

Living out our faith Pt. 25

Acts 18:18 – 28

- We left off with Paul being brought before the council of Corinth. Once there, he is falsely accused of persuading people to worship in opposition to the scriptures. But, before Paul could open his mouth to defend himself God had already worked on the chief judge's heart. Not only did Gallio side with Paul but he rebuke Paul's accusers; causing the crowd to turn against and beat Sosthenes the person who led the charge against Paul. The story doesn't stop there. After experiencing such great humiliation in front of his peers Sosthenes ended up being befriended by Paul and the other Christians, and they led him to Christ. Being changed from an enemy of the cross, to a brother to the saints, he even has his name mentioned in **1 Corinthians 1:1**.

V18 – 23

- Paul was in Corinth for eighteen months and after teaching and discipleship with many in the faith his ministry was complete. He journeys back to Antioch his home church. Verse 19 – they stop in Ephesus, and as we have seen, everywhere Paul went he was certain to find where the Saints were and connect with them. He enters the synagogue and encounters witnessing opportunities. As we have studied in 17:2 we learned it was Paul's custom to engage people by reasoning from the scriptures. Many will try and reason by intellect or from the perspective of experience, but nothing is more effective than impacting someone's life through the power of the Word. Reason means to say or discuss thoroughly. Reason can also mean to thoroughly engage someone that he/she understands the subject enough to make a well thought out decision. That is why people either loved or hated Paul because he forced them to choose whether they would follow or reject the Lord leaving no room for doubt.
- Verse 20 – the Ephesians loved him and they wanted him to spend more time with them. Why do you think they enjoyed Paul so much? We know it wasn't because of an endearing personality because there were many who hated him so much. It wasn't his physical appearance because **Galatians** describes him as rather loathsome to look at so then what was it? It is because he was

a treasure chest of truth, a storehouse of spiritual knowledge, a walking reminder of why we were still on this earth. It's still that way today.

- How I love to be around those who are rich in the things of God, who take in the Word and give out the Word. Who, by their daily lives challenge me to live by the definition of who I say I am. Verse 21 – many use the phrase “if God will” like they use “God bless you” after a person sneezes. However “if God will” was more than a religious phrase to Paul, it was one of the strengths and encouragements of his life and ministry. After eighteen months of ministry Paul decided it was time to leave Corinth and return to Antioch.
- You can believe when Paul made a decision affecting other people's lives, that he was certain it was God's will. So, many will ask how do you know? How did Paul know? The answer is simple – who does it benefit initially you or others. If the body is not blessed you should not expect to be. Verses 22 – 23 epitomize Paul's ministry. First he greets the church – to greet, to salute or embrace them. Second he strengthens the church to supports or re-establish. Through his embrace people can stand.

V24 – 28

- Here's an example of knowing that your decision is in God's will – remember, if it's God's will it will not only benefit you, but others. Apollos is a man, who is not only brilliant intellectually but, also fervent in heart spiritually. **1 Corinthians 3:4** tells us he is such a charismatic figure that Paul had to rebuke some of the Corinthians for priding themselves in being his followers.
- Apollos, although eloquent in speech and accurately preached with great fervor his message was not the complete story. At this point he had not heard of Jesus resurrection but only heard John the Baptist message of repentance. Therefore, all he could preach was repent for the Messiah was coming. Paul's companions Aquila and Priscilla hear him as he is sharing this message in the synagogue. When the Ephesians had asked Paul to stay longer he said no and returned to Antioch. However, he did the next best thing asking Aquila and his wife to stay in his place there at

Ephesus. Because they did look what happens. It benefits not only Apollos but also the whole church, unbelievers included, as many come to faith because of his enlightenment. This story shows us it is not enough to be merely brilliant or spiritual you also need to be humble.

- Apollos is from Alexandria, a man who fits the description of this area. Alexandria, next to Rome, was the largest city in the Roman Empire. It was home to several universities and prided itself on education and intellect. Now, look at the instruments the Lord chose to use to teach him the full truth; two tent makers – Aquila and Priscilla – no education, no pedigree, no charisma but they know Jesus. **1 Corinthians 1:26 – 27** tells not many mighty, not many noble are called, so if Apollos was not teachable he could have never received correction from these two; and because he did listen, it allowed God to speak through him which led to others hearing and receiving the message of grace.