

Ministry of The Holy Spirit
Arrival in Corinth
Acts 18:1-11

Last time...Paul, alone in Athens, was stirred in his spirit by what he saw...

temples and altars and objects of idol worship everywhere

The Lord opened a door for him to preach the Gospel to a bunch of Greek philosophers
using the altar to the “Unknown God” as the springboard

He made known the Living Creator God to the Athenians, who, when he spoke of the
resurrection of Jesus Christ, for the most part mocked him or saw him as an
intellectual stimulant

This time...Paul leaves Athens and arrives in Corinth

We will be in Acts 18

v1 Athens...Corinth:

The Gospel did bear some fruit in Athens (Acts 2:47b), but it was mostly met with
contempt or philosophical curiosity.

Neither Paul nor the Lord is interested in fruitless philosophical debate
so the Holy Spirit moves Paul onward

He leaves Athens, never to return again; on his 3rd Missionary Journey,
Paul will go around Athens rather than go thru it

From Athens, he goes to Corinth

[map]

Paul came alone to Athens, leaves Athens alone, and arrives in Corinth alone

Corinth, a very sizable city, was a wild town!

- a very busy commercial center, close to a very busy seaport
(Cenchrea)
- sailors on shore leave were ever-present...
drunkenness and prostitution thrived
 - in Greek plays, a drunk character was called a “Corinthian”
- On the acropolis overlooking the city stood the temple to Aphrodite
 - (aka Venus in the Roman pantheon) goddess of fertility, love,
desire, and pleasure
 - 1000 temple prostitutes “led worship” of Aphrodite
 - sexual immorality permeated the city and its inhabitants...
Epicureanism/hedonism was on full display
- Proud, wealthy, wicked
- “Las Vegas”

v2-3 Aquila...Pricilla...Claudius...tentmakers:

Paul comes into this large, immoral city alone;
where do we suppose Paul went when he got to town?

To the synagogue...
and the Lord immediately leads him to a like-minded brother and sister,
Aquila and Priscilla

Aquila was from Pontus (north of Galatia), therefore familiar with Greek thought
and Roman law/culture.

Aquila and Priscilla are in Corinth because Claudius ran all the Jews out of Rome
in 49 AD

Another time of persecution and oppression of God's people by the Gov't
The Jews would not worship Caesar as god
They spoke of the One True and Living God, Creator of heaven
and earth
Claudius opposed any religion proselytizing others and claiming
to be the "only way"

(it is thought Paul came in Corinth sometime between 51 AD and 54 AD)

Immediately, Jesus encourages and strengthens His faithful servant Paul by
connecting him with like-minded believers he can relate to

- sharing the Jewish/Christian worldview
- also raised with Roman culture and Greek thinking
- fellow craftsmen
- far from home
- been persecuted for their faith

The Lord provides Paul with companionship and encouragement and shelter in
the house of this couple, who will prove to be faithful co-laborers in
Corinth and Ephesus

Q: Did either the Jews or the Christians in Rome fight the Gov't,
even if it was unspeakably Godless?
Did Jesus take on the Roman Empire, a wicked, corrupt, oppressive,
tyrannical Gov't?

No, Jesus confronted the kingdom of darkness, the spiritual kingdom
(principalities and powers, spiritual wickedness in high places)
His fight was not political, it was spiritual
He did not fight "low", He fought "high"
Jesus battled the real enemy with Light and Truth

Therefore, when

- the godless rule with rabid tyranny
- opposition to the tyranny and support for the Truth is oppressed and silenced
- everything is backwards...Is 5:20

disciples/witnesses of Jesus Christ shine the Light and stand on the absolute, unchanging Truth of the Word of God, our source of strength, hope, and encouragement

v4 reasoned...persuaded:

While he worked at making tents, Paul was faithful to do the work the Holy Spirit sent him to Corinth to do: preach the Gospel to the Jew first and then the Gentile

In the synagogue, Paul reasoned with the Jews regarding the Person and work of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, and the gift of God's salvation by grace thru faith in Jesus Christ

He used the prophetic Scriptures (Hebrew) to open up their understanding of God's Plan of Redemption of fallen man and the mystery of His Messiah

Luke 24:44-47 *These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.*

John 5:39 *Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me*

1 Cor 15:3-4 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures.

We do not know how many sabbaths Paul did so, but we do know some of the Jews and some of the Gentile believers in the God of Israel believed God's testimony, and were subsequently given the power to become the children of God and adopted into God's family

v5 Silas and Timothy...Paul was pressed:
After some unknown number of weeks of Paul being in Corinth, Silas and Timothy catch up with Paul
1 Thes 3:1-7

