

Acts 18:1-17 “The Power of the Spirit to Engage a Metropolis”

Intro. As we consider Paul’s ministry at Corinth we discover that he lived Christ’s Great Commission: **Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen. [Mt.28:19-20]** Examine your life. What would you say is your mission? How does your mission glorify God and fulfill His mission?

Subject: Paul’s ministry at Corinth

Object: Live Christ’s mission

Context: 2nd Mission trip arrives in southern Greece [Athens, Corinth]

1. Go [1-3] Engage your world for Christ [Go therefore]

a. Paul goes to Corinth

1After these things Paul departed from Athens and went to Corinth.

- i. Paul was at Athens the great intellectual & cultural center, and goes south to Corinth the great commercial center and political capital of Southern Greece.
- ii. temple of Aphrodite/Venus & 1000 temple prostitutes, immoral like Las Vegas
- iii. hosted Isthmian games; 2nd only to Olympic games
- iv. Paul wrote “Romans” from Corinth description of Gentile immorality reflects Corinth
- v. problem: pride, pleasure and presence of money can be an obstacle to seeing our need for God

* desire to see your community reached for Christ despite obstacles

b. Paul connects with Aquila and Priscilla

2And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla (because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome); and he came to them. **3**So, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and worked; for by occupation they were tentmakers.

- i. Aquila & Priscilla were driven from Rome when Emperor Claudius expelled the Jews in 49AD. Uncertain whether they came to faith prior to or through Paul. Hosted the church in their home [1Cor.16:19], risked their life for Paul & the gospel [Rom.16:3-4]
 - ii. Were leather craftsmen like Paul. Used their career to engage people and support selves. Rabbinical tradition of working a trade to support ministry. Avoid charge of serving for financial gain despite being entitled to support [1Cor.9:6-15]
 - iii. sacrifice to reach people for Christ:
 - iv. later support came from Philippi & Paul could focus more on calling than career
- * often easier to engage your world with others than alone

2. Make disciples [4-8] Help people to follow Jesus

4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks.**5**When Silas and Timothy had come from Macedonia, Paul was compelled by

the Spirit, and testified to the Jews *that Jesus is the Christ*. 6But when they opposed him and blasphemed, he shook *his* garments and said to them, “Your blood *be upon your own heads*; I *am* clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.” 7And he departed from there and entered the house of a certain *man* named Justus, *one who worshiped God*, whose house was next door to the synagogue. 8Then Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his household.

- i. reasoned at synagogue every Sabbath to persuade Jew & Gentile to commit to Christ [4]. Gentiles were attracted to the God of the Jews (YHWH)
 - ii. When Silas & Timothy came from Thessalonica & Berea [Northern Greece/Macedonia] with good news about the church (1Thess. 3:6-10) Paul was led by the Spirit to boldly declare to the Jews that Jesus is the Messiah [5]
 - iii. When the Jews rejected the gospel Paul focuses on the Gentiles [6-7]
 - iv. Shaking garments [6] is a symbol re no longer responsible for their rejection
 - v. Crispus the head elder of the synagogue & all of his family came to faith in Christ – a very unlikely disciple who counted the cost and chose Christ [**Lu.9:23**]
 - vi. **Rom.10:17** many Corinthians came to faith
- * community groups re outreach & making disciples

3. Baptize [8] Identification with Christ

And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized.

- i. **Rom.6** baptism is a symbol of identification with Christ’s death and resurrection. li. It is evidence that we are saved not the means to be saved. [* January baptism]

4. Teach [11] And he continued *there* a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them: Mt.28:20; 2Tim.2:15

- i. spent a year and half at Corinth teaching the Word [cf. Ephesus – 3 years]
- ii. primary tool to become mature followers of Jesus is Scripture [**2Tim.2:2**]

5. Jesus’ Presence [9-10] The encouragement of God with you

a. peace to proclaim [9] don’t be afraid to share the gospel Now the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision, “Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent: Paul was opposed by Jewish leaders [12-13] [cf. prior stoning at Lystra Ac.14]. Implication is that Paul was afraid

b. protection [10,12-17] for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you: Paul was protected from Jewish leaders, and Roman opposition [12-17]

- i. **Josh. 1:5,9** I will never leave you, as I was with Moses, so shall I be with you

c. purpose [10] for I have many people in this city: help produce many followers of Christ in a community > reach a metropolis

- i. Christ’s presence is the means

12When Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul and brought him to the judgment seat, 13saying, “This *fellow* persuades men to worship God contrary to the law.”

14And when Paul was about to open *his* mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, “If it were a matter of wrongdoing or wicked crimes, O Jews, there would be reason why I should bear with you. **15**But if it is a question of words and names and your own law, look *to it* yourselves; for I do not want to be a judge of such *matters*.”**16**And he drove them from the judgment seat. **17**Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat *him* before the judgment seat. But Gallio took no notice of these things.

- i. Gallio was governor of southern area of Greece [younger brother of Seneca, famed philosopher & Nero’s tutor], refused to prohibit Paul from sharing the gospel > opportunity to proclaim the gospel without opposition from Rome
- ii. Gentiles beat Sosthenes the leader of the synagogue after Crispus came to Christ probably re false charges vs. Paul & Gallio did not intervene [17]

Disc. Qs

- 1. What do you think are important characteristics of a healthy ministry?**
- 2. Why might it be easier to engage people as a team rather than alone?**
- 3. How can your community group reach the lost and make disciples more effectively?**
- 4. How could the awareness of Jesus’ presence impact your life and mission?**
- 5. Reflection: Examine your life. What would you say is your mission? How does your mission glorify God and fulfill His mission?**