

Sermon No. 408

CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH

The book of Acts

CHAPTER 18

Scripture Reading: 1 Corinthians 3:1-11

Dean Carter

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INTRODUCTION:

§ Paul evangelizing – Thessalonica – Berea – Athens

§ Many came to know the Lord

§ But at times not so many

§ In Athens very few . . . some think Paul disillusioned

§ But the letter he writes to the believer's just echoes with joy!

Don't judge the content of the message *by the magnitude of the response*

§ What he shared was 'the' message

§ Being an effective witness is not be about how big a crowd you can pull . . . but how faithful you are to the TRUTH

§ But when you share . . . tell it plainly!

Romans 10:9-10

^{NLT} ⁹ If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that GOD raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with GOD, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved

ACTS 18**(18:1-5) Paul ministers in the city of Corinth**

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

- South of Athens – surrounded by sea and mountains
- Major city . . . destroyed 146BC by Rome . . . rebuilt by Julius Caesar
- Main road into southern Greece
- Paul could see that a strong church there could touch lives all over the Empire
- Corinth was also a tough city – sinful – hedonistic – immoral
- Proves Paul didn't just plant churches where he thought it would be *easy*

² And 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.

- The biography of Emperor Claudius mentions the expulsion of Jews from Rome
- Aquila and Priscilla moved from Rome to Corinth
- It isn't clear whether they were already believers
- Some say yes . . . some no
- What we do know is this . . .

The meeting begins one of the most important friendships in NT

⁴ And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks

- Paul does what he does best!
- He was very bold . . . 1 Corinthians 2:1-16 . . . he declared, For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified

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*.

- Claiming that Jesus *is* GOD . . . doesn't impress Jews
- Paul is set on getting to the heart of the Gospel

(6-8) Opposition rises again against Paul

⁶ But when they opposed him and blasphemed, he shook *his* garments and said to them, "Your blood *be* upon your *own* heads; I *am* clean.

- He shook his garments . . . he is expressing *his* rejection of *their* rejection!
- That would have been directed at Jesus . . . they wouldn't blaspheme GOD

From now on I will go to the Gentiles." ⁷ And 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

- Paul wasn't afraid to make a strong statement!
- He knew his responsibility was to preach to the Jews first (Romans 1:16) . . . but when they openly rejected the Gospel *again*. . . he went to the Gentiles

Matthew 7:6: *Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces*

- Fine line . . . doesn't always mean we should stop trying to reach them?

⁸ Then Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his household. And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized

- This shows that Paul didn't carry a grudge against the Jews
- He was one of the few baptized in Corinth personally by Paul . . . 1 Cor. 1:14

(9-11) GOD encourages Paul

⁹ Now the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision, "Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; ¹⁰ for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city." ¹¹ And he continued *there* a year and six months, teaching the word of GOD among them

- Does this IMPLY Paul has become afraid!
- GOD wanted to encouraged him . . . he was OBEDIENT to GOD
- Paul stayed at Corinth longer than in any other city where he founded a church
- Paul's ministry is . . . teaching the Word of GOD among them

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

- His fellow countrymen had him arrested!
- Gallio is a ROMAN SENATOR under Claudius

¹⁴ And 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.

- In a way Gallio gave recognition to Christianity . . . as a religion

- Gallio knew government had no role in religious matters
- But had Gallio taken action . . . set a tragic precedent

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

- Not surprising Gallio looks the other way . . . Romans don't like Jews
- Doesn't mean they like Christians
- They just probably hates Jews more than they do Christians!

(18-23) Paul's second missionary journey comes to an end

¹⁸ So Paul still remained a good while. Then he took leave of the brethren and sailed for Syria, and Priscilla and Aquila *were* with him. He had *his* hair cut off at Cenchrea, for he had taken a vow. ¹⁹ And he came to Ephesus, and left them there; but he himself entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews.

- At the start the Holy Spirit stopped him going to Ephesus
- Now, the Holy Spirit gives him the freedom to preach there . . . great results
- Everything in GOD's timing!

²⁰ When they asked *him* to stay a longer time with them, he did not consent, ²¹ but took leave of them, saying, "I must by all means keep this coming feast in Jerusalem; but I will return again to you, GOD willing." And he sailed from Ephesus. ²² And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up and greeted the church, he went down to Antioch. ²³ After he had spent some time *there*, he departed and went over the region of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples.

Third missionary trip begins

- Strengthening disciples is Paul . . . he isn't just interested in a person's conversion

(24-28) Ministry of Apollos

²⁴ Now a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man *and* mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. ²⁵ This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John. ²⁶ So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of GOD more accurately. ²⁷ And when he desired to cross to Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him; and when he arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace; ²⁸ for he vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ.

- Apollos came from Alexandria . . . he was a remarkable man
 - Eloquent
 - Mighty in the Scriptures
 - Instructed in the way of the Lord
 - Fervent in spirit . . . has the idea of "bubbling over with enthusiasm."
- But he only knew only the baptism of John
- That means he probably had little knowledge of the *full* person and work of Jesus
- Proves you don't have to know the entire Word of GOD to be an effective witness

The Heart of the Matter . . . what stands out in second missionary journey . . . are the people that became CO-WORKERS for CHRIST

The willingness to give their hearts, hands and homes to the Lord

The harmony that exists between them

Each of them are unique

Each one of them will feature again in apostolic history

Timothy . . Luke . . Silas . . Lydia . . Aquila and Priscilla . . Apollos

Paul was grateful to GOD for them all

Paul was encouraged by their support

Every pastor I have known is grateful for co-workers

Aquila and Priscilla

- Always mentioned together . . . Godly couple
 - They take Paul in
 - They travel with Paul to Ephesus
 - They help Apollos
- Prepared to help another serving Christ . . . extremely valuable in GOD's kingdom
- Romans 16:3-4

NKJV ³ Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, ⁴ who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles

Apollos

- He went to Corinth . . . Paul wrote in 1 Cor. That he had a remarkable ministry
- Some became confused by that . . . some followed Apollos . . . some Paul
- But they were 100% co-workers in Christ . . . one planted . . . one watered

1 Corinthians 3:6

⁶ I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase

Consider today what it means to be a fellow worker for CHRIST

GOD gives all of us the amazing opportunity to work with Him

TRUTH IS: We cannot work without Him

IN FACT: It is CHRIST working with us!

Imagine JESUS wanting us to be His working partner

Mark 16:20

NKJV ²⁰ And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with *them* and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen

- When you consider all the ways GOD *could* have done His work . . . it is even more amazing to know He wants our participation

NLT . . . and the Lord worked through them

- Spurgeon called this 'wonderful condescension'

Is not this wonderful condescension? You remember the passage in which we are said to be laborers together with God? Is it not gracious and kind on the Lord's part to let us come and work with Him? Yet it seems to my mind more condescending for God to come and work with us, because ours is such poor, feeble, imperfect service! Yet so He does—"the Lord working with them." The Lord is working with that dear Sister who, when she takes her class, feels that she is quite unfit for it, and with that Brother who, when he preaches, thinks that it is not preaching at all and is half inclined never to try again. Oh, yes, "the Lord working with them," such as they were—fishermen, humble women and the like! This is wonderful condescension!

The evening message – the friendship of Christ