

# Acts: 18:1-11

## *Confident, Faithful Devotion!*

Image Church // July 25, 2021

---

### Introduction

Well good morning Image family, I hope you're doing well... Hey, if you're **NEW** with us, we're so excited that you're here with us today...

We've been having a lot of new folks join us each week this summer... Now is such a great time to jump into the life of our church- and we want to walk with you in the days ahead helping you get connected and loving and serving you any ways that we can...

- So, if you're here and you want to take a next step to get connected, or if you have any questions stop by the **CONNECTION CENTER**...

Well listen, it's so good to be back with you this week, *forewarning- I have a fresh-wind and I am fired up about this morning*...

For those of you that are new we've been in a series through the **Gospel of Luke** that I can't wait to jump back in on that next weekend!

But before we do that, I wanted to preach a text that I believe God sovereignly for this morning especially in light of where we've been the last few weeks... And as we transition out of *summer*, which, for many is the transition officially out of COVID and the chaotic implications that it had on our lives, our rhythms and our faith...

See, as a result, more than ever **Christianity** is something that we're **attempting** to fit in when there's time...

You have your job, you have your family and friends, you have other life duties, all of which have been discombobulated for 16 months... And then you have your faith thing that's also shifted in some capacity over the past **17 months**...

And what will happen is, if we're not careful we'll walk through the book of Luke, we'll hear about how God is working in us, and we'll hear about God's call for us to multiply and yet there will not be any actual fruit that will come from it...

We will hear good things, biblical truths, but we won't actually walk in them...

And for many the reason is because we've lost our confidence... See **chaos tends to affect our confidence**... Because what chaos does is impact our consistency, and consistency is what fosters confidence, but when we're not consistent then we begin to lose confidence...

See when you lose consistency, you lose confidence, and when you lose confidence, your devotion begins to waiver...

**For many of us this is where we are**- things have been crazy, rhythms have been everywhere and you're not where you want to be in the Christian life, and if you're being honest you've **digressed**-we all have to a degree in light of the circumstances surrounding COVID that were unlike anything else...

**Participating in the mission of Jesus was so different for the last 17 months**... And we've found ourselves in a place where we lack confidence to move forward because now it feels awkward and more uncomfortable because we haven't been doing it...

**Example:** *School dance dancing for the first time- awkward*  
*Or- Asking a college student to actually pick up the phone and call the girl!*  
*Or- like not using a filter on Instagram!*

For some of you that are new to the faith this is just where you are- you never really had consistency or confidence... Either way we're kind of all in the same boat...

This where we are... Here's what I want you to do this morning- **breath** and soak in the Word...

And let's reorient around an incredible story that I think will give us motivation and encouragement so that we can have a **confident and faithful devotion** to Jesus and His message and ministry...

And as a part of that, walking away with some **very practical application** as you begin to take steps forward...

So, if you have your bibles go ahead and grab them and turn to **Acts 18**...

As you're turning there let me give you a little context around what's happening here...

We're going to be looking at a guy named Paul, who used to be Saul, that murdered Christians. But he had an encounter with Jesus that changed everything...

- Became a prominent figure in the NT writing 13 books...

**He went from killing Christians to becoming a Christian**, and he's given his life toward advancing the message that had changed his life...

And he did this through a series of missionary journeys where he would share the gospel, the problem is the Jewish religious leaders weren't having it- they didn't like Paul...

- They thought Jesus wasn't the Messiah and Paul a Jew was saying he was... Wreaked havoc on his life...

**Case and point**- right before where we're going to be picking up, In **Acts 17** Paul was in a city where things were getting all stirred up because he was preaching about Jesus, and so they had to escort him out, so they dropped him off in a city called **Athens** to wait on his boys...

While Paul was there, he stated to preach about Jesus again- sounds crazy right?!? ... *You want to talk about confidence...*

**And get this**: he ends up getting a chance to preach in front of the **Athenian Council** with some of the most prominent philosophers of the day, and he tells them about the One True God and his revelation through Jesus... Huge moment!

*And that brings us to our text for today...*

## **Acts 18:1-11**

After this, he left Athens and went to Corinth, **2** where he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla because Claudius had ordered all the Jews to leave Rome.

So, Paul gets to Corinth and he meets up with **Aquila and Priscilla**... These are 2 people that have been kicked out of their country because of religious persecution...

