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Philippians 3:13-14 The Message Bible

First Love Ministries, Inc.

Prayer Study #246

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

CHAPTER 18

Paul Works with Aquila and Priscilla

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

Paul tells of his coming to Corinth from Athens in an interesting passage in 1st Corinthians 2:1-5: *"When I came to you, brethren, I came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom....I determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified and I was with you in fear and weakness and in much trembling..."* This passage seems to indicate that Paul was unable to persuade the intellectual Athenians with wise words and good speaking. Thus, he comes to Corinth determined to simply preach *Christ crucified*, which, of course, is the very crux of the Gospel.

Corinth was a major market place for all of Greece and also the home of the Isthmian Games, which were second only to the Olympics. Corinth was the home of the temple of Aphrodite, which was the home to a thousand priestesses who would come down to the city at night to prostitute. Corinth was a very wicked and evil place. Paul makes a list of some of the sins of Corinth in 1st Corinthians 6:9-11: Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, sodomites, thieves, the greedy, drunkards, revilers, robbers, telling the people that practitioners of these sins would not inherit the Kingdom of God. He ends this passage in Corinthians, however, with the Good News: *And such were some of you, but you have been washed, but you are sanctified, but you are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.*

Paul was a rabbi, and according to Jewish practice, all Rabbis must work and have a trade. Paul made no money preaching and teaching and had to make a living doing something. He apparently was a skilled leather craftsman, making tents as well as other items. Paul was thus a tent maker

not only physically but also spiritually as he built the tent or Tabernacle of the Lord through the revelation that was given to him.

In 49 AD Claudius banished all Jews from Rome. Aquila and Priscilla left Rome and came to Corinth. They too were tent makers, and Paul worked with them in this trade. Paul lived with them for a year and a half and Paul later says that they were willing to “lay down their own necks” for him. They had a church in their home and because of their spiritual quality and knowledge of Scripture many people were blessed by these wonderful Christians.

Jews Reject Paul

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.
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. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.”

As was his custom, which we have seen already in several passages of Scripture, Paul goes first to the Jews and to the synagogue. Silas and Timothy now join him, and Paul preaches that Jesus is the Christ. The Jews could not receive this so Paul shakes his garments, as did the Prophets of old, and quotes from Ezekiel 33:3-7. Although Paul had preached to the Gentiles many times before, this is the first time that he declares publically and openly that he is going to turn to the Gentiles.

Crispus Is Converted

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

Crispus was the one who presided at the synagogue. When he believed on Jesus, many Corinthians also believed. Crispus is one of the few people that Paul personally baptized (1st Corinthians 1:14).

The Lord speaks to Paul in a vision showing Paul that He will protect him and that He has many people in the city. Thus Paul preaches in Corinth for 18 months.

Gallio Will Not Try Paul

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."
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.
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.

Gallio was a Roman who was unbiased and whom was very kind hearted. His brother Seneca said of him, "No man was ever as sweet to one as Gallio is to all." The Jews wanted Gallio to rule against Paul, but Gallio knew that there was no fault in Paul. Besides, he was not interested in religious differences between the Jews. Paul was freed, but the Greeks took it out on Sosthenes, ruler of the synagogue. More than likely this Sosthenes is the same man whom Paul refers to as *my brother* in 1st Corinthians 1:1. Perhaps this experience of Sosthenes at the hands of these Greeks allowed Paul to minister to Sosthenes and lead him to Christ.

Return Trip to Antioch

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.
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.

Paul is returning home after his second missionary journey. He is returning back to Antioch, his home church, and he brought Priscilla and Aquila with him as far as Ephesus. At Ephesus he goes to the synagogue and reasons with the Jews out of the Old Testament Scriptures. Apparently he got a good reception because they invite him to stay longer, but he refuses because he wants to make it to Jerusalem in time to celebrate the Feast of Pentecost and wanted to report back to the congregation at Antioch before going to Jerusalem.

When a Jew wanted to thank the Lord for a blessing, he took the Nazirite vow (Numbers 6:1-21). For thirty days he was neither to eat meat or drink wine. And he was not to cut his hair. At the end of the thirty days he made certain offerings at the Temple and cut his hair, which was burned on the altar as an offering to God.

Galatia and Phrygia: Strengthening the Disciples

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.

Paul has returned home to his home church which sent him out, There he reported on all that the Lord had done. Christian churches had been established by him in Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, and Corinth. An important part of his ministry was revisiting places where he had been in order to encourage and strengthen the disciples he had left behind. Leaving Antioch and going to Galatia and Phrygia, Paul begins his third missionary journey. Kevin Conner tells us, "It is evident that the Apostle Paul had several other journeys in his missionary work which are alluded to in his Epistles, but the Book of Acts covers three main missionary enterprises."

