

Living out our faith Pt 23

Acts 18:1-11

V1-3

- Paul has left Athens and journeyed fifty miles to Corinth, and although the cities were relatively close in proximity, they were quite different philosophically. Athens was known for its culture and learning while Corinth its commerce and wickedness. Since Athens was the educational center of the world, producing such noted philosophers like Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. Corinth was the commercial center of the world, known for trade and travel, and producing something as well – money and vice. Being strategically located between a narrow isthmus, Corinth became the stopping place for all land trade moving North to South, and all sea trade moving East to West. This brought people from all over the world seeking fortune and pleasure; and bringing strange philosophies and new religions. All of these found a home in this slick bustling city. If you want to know how bad Corinth was remember **Romans 1:18-23** which describes human depravity that was written about Corinth.
- Verses 2-3 at this time the Jews were being driven out of Rome and spreading over Europe, and because of this a couple name Aquila and Priscilla, come into contact with Paul. What brought them together wasn't the gospel but their occupation as tent makers. The Jewish rabbis used to say, for a father not to teach his son a trade was to teach them how to steal. Paul knew a trade and he had no problem working as this was part of his witnessing (**1 Thessalonians 2:9**). Interestingly we are not told that Aquila and Priscilla were believers before they met Paul, so we have to assume that it was Paul who led them to the Lord as they were working side by side. So impacted by Paul this couple invited him to stay with them and continue his ministry. People will ask what their mission field is, and often, its right in front of them on the job.

V4-11

- Like all cities known for travel and trade, Corinth was a pleasure center for the flesh, their motto was work hard so you can play hard, and it had a temple dedicated to Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of lust. From this temple 1,000 prostitutes would come down each evening and offer themselves to

men as an act of worship to this false god. Next to Ephesus, Corinth would be the most important city Paul would visit. Verse 4 – Paul reasoned in the Synagogue, the word reasoned to say thoroughly. The Apostle Paul had it in his heart that it wasn't enough to casually speak about God, but to be able to explain the plan of God concerning the salvation of man. As Christians our desire should be to be able to explain, correct, refute, and exhort people in the truth according to what God's word has said not an opinion or philosophy handed down by man. In **1 Corinthians 2:1-5**- Paul arrives in the city of Corin and expresses these three things:

1. He determined to magnify Jesus Christ and the cross.
 2. To depend upon the Holy Spirit.
 3. To present the gospel in simplicity.
- To magnify Jesus and the cross is easier said than it is done. Because of distractions like my pride, my emotions, and feelings, which can and will be hurt, enter in when this is our plan of action. Therefore total dependency upon God's Spirit is necessary if we are to accomplish this goal. This will allow us to share God's truth in a way that's understandable and believable without any gimmicks or tricks. Verse 5 – **Philippians 4:15-16** tells us financial aid had arrived from Macedonia which allowed Paul to take a break from his tent-making job and devote himself solely to preaching and the work of the gospel. Paul's message is the same one he learned on the Damascus road – that Jesus is the Christ. Verse 6 – **Ezekiel 33:6-9** tell us we are to be watchmen on the wall who warn people of judgment and danger, and to refuse to do this will cause us to be held accountable for their rejection. But, if we do warn people of what God has said and they reject it then we've done our part and it is on them.
 - Verse 7 – Paul departs the Synagogue and went next door to the home of Justus and amazingly the ruler of the synagogue Cripus, becomes a believer. Often we find in Acts people who start out antagonistic toward the gospel and eventually become Christians; and who better for that ministry than Paul who had that very testimony. You know this riled up the Jewish population who didn't believe. Not only does one of their own get saved but many of the heathen Corinthians also get saved. Isn't it something how others benefit from a single decision by you, or me to trust God, to believe God and do what we know is right. Not only has Paul's ministry impacted Justus, but

also Crispus and his whole household. You would think this is a high time in the Apostle Paul's life right? Wrong.

- Verse 9 – during a time of tremendous blessing God tells Paul “not to be afraid”
 1. Paul was bold preaching the gospel to any who would listen.
 2. Paul was courageous going back into the same city that stoned him earlier.
 3. Paul was battle tested. He had been beaten, imprisoned, chased from city to city.
- Yet God saw fit to say this to him why? Because just like us, his heart was prone to wander, like us his voice trembled when he spoke, like us he also experienced anxieties and fears just like us, and so like us he occasionally needed some reassurance. Verse 10 – would seem odd since Paul had gone through that already in other cities why would it bother him now? Apparently Paul, like us, when we go through trials long enough it wears on us, discourages us, and cause us to make rash decisions. He was thinking about leaving the city, but God intervenes and after His word of affirmation he stays another 18 months. God is so good He knows what we need to hear and when we need to hear it, and from whom we need to hear it. Acts 9:15 and Acts 20:22-24, although Paul knew what to expect he still needed to be reassured that the One he was doing this all for was with him and would continue to sustain him no matter what he faced.