They were **forced** to uprooted their lives, leave their jobs... In an instant, their lives were literally flipped upside down... Can you imagine what they must have been feeling, or the thoughts that were running through their heads?!?

The confusion, the frustration, the disappointment, the anxiety of not knowing what to expect next... They had to restart their lives, and this was not at all what they were expecting...

**And yet**, this is exactly the place where God's going to use them the most...

See, *what seemed like and ending was really what God was going to use for a new beginning!*<sup>1</sup>

**Aquila and Priscilla** would end up playing a key role in God's plan to advance the message of Jesus... And it all started through an unexpected turn of event that didn't make sense at the time...

There's some of you here today and you're going through some unexpected things in your life right now that wasn't part of the plan...

- Maybe you lost your job, maybe you didn't get the promotion that you needed to be more financially stable, maybe you didn't get the job you applied for, maybe you thought you were going to be married by now and you're not...

Today you need to be **encouraged**, and you need to take heart in the fact that just because things aren't going the way you planned doesn't mean that God's not in control...

See, often the times when our plans fail that God steps in and says "**watch this**" and He shows you why He is God and you are not, and then He uses you in ways that you would have never thought possible, just like He did with **Aquila and Priscilla!**

Some of you need to see that not all hope is lost, and you need to get ready for the work that God is about to do in your life.

**Let's keep reading...**

Paul came to them [**Aquila and Priscilla**], **3** and since they were of the same occupation, tentmakers by trade, he stayed with them and worked. **I like to think that they were making ground-blinds for deer hunting... Paul probably was the first one that came up with the desert pattern.**

**4** [Paul] reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath and tried to persuade both Jews and Greeks. **5** When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself to preaching the word and testified to the Jews that Jesus is the Messiah. **6** When they resisted

and blasphemed, he shook out his clothes and told them, "Your blood is on your own heads! I am innocent. From now on I will go to the **Gentiles.**"

So, Paul per-usual, Paul goes to the synagogue to talk to the religious leaders first... These are the people that you **think** would get it, and be like "*Paul, this makes sense, I am in!*" And yet that couldn't be farther from the truth...

Not only do they **not** believe, but they **blasphemed**, or **reviled** him- they literally **slandered** him...

\*This shows how dangerous religion can be... Listen, **being religious doesn't make you righteous, only Jesus can do that...** Never mistake religious activity, going to church, being a good person, even reading your bible, as something that saves you it doesn't... Religion is just a mask over a bad heart...

**Example:** It's like if you needed a heart transplant to live, but you go to a plastic surgeon... you need a new heart you don't need a better appearance!

So, Paul says- "Look I told you the truth about Jesus, who by the way came through the line of the Jewish people as the fulfillment of God's promise, in fact everything that you do actually points to Him... and you slander me!!"

So, Paul's like, "at this point I am innocent of what happens to you from here... God told me to come and preach to you, so I did it and you have confrontationally rejected me, so I am going on to the gentiles (non-Jews)."

The synagogue just never turns out well for Paul... **I mean if you Paul's side-kick, you're like, "hang on Paul let me grab the first aid kit before you head in there, because every time this thing ends up turning violent..."**

<sup>1</sup> Thoughts gathered from Spence Shelton, Sermon: Yearbooks, dreams and Jesus. July 6, 2014.

But amidst the beatings and the rejections, the crazy thing is that Paul continues to be faithful to keep sharing the gospel even though he knows by now how things are probably going to turn out...

**Why?!?** Because he is dedicated to the mission of God, and he understands what's at stake, and he feels the weight of that...

You get the sense from what he says to them about *"their blood being on their own heads"* that he feels the burden that, if he doesn't share the gospel with them, that he shares in some way the guilt of their condemnation.<sup>2</sup>

**Let me ask you this**, is that true for you? Do you understand what's at stake, do you feel the weight of that for the people that God has placed around you?

*Let's keep reading:*

**7** So he left there and went to the house of a man named Titius Justus, a worshiper of God, whose house was **next door** to the synagogue. **8** Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, believed in the Lord, along with his whole household. **Many of the Corinthians, when they heard, believed and were baptized.**

So, Paul heads next door to his buddies house...

- *Interesting how revival takes place in a home and not in a church building?!*

And **verse 8** says, and many heard and believed... incredible right?!? And naturally you can imagine that Paul is starting to get worried based on past history, its about this time when they would come and beat the tar out of him, or throw him in prison...

