Notice Acts 18:23

Here is the beginning of the second journey. Paul would go to the churches in Galatia and Phrygia. On this journey it would be Paul's mission to strengthen the disciples. In doing this Paul was walking in obedience to the Great Commission.

Mark 16:15

¹⁵ *And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.*

Matthew 28:18-20

¹⁸ *And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.*

¹⁹ *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:*

²⁰ *Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

How did Paul strengthen the disciples? He did it by teaching them the Word of God. Let us notice what Paul said to the elders at Ephesus on this third journey.

Acts 20:27-32

²⁷ *For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.*

²⁸ *Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*

²⁹ *For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.*

³⁰ *Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.*

³¹ *Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.*

³² *And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.*

There is only one means of spiritual growth for the believer and that is to feed upon the Word of God.

1 Peter 2:1-2

Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings,

² *As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:*

Let me give you 3 words that will help us to grasp 1 Peter 2:2 better.

1. Attitude

A newborn baby will grab for a bottle and in the same way the believer should grab for the Bible. Our attitude should be that we long for the Word. A newborn baby has an internal alarm that tells it to eat about every 3-4 hours. There is within the believer the Holy Spirit that longs to feed upon the Word of God on a regular diet.

2. Appetite

Peter tells us that we are to desire the sincere milk of the Word. It should be our desire to feed upon the Word. I have heard people say that they do not get much out of the Word. To that someone has said that is a commentary on the person and not the Book. When a believer does not desire the Word, something is truly wrong. Notice what one man said concerning the three types of believers.

"There is the "nasty medicine" type. To them the Word is bitter, but it's good for what ails them. Then there is the "shredded wheat" kind. To them Scripture is nourishing but dry. It's like eating a bale of hay. But the third kind is what I call the "strawberries-and-cream" folks. They just can't get enough of the stuff. How did they acquire that taste? By

feasting on the Word. They've cultivated what Peter describes here—an insatiable appetite for spiritual truth. Which of these three types are you?"

Psalm 19:7-11

⁷ The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.

⁸ The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.

⁹ The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.

¹⁰ More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

¹¹ Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.

3. Aim

Peter tells us that the aim of feeding upon the Word of God is that we will grow. The Bible is not a Book to make us a smarter sinner but it is a Book to make us more like the Savior as it transforms our lives.

Ephesians 4:11-15

¹¹ And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

¹² For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

¹³ Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

¹⁴ That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

¹⁵ But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

We therefore must have a steady diet of God's Word. There are churches that have small groups throughout the week but in many of those circles they only share stories. That will do absolutely nothing for growth. If we are going to grow as believers we **MUST** feed on the Word of God.

➤ **The Arrival of Apollos**

Notice Acts 18:24

The scene here is one that took place in Ephesus after Paul left on the second missionary journey. Paul had taken Aquilla and Pricilla to Ephesus and they stayed as he returned to Jerusalem and Antioch. While they were there a church was started through their ministry. Before Paul returned Apollos showed up. He came from Alexandria which was a very prominent city in Egypt.

"Alexandria was the principal port of Egypt located on the western edge of the Nile delta and had a substantial Jewish quarter, the Royal area, the Neapolis, and a necropolis to the far west. Alexandria was known for its cultural and academic pursuits, housing the finest library in the ancient world with over 500,000 volumes. Alexandria became the most important center of Judaism outside of Jerusalem. It was in Alexandria that the Jewish rabbis gathered in to produce the Septuagint , the Greek translation of the Old Testament completed in about 132 BC. Greek philosophers and mathematicians worked here. Octavian incorporated it into the Roman empire about 30 B.C. It quickly became second in importance to Rome. Its importance declined about 100 A.D. The fact that the Septuagint had its origin in Alexandria may help explain why Apollos was so mighty in the Scriptures."

Getting back to Apollos, we are told that he was eloquent and mighty in the Scriptures. The word "eloquent" can mean two things, it can mean "well learned" or it can mean "eloquent in speech" and many believe that both apply to Apollos. He was a man that had a special ability to articulate what he was teaching. He was very convincing with what he taught. But the fact that he was eloquent was not as important as the fact that he was mighty in the Scriptures. Many believers are not "eloquent" with their speech and that is just fine because God cares more that we are filled with the Spirit not with eloquent words. We do not need to be eloquent to be used of God. Notice the words of Courson.

"He tells the following story about Mr. Moody - One of the great evangelists of all time and founder of the YMCA, D.L. Moody was very impacting but not very polished. A woman

came to him after one service and said, "Mr. Moody, I noticed in your message that you made eighteen grammatical mistakes." "Ma'am," Moody replied, "I'm using all the grammar I got for the Lord. What are you doing with yours?" God loves to use the foolish things of the world to confound the wise. He loves to use those who stutter spiritually, who don't have perhaps the greatest skills or the most talent because that way, He gets the glory."

1 Corinthians 1:26-29

²⁶ For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:

²⁷ But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

²⁸ And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:

²⁹ That no flesh should glory in his presence.

1 Corinthians 2:1, 4

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

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:

Conclusion: In our society it has been taught and believed that without a degree attached to your name you cannot be an effective part of society. But the truth is if you are IN CHRIST, you can be very effective without any degrees attached to your name. Every person here has the potential to be "mighty in the Scriptures" and may I add that it is my desire as your pastor to contribute to that. I cannot make you "mighty in the Scriptures" but I can teach you so that you have what you need to be so. Everyone of us can be "mighty in the Scriptures" if we desire to be. It just takes dedication to learning the Bible. We that are saved have the Greatest Teacher of all living within us, the Holy Spirit. Therefore, every one of us can learn the Bible as Apollos did.

Notice Acts 18:25