Paul is comforted and encouraged by

- the companionship of Silas and Timothy
- the good report from Thessalonica of the fellowship there

Being comforted and encouraged in soul and spirit, Paul is

- pressed/compelled/constrained
- energized in his spirit

to preach Jesus Christ to the Jews in Corinth

1 Cor 9:16 Woe unto me if I preach not the Gospel
2 Cor 5:14 the love of Christ constrains us

v6 opposed themselves and blasphemed:
The result of Paul's heart-felt, passionate sharing of the Gospel?

The Jews (not all, but most...Matt 7:13-14)

- opposed themselves...did not believe the Good News of God's grace, mercy, love, and peace in the Person and work of Jesus Christ
 - to their own eternal harm, if they remain in unbelief
 - not rational given the light of Scriptures
 - spiritual (2 Cor 4:3-4)
- blasphemed...rejected God's testimony
 - John 15:26
 - Mark 3:28-29
 - 1 John 5:11-13, 16-17

Most likely in Paul's mind: O Lord, here we go again! Trouble, always trouble!
(Acts 9:15-16)

The pattern in Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea continues!

So, Paul "violently shook" the dust of his clothes, symbolic of their rejection of God's gift

Your blood...life, Lev 17:17

is on your heads...Matt 27:25, Acts 17:30-31

Ezk 33:4 whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head.

I am clean...Ezk 3:17-21, Ezk 18:4, John 8:23-24
from henceforth I go unto the Gentiles...John 10:16

v7-8 Justus...Crispus:

From Paul's witness in v4 (alone) and/or his witness in v5 (with Silas and Timothy), the Gospel finds good soil in Corinth

- Justus...a son of peace (Luke 10:5-6) living next to the synagogue
The "townhouse" next door from which Paul teaches/preaches within earshot of the Jews
- Crispus...a Jew of position and authority, which he will lose for his faith in Jesus (v17)
- Many of the Corinthians...Gentiles whose hearts the Lord opened
Rom 10:17

v9-10 spake the Lord to Paul:

Now, here in the wild city of Corinth, the Lord Jesus Christ speaks directly and Personally to Paul, just as He did in Damascus and in Arabia

Be not afraid...because Paul was afraid!

Violence has been directed at him at every stop

Consider the Apostle Paul at this point, whom we tend to look at as

"superman"

Acts 14:15

1 Cor 2:1-5

Paul was just like us:

- not immune to fear
- unsure of himself and his abilities
- weak
- discouraged

Paul's effectiveness rested in the Holy Spirit, Who used Paul's

- dependence upon God
- obedience to God
- faithfulness to God
- zealotry for God (fervency)

The Lord knew where Paul was physically, spiritually, and emotionally.

He knew what Paul needed at that moment

Jesus gives Paul loving, gentle encouragement to break the bonds of fear and discouragement.

Satan is opposing Paul at every turn; the enemy wants to shut the mouth of Paul, and of every Christian.

but speak and hold not thy peace...do not be silent, do not be intimidated into silence, do not let persecution of the godless quench My words

Ezk 3:26-27a I will make thy tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth, that thou shalt be dumb...But when I speak with thee, I will open thy mouth, and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; He that heareth, let him hear

For I am with thee...Matt 28:18-20, Heb 13:5b

To His prophet to a dying nation that had known Him once but had turned from Him and despised His Word:

Jer 1:7b-8 ...thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces: for I *am* with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD.

no man shall set on thee to hurt thee...I will Personally defend you, I will Personally protect you from all who want to hurt/harm you

The man of God in the will of God is immortal until his work is done
Where God is working so is the devil...and where the devil is working so is God!

I have much people in this city...I, the Lord of the harvest, have sent laborers into the harvest in this city (Luke 10:2)

Paul, Silas, Timothy, Aquila, Pricilla, Justus, Crispus

Paul was thinking, "O Lord, here we go again! Always trouble!"