*But then God say this to Paul:*

**9** The Lord said to Paul in a night vision, **"Don't be afraid, but keep on speaking and don't be silent. 10 For I am with you, and no one will lay a hand on you to hurt you, because I have many people in this city."**

**11** He stayed there a year and a half, teaching the word of God among them.

*There are **4 practical points of application** that we need to see from all this as we reorient and move forward...*

### **1. Be intentional with where God has you**

Everywhere Paul shows up, he is laser focused on the mission to advance the message of Jesus... He's like, "Ok, I am where I am right now, God must have a plan and a reason for it, so here we go!"

Now, I know some of you are like, yeah but he is a professional, this is what he does for a living... Not true, Paul got a job **making ground blinds** and was still doing it...

And not only was he being intentional to share the gospel, but he was being intentional to build relationships with people to be part of the mission with him...

See, he jumped in with **Aquila and Priscilla**, and what we know from other places in Scripture is that he developed a friendship with them, in fact in **verse 18** Paul would take them with him to **Ephesus**... *They had to be tight with him and bough in to the mission to uproot their lives yet again!*

And then, check this out, **Aquila and Priscilla** would end up investing in a guy named **Apollos** who would have a profound impact on many others!

See, all of this was born out of Paul's **intentionality** to advance the gospel, and to rally others to jump on board and do the same!

**What if that was you goal at work?** What if you realized that God has placed you where you are for a specific reason, and that it's all part of His plan to reach people through you??

<sup>2</sup> Spence Shelton, Sermon: Yearbooks, dreams and Jesus. July 6, 2014.

What if the mission of the gospel became the **undercurrent** for why you are doing what you are doing? That instead of having a **personal agenda**, you **God-centered agenda**?

*And get this...* What if you rallied the other believes that you worked with together to do the same thing, and together you made it your goal to reach your office for Christ!

What if we realized that God has placed us in our neighborhoods, and communities for a greater purpose?!?

The question is, will you be intentional with the people that God has put around you in the place where God has you??

It's easy to unplug during the summer... But don't miss the opportunities around you... We never unplug from the mission that God has given us, there's too much at stake...

**Example:** My dad played basketball with a guy, led him to Christ and not long after that they were playing and after they got done my dad saw him in the locker-room and asked if he was ok... and they guy said he didn't feel well...

- My dad prayed with him and as soon as he said Amen, the guy dropped dead on the spot with a heart attack...

In that instant that man was with the Lord... You never know what life holds, or how God can use you... will you be intentional...

**For others of you**, you're here and you're **not** a Christian... You need to know that you're not promised tomorrow... Maybe you've been back and forth about this Christianity thing and today you need to jump in... you need to trust in Jesus.

*Let's look at the second thing that we need to see:*

## **2. Be devoted to the Word (v. 5)**

*Look at verse 5:*

**5** When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul **devoted** himself to preaching the word and testified to the Jews that Jesus is the Messiah.

Paul was devoted to preaching, but you can also read that, like this **Paul was occupied with the Word**... In the original language that verb has a sense of being compelled attached to it...

The Word of God was central to the mission of God...

Listen, **when you're occupied with the Word of God, it will keep you focused on the mission of God!**

The question is, are you devoted to the Word of God, are you **occupied** by the **Word of God**?

Let me take a step back, do you understand the power of the Word of God?

- 2 Timothy 3:16
- Hebrews 4:12
- Eph. 6 armor of God- Word, only offensive weapon

Many of you don't feel compelled or adequate to live on mission, and that might be because you're not in the Word... You don't know the Word...

- Holding up hope is hard when you don't know where to point...
- We don't want to give people our words, we want to give them Gods Word... You can never go wrong with that...

Here's the deal though, we get so easily occupied by so many other things and the first thing to go is the Word of God... we stop making time for it...

And what you find is that your priorities begin to get clouded, your motivation begins to fade, you feel disconnected or distant from God... and it's because you're not engaging with the power source that He has given you, His Word!

Listen there is an old saying, If the devil can't make you bad he will make you busy...

Let's look at the 3<sup>rd</sup> thing we see:

### 3. Don't let failure set you back (v. 6-8)

In **verse 6** Paul gets rejected hard, so in **verse 7** he heads next door...