Apollos Teaches Effectively

24. Now a certain Jew named Apollos, born in 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 was a cultured man, well versed in Scripture and on fire for God. Since the New Testament had not been written yet, and since he had not learned the things he had learned from personal revelation, he had been instructed by asking questions and listening to believers talk. Yet he taught diligently the things that he had been taught concerning the Lord Jesus and the Messianic prophecies pointing to Him. He was in Ephesus and spoke very boldly in the synagogue. He was a Christian, but he was lacking the Baptism in the Holy Spirit so Aquilla and Priscilla took him aside and explained The Way. Here is a man who was humble and teachable.

Apollos was moved by the Spirit to go to Corinth. Aquilla and Priscilla who had just come from Corinth wrote letters to the Christians there so that they would receive Apollos. So great was Apollos' ministry in Corinth that factions, which were strongly rebuked by Paul in 1st Corinthians 3:1-7 & 21-23, came into being over the personalities of Paul, Peter, and Apollos. We must remember that all are needed in the Body of Christ, and we are not to follow men. There is only one hero, and that is Jesus. One sows, another waters, but God gives the increase!

MIDNIGHT CRY

I hear the sound of a mighty rushing wind
And it's closer now than it's ever been
I can almost hear the trumpet as Gabriel sound the call
At the midnight cry we'll be going home.

I look around me-I see prophecies fulfilled
And signs of the times they're appearing everywhere
I can almost hear the Father as He says,
"Son go get your children!"
And at the midnight cry the bride of Christ shall rise.

CHORUS

When Jesus steps out on a cloud to call His children
The dead in Christ shall rise to meet Him in the air
And then those that remain will be quickly changed
At the midnight cry (at the midnight cry) when Jesus comes again.

TAG

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CHAPTER 17

Thessalonica: "Turned the World Upside Down"

1. Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews.
2. Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures,
3. Explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead and saying, "This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ."
4. And some of them were persuaded; and a great multitude of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women, joined Paul and Silas.
5. But the Jews who were not persuaded, becoming envious, took some of the evil men from the marketplace, and gathering a mob, set all the city in an uproar and attacked the house of Jason and sought to bring them out to the people.
6. But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some brethren to the rulers of the city, crying out, "These who have turned the world upside down have come here too.
7. "Jason has harbored them, and these are all acting contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying there is another king-Jesus."
8. And they troubled the crowd and the rulers of the city when they heard these things.
9. So when they had taken security from Jason and the rest, they let them go.

Paul tells, especially in 1st Thessalonians 2:1-19, of his leaving Philippi, where he says he and his assistants *suffered* and *were shamefully treated*, to come to Thessalonica to boldly share the truth of God. This trip from Philippi to Thessalonica was one hundred miles. First, as was his custom, he goes first to the Jews and teaches in the synagogue that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah whom the Jews so earnestly sought. He does this using the Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets. Some of the Jews and many of the

Gentiles and leading women believed. But the religious crowd was jealous that Paul had won over these people, and they falsely accused Paul and the followers of Jesus and said they had come to cause trouble and were *those who have turned the world upside down*. They were accusing Paul and his company of political rebellion. Thus, they incited a mob which attacked the house of Jason. Jason was a believer in Thessalonica who had shown hospitality to Paul and Silas, perhaps taking them in his home. In Romans 16:21 Paul sends greetings to a Jason whom he calls his "kinsman," that is a fellow Hebrew Christian, and many think that these two Jasons are one and the same.

Berea: Many Receive the Word

10. Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews.
11. These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.
12. Therefore many of them believed and also not a few of the Greeks, prominent women as well as men.
13. But when the Jews from Thessalonica learned the word of God was preached by Paul at Berea, they came there also and stirred up the crowds.
14. Then immediately the brethren sent Paul away, to go to the sea; but both Silas and Timothy remained there.
15. So those who conducted Paul brought him to Athens, and receiving a command for Silas and Timothy to come to him with all speed, they departed.

The believers in Thessalonica sneaked Paul and Silas out of the city by night, and they went to Berea. Berea was 60 miles from Thessalonica. The believers in Berea were much more mature and gracious than those in Thessalonica. They received Paul's teachings and searched the Word to see if what he taught lined up with the Word of God. They were not closed and prejudiced against Paul's teaching, but they were not gullible either. They knew that the test of the correctness of Paul's teaching was the Scriptures, and they found that Scripture lined up with what Paul said, and many believed. Unfortunately the Jews from Thessalonica came to Berea to stir up the crowds and to run Paul out of town. Paul had been imprisoned in Philippi, he had left Thessalonica under cover of night because the mob wanted to attack him, and he had to flee Berea. Most men would have given