The Lord told him, "No, I am breaking the pattern because I have many people here who will believe My testimony. It is going to take some time to reach them. So settle in and be busy about My Father's business."

v11 year and six months:

Paul, greatly encouraged and strengthened by the Lord Jesus Christ, did just that
He was in Corinth for 18 months, 1½ years, teaching the Word of God

Note: not "human-interest" topics with an occasional reference to a verse in the Bible

the entire counsel of God...God's words, not man's words

The church in Corinth was established in the home of Aquila and Priscilla
(Rom 16:3-5a)...home church

And while Paul was settled in Corinth, he wrote 2 letters to the fellowship in Thessalonica...1 Thes and 2nd Thes

So, at this point in our study of the MoHS, we will leave Paul in Corinth here in Acts 18:11 and jump over to study those 2 letters

Application/Lessons

A very personal message for all who serve the Lord in the ministry they have been called to (spouse, parent, grandparent, uncle/aunt, in the Church...)

The Lord sees the difficulty, He knows the heartache
He is with us...v9-10
He has connected us with like-minded believers
Let's be pressed in the Spirit and make Jesus Christ known!

A very personal message for me...

As was Paul's calling in Corinth, so is my calling here – to teach the Word of God
As it was for Paul, so it can be for me...the calling can be very discouraging,
as the devil relentlessly attacks

Over the years,

- Making disciples is long, hard, heart-breaking, and even lonely work
- Lots of pain and sorrow to go with the joy
- Many we have loved have not continued
 - “Too much Bible”
 - “I don't like so-and-so”....a failure of grace
 - Looking to please the flesh (emotions) rather than feed the spirit
(there is no fleshly reason why anyone would come here)
- Revolving door
 - Many have grown weary in well doing and have fainted
 - Many are Soil #2 and Soil #3
- Fellowship giving way to isolation

But this I know (because the Lord reminded me), and this we all should know:

1 Cor 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always
 abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour
 is not in vain in the Lord.

Heb 6:10 For God *is* not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which
 ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints,
 and do minister.

1 Tim 4:6 If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a
 good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of
 good doctrine

1 Tim 4:15-16 Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting
 may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue
 in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear
 thee

2 Chron 15:7 Be ye strong therefore, and let not your hands be weak: for your work shall be rewarded

Even this morning at 7:27 am, the Holy Spirit moved a like-minded believer to text me:
“Praying for you this morning and the message God has given you to deliver today!”

As the Lord knew what Paul needed and was faithful to give it to him, He knows what each of us need and is faithful to give it to us!

Be encouraged!

Fight the good fight of faith

We live in a nation that is very much like the dying nation of Judah, to whom the Lord said in Jer 7-10

- thoroughly amend your ways and your doings (Jer 7:3-5)
- shed not innocent blood (Jer 7:6)
- this house, which is called by My name, has become a den of robbers (Jer 7:11)
- I called you but you answered not (Jer 7:13b)
- This is a nation that obeys not the voice of the Lord their God, nor receives correction; truth is perished (Jer 7:28)
- They hold fast deceit, they refuse to return (Jer 8:5)
- Every one of them from the least to the greatest is given to covetousness (Jer 8:10)
- (the leaders and wise men say) Peace, peace, when there is no peace (Jer 8:11)
- Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? They were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush (Jer 8:12)
- They are not valiant for the truth, they proceed from evil to evil (Jer 9:3)
- They have taught their tongue to speak lies (Jer 9:5)
- Through deceit they refuse to know Me (Jer 9:6)
- Shall not My soul be avenged on such a nation as this? (Jer 9:9)
- I will feed this people with wormwood (Jer 9:15)
- Let him that glorieth (boasts) boast in this, that he understand and knows Me (Jer 9:24)
- Hear ye the word of the Lord (Jer 10:1)
- The pastors are become brutish and have not sought the Lord (Jer 10:21)

And Jeremiah wept for the spiritual condition of his people
As we do for ours

But...v9-10

Not personally, but by His Spirit and His written Word

2 Chron 32:7-8 Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that *is* with him: for *there be* more with us than with him. With him *is* an arm of flesh; but with us *is* the LORD our God to help us, and to fight our battles. And the people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah king of Judah

Learn to hear the voice of the Lord

and

Recognize the voice of the enemy

- noisy
- fear and doubt
- discouragement and hopelessness
- slander
- false accusations
- intimidation
- deceit and lies
- blasphemy and taunting
- agitation and confusion

And as He did with Paul, the Lord has blessed me with like-minded believers...
for whom I am so very thankful!

So, as we leave here this morning (prayerfully encouraged), let's be

- not afraid, be bold
- ready to talk about Jesus...He is within us so by default He is a part of every conversation...bring Him front-and-center
- not silent...silence is a "safe retreat" into which Satan lures us...a false safety

The Lord has many appointments for us to keep...let's be busy about His business...together!