*This is almost comical... Waving back and forth...*

Paul didn't let failure and rejection set him back, he just looked for another way... Allowing the gospel to be the undercurrent that keeps him moving forward on the mission...

And what's amazing is that what we see is that he actually didn't completely fail... **Crispus, a leader of the synagogue**... Actually, gets saved along with his whole family!

- So, you never know when God uses what seems like failure to you, to do something amazing that can only happen through Him... Because He's the one in control not you...

The bottom line is that Gospel progress cannot be stopped... It moves forward regardless of the obstacles... This should be encouraging to you, that no matter what kind of opposition you're having at work or in your neighborhood, God can press through...

The question for us is will we continue in faith or will we sit back **loathing** over what we think is failure or rejection?

Listen, ***we have to remember that the goal isn't acceptance or conversion, the goal is to live out the mission- and trust God with the conversion!***

Look as a church we are going to be **intently persistent** in advancing the mission of God by proclaiming the good news of Jesus...

The gospel's center of who we are as a church, and out of that, everything else that we do, is done with the goal of pointing people back to the gospel!

So, if you're looking for a **safe** church that does the *same thing* over and over again with no intentionality for advancing the gospel, then this probably isn't the best place for you...

We are all about trying things and leveraging things to see people come to know Jesus... And that means that we are going to try some things, especially as a new church plant, we are going to try some things, pray like crazy and see what happens.

And if it doesn't work, we'll scrap it and try something else... Because we want to see people come to Jesus, and we hope that's your heart to so that we can do this together!! We are in this together, that's why when someone comes to Christ we baptize them publicly to celebrate as a family!

But here's the great news in all of that is that our security not found in the right plan, it's found in Jesus...

*Which leads me to the last thing we see...*

### 4. Your confidence comes from Christ (v. 9-11)

Look at **verse 9** and see what God says to Paul in the midst of all that's going on... "Don't be afraid, but keep on speaking and don't be silent.

**10** For I am with you, and no one will lay a hand on you to hurt you, because I have many people in this city."

And how does Paul respond? **Verse 11** He stayed there a year and a half, teaching the word of God among them.

Paul as able to have confidence to continue on no matter what was going on around Him because of the finished work of Jesus...

See, when you understand who God is and what He has done for you, it changes everything...

God sent Jesus to come and be rejected and scorned in our place on the cross, paying for our rejection of God... And just before Jesus dies, he says: "It is finished" and 3 days later He would rise from the dead...

What was finished is your separation from God because of your sin... When you trust in the finished work of Jesus you receive:

- Acceptance, and a new identity... Your acceptance your identity, it all rests in Jesus...
  - *No guilt in life, no fear in death—  
This is the pow'r of Christ in me;  
From life's first cry to final breath,  
Jesus commands my destiny.*

And listen know this, there's nothing that on this earth that can affect your final destiny... ***And for you, rejection of the created things means nothing to the acceptance of the Creator!***

Have confidence that the God is in control, and He promises that He will never leave you or forsake you... continue on in the boldness of the identity and security you have in Jesus!

## Conclusion [VAMP]

**1. Be intentional with where God has you**

**2. Be devoted to the Word (v. 5)**

**3. Don't let failure set you back (v. 6-8)**

**4. Your confidence comes from Christ (v. 9-11)**

For some of you the question is, have you trusted in Jesus? Some of you need to start there... You need to receive the gift of salvation and the new identity and the eternal security that only Christ offers!

Others of you maybe thought you have but there is nothing in your life that looks anything like we talked about today...

Maybe you have been holding on to a religion and not being in a relationship with Jesus and you need to repent and trust in Him today!

Some of you need to ask yourself, what defines me right now, what is driving my life? Is it the mission on God?

- Do you really recognize the weight of the message of Jesus and if you really understand what's at stake...?
- Some of you need to hit reset and you need to jump in the Word of God and jump back in the game!

## Specific Application:

Are you engaging in the local vehicle that God uses to move the mission forward? Are you connected to a local church? Listen you were not intended to do this alone...

- That's why we have the church... The question is, are you actively involved in a local church for the sake of advancing the mission of the gospel?

Paul partnered with people in the city to reach the city....

- Community Group?

And partnering with people to reach the world....

- Praying, Going, Giving...

Want to leave you with this... ***If Jesus had people in that city, then you better believe that He has people in this city!***

***Have Confidence that God is at work!***

**Pray...**