

SERMON NOTES

SERIES: **Acts: To Be Continued**
TITLE: **Experiencing God's Kindness**
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In Acts, Luke shows Jesus' friends continuing the kingdom mission that Jesus started in his earthly life and ministry. The Book of Acts is all about Jesus' followers continuing his mission in the world. We are the ones God has entrusted with carrying the message of Jesus forward.

Today, we look at Acts 18:1-22, through the eyes of Paul, himself.

Paul in Corinth

¹After this Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. ²And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. And he went to see them, ³and because he was of the same trade he stayed with them and worked, for they were tentmakers by trade. ⁴And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and tried to persuade Jews and Greeks.

⁵ When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul was occupied with the word, testifying to the Jews that the Christ was Jesus. ⁶ And when they opposed and reviled him, he shook out his garments and said to them, *"Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent. From now on I will go to the Gentiles."* ⁷ And he left there and went to the house of a man named Titius Justus, a worshiper of God. His house was next door to the synagogue. ⁸ Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord, together with his entire household. And many of the Corinthians hearing Paul believed and were baptized. ⁹ And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, *"Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent, ¹⁰ for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many in this city who are my people."* ¹¹ And he stayed a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

¹² But when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews made a united attack on Paul and brought him before the tribunal, ¹³ saying, *"This man is persuading people to worship God contrary to the law."* ¹⁴ But when Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, *"If it were a matter of wrongdoing or vicious crime, O Jews, I would have reason to accept your complaint. ¹⁵ But since it is a matter of questions about words and names and your own law, see to it yourselves. I refuse to be a judge of these things."* ¹⁶ And he drove them from the tribunal. ¹⁷ And they all seized Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him in front of the tribunal. But Gallio paid no attention to any of this.

Paul Returns to Antioch

¹⁸ After this, Paul stayed many days longer and then took leave of the brothers and set sail for Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila. At Cenchreae he had cut his hair, for he was under a vow. ¹⁹ And they came to Ephesus, and he left them there, but he himself went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. ²⁰ When they asked him to stay for a longer period, he declined. ²¹ But on taking leave of them he said, "I will return to you if God wills," and he set sail from Ephesus.

²² When he had landed at Caesarea, he went up and greeted the church, and then went down to Antioch.

While Paul was in Corinth, he experienced both great opportunity and much opposition. He served the people of Corinth in weakness and much fear and trembling—to the point of wanting to give up.

What do you do when you're afraid to do what God wants you to do? You keep doing what God has told you to do and you count on his kindness to carry you through.

Even amidst fear and weakness, he encountered the kindness of God in a variety of ways.

- First, he experienced the kindness of God in community.
- He also experienced it through God providing resources that Paul needed at just the right time, and in God turning what was meant for evil into good.
- But most importantly, God's kindness came to Paul in Jesus promise of his presence (*I am with you*), God's protection (*no one will harm you*), and the importance of the work Jesus gave him to do there (*I have many people in this city*).

Paul believed the promise of Jesus by making a promise of his own (vow) that he would stay put, and the church in Corinth was established.

There is never a day in your life where you are not the object of God's kind attention. **Until and unless we learn to rest in the kindness of God, the sovereignty of God, the faithful promises of God, we will never risk for God. If we don't rest in God, we will never risk for God.**

For Discussion:

1. When have you experienced God's kindness and success, while also being haunted by fear and exhaustion to the point where you want to give up?
2. What do you normally do when you're afraid to do what you think God wants you to do?
3. What is a vow, or concrete commitment, you can make today to remain faithful to God because Jesus has been so faithful to you?