



The Mission: Corinth to Ephesus

ACTS 18

Lesson Outline:

- ▶ 1) Paul in Corinth
- ▶ 2) Others in ministry
- ▶ 3) Priscilla and Aquila

Paul in Corinth

Acts 18:1-17

- ▶ The city of Corinth
 - Paul is said to have reached Corinth after having left Athens.
 - He meets and joins with Aquila and Priscilla, who are tentmakers like him. It is not mentioned whether they were previously saved or received salvation through interacting with Paul. We'll see their significance in ministry later.
 - Corinth was a major trade route area, which made it a great place for the gospel to be preached because so many people came to and passed through Corinth from different parts of the world.
 - Corinth was also a place with a high degree of immoral practices, and some of that is what we see reading through the epistles to the Corinthians.
 - ❖ Paul going to Corinth shows us the need to be strategic in finding ways to ensure that the gospel message goes out to all the world. Many people would have heard the message and passed along what they heard, regardless of their belief in the message. Our concern is to get the message out by whatever means, while God's concern is to address the hearts of all people leading them to salvation.
 - ❖ For God to lead Paul to Corinth is a reminder that all people are to receive the gospel no matter how far gone we might feel they are based upon their lifestyle practices. The commission of Christ mandates our engagement in all the world - ALL PEOPLE – whatever that may look like.

Paul in Corinth

Acts 18:1-17

- ▶ Paul's engagement in ministry
 - As was his custom, Paul went into the synagogues persuading the Jews. He did this weekly.
 - When Paul got to the point of speaking about Jesus being the Christ, the people "blasphemed," which ultimately is to say that they strongly denied the truth of Paul's message.
 - Paul shakes the dust off his feet and tells them that he will now go to the Gentiles. This was a practice mentioned by Jesus to the disciples, that symbolized rejecting the people who rejected the message of the gospel (Matt 10:14).
 - ❖ Once again, it's not our job to keep trying to convince people of the truth. We do what we can in sharing the word and living as a witness, but we don't beat people over the head with the gospel.
 - Paul connects with Justus, likely a God-fearer (like Cornelius in Acts 10), who is connected to the synagogue. This connection results in the conversion of Crispus, the leader of the synagogue (Also identified by Paul in 1 Corinthians 1:14).
 - ❖ God always makes provision for those who he desires to be saved. In this instance, Paul likely didn't know that his association with Justus would lead to Crispus' conversion. With this in mind, we should do our best to be intentional about developing relationships with unbelievers as we don't know where it will lead to by the grace of God.

Paul in Corinth

Acts 18:1-17

- ▶ God's message to Paul
 - After Crispus' conversation, the Lord sends a message to Paul telling him to 1) not be afraid; 2) don't stop speaking; 3) the Lord is with him; 4) nobody can hurt him and 5) there are much people to be saved there.
 - With this encouragement, Paul continued in ministry for 18 months.
 - ❖ We can be assured that God is with us as we continue to do his will. We can be confident against our personal feeling, outside interference and the in the will of God being accomplished.
 - Eventually the Jews attempted to come against Paul, but they were unsuccessful in trying to stop the will of the Lord, as he had already confirmed to Paul .

Others engaged in ministry

Acts 18:5,18-23

- ▶ Silas and Timothy; Priscilla and Aquila
- Going back to verse 5, Silas and Timothy are said to be coming from Macedonia. In Acts 17, we see that Paul had moved unto Athens but left Silas and Timothy to continue the ministry in Berea until he called for them.
- In 18:19, Paul has now left and come to Ephesus, but is on his way to Jerusalem. However, he leaves Priscilla and Aquila there to continue the ministry in Ephesus.
- ❖ It is the responsibility of church leaders to train those who can be engaged in leading ministry. It is the responsibility of people, those gifted, to avail themselves to learning and preparing for leadership. Ministry succession is an important tool for the continuation of the ministry.

Priscilla and Aquila

Acts 18:24-28

► Background

- Interracial couple: Aquila was Jewish, but Priscilla was not.
- Tentmakers like Paul.
- They worked with Paul in the ministry. Paul refers to them as “helpers” (or coworkers) in Christ and those who have placed their lives on the line for him.

Priscilla and Aquila

Acts 18:24-28

- ▶ In ministry
 - One note that should be mentioned is the order in which their names are mentioned by Luke and Paul in relation to the ministry.
 - Their names are always mentioned together, which gives focus to the fact that they are considered and treated as equals in life and ministry.
 - In two instances where their names are mentioned in a ministry context (Acts 18:18-19; Rom 16:3-4), Priscilla's name is mentioned first. This provides some indication that she may have had a stronger or more recognized role.
 - With them being in ministry together in Ephesus, it is arguable that they can be considered the first married couple in a pastoral role.
 - They were knowledgeable enough to explain the gospel with such clarity to teach others to express it. This is shown in their encounter with Apollos (18:24-28)
 - ❖ God is not impartial with respect to men and women in ministry. He will use whomsoever he will.