

Sermon Date: January 26, 2014
Paul in Corinth – Acts 18:1-22
Doug McBride

Read Acts 18:1-22

1. Paul meets up with a husband and wife, Priscilla and Aquila, who become very important to him in his ministry for various reasons (v. 1-3). What similarity does Paul share with Priscilla and Aquila? How might that be a factor in Paul's length of stay in Corinth (see v. 11)?

2. See Romans 16:3; 1 Corinthians 16:19 and 2 Timothy 4:19. What do these verses tell us about Paul's relationship with Priscilla and Aquila?

It is quite possible that when Silas and Timothy arrived to meet up with Paul in Corinth (v. 5) they brought an encouraging report about the church in Thessalonica which they had participated in establishing in that region (Acts 17). It is believed that shortly after their report Paul wrote his 1st and 2nd letter to the church in Thessalonica (see 1 Thessalonians 3:6-8). Remember, Paul had to leave Thessalonica under adverse circumstances and persecution (Acts 17:5-10). For Paul to see the church he left so abruptly now flourishing must have been of great encouragement to him. If you have a chance to read 1st and 2nd Thessalonians (very short letters) you get a view of Paul's heart for this church community as he encourages them to continue in the faith, giving instruction in godly living, and addressing issues for the new believers – somewhat like a mother hen taking care of her chicks. See 1 Thessalonians 1:2-4 for Paul's heart toward this church body.

3. Looking at v. 5, what additional effect might the encouragement Paul received from Silas and Timothy's report have had on Paul?

4. How does Paul respond when the Jews reject his testimony (v. 6)? Why do you think he responded so strongly?

5. What effect is Paul's preaching having on the Corinthians overall (v. 7-8)? See also 1 Corinthians 1:14.

6. What significant experience does Paul have in v. 9-10? What does this verse suggest about Paul's state of heart (see also 1 Corinthians 2:1-3)?
- a. Doug commented that Paul's experience validates how often our faith can be a wrestling match. Have you had a similar experience when you had to "wrestle with God" when you were in a difficult spot?
 - b. How does knowing Paul "wrestled" over discouragement affect your own personal experience(s)?
 - c. Is the walk through our faith supposed to be a cake-walk in the park?
 - d. How does the LORD minister to Paul (v. 9-10)? Along with being able to make a living through his trade, what effect do the LORD's words have on Paul's ministry? Can this encourage us when we are wrestling with what we should do next?
7. What does Paul do in response to a vow (v. 18)? Although Paul delivers an overall message of salvation by grace over the Law, see 1 Corinthians 9:20-22 for his possible reasoning in keeping a vow.

Take Home Message:

Doug taught us that Paul, in his time of discouragement did not isolate – he kept Priscilla and Aquila close beside him. We all are susceptible to being discouraged in the faith. It's not an 'if'; it's a 'when'. And 'when' that happens it's important to follow Paul's model to not isolate. It's tempting to not want to look weak to each other. But this is precisely when we are struggling that we hunker in close to one another and be honest, real and authentic. Equally, we need to give each other permission to struggle.

Doug said, "Every day and everywhere Paul goes there is beauty/light and darkness side by side. Not separate, but side by side. If we only see one, we're missing it. Psalm 23:4 – "even though I walk through the valley of death, You are with me."

"In the world you will have tribulation, but take heart, I have overcome the world." John 16:33