

## Gospel Ministry in an Immoral Culture

### Acts 18:1-22

Old Man Picture

Map – Second missionary journey.

Map – Location of Corinth – Isthmus

<sup>1</sup>And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. <sup>2</sup>For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. <sup>3</sup>And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling (1 Cor 2:1-3)

#### Stage 1: Tentmaking (18:1-4)

Paul's coworkers

<sup>1</sup>After this Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. <sup>2</sup>And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. And he went to see them,

Paul's work ethic

<sup>3</sup>and because he was of the same trade he stayed with them and worked, for they were tentmakers by trade. <sup>4</sup>And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and tried to persuade Jews and Greeks.

A tentmaker couple translated the New Testament for give million Muslims while he did university teaching and she tutored English! A science teacher evangelized his students in rural Kenya, and preached every third Sunday in the local church. A symphony violinist in Singapore had Bible studies with fellow musicians. A faculty person and an engineer set up a Christian bookstore in the Arab Gulf region. ("Tentmakers Needed for World Evangelization," quoted by Ajith Fernando, *Acts*, 498-99)

#### Stage 2: Full-Time Ministry (18:5-8)

Support

<sup>5</sup>When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul was occupied with the word, testifying to the Jews that the Christ was Jesus.

<sup>15</sup>And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only. <sup>16</sup>Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. (Phil 4:15-16)

<sup>9</sup>And when I was with you and was in need, I did not burden anyone, for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied my need (2 Cor 11:9)

Opposition

<sup>6</sup>And when they opposed and reviled him, he shook out his garments and said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent. From now on I will go to the Gentiles."

### Fruitfulness

<sup>7</sup> And he left there and went to the house of a man named Titius Justus, a worshiper of God. His house was next door to the synagogue. <sup>8</sup> Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord, together with his entire household. And many of the Corinthians hearing Paul believed and were baptized.

### Stage 3: Weakness and Fear (18:9-10)

<sup>9</sup> And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, “Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent, <sup>10</sup> for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many in this city who are my people.”

The vision and its opening words—the fact that God made the effort to encourage Paul not to fear—meant that God loved and cared for his ambassador. This assurance ministered to Paul’s heart, just as 1 John 4:18 teaches us: “There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear.” The simple words in the vision filled Paul’s heart with God’s love, and fear was put to flight. Time and time again the Scriptures tell us to fear not—to stop worrying about tomorrow, to stop borrowing trouble—because we are divinely loved, and God’s love is enough! (Kent Hughes).

When I am afraid,  
I will trust in You.  
In God, whose word I praise,  
in God I trust; I will not fear.  
What can man do to me? (Ps 56:3-4)

This I know: God is for me.  
In God, whose word I praise,  
in the Lord, whose word I praise,  
in God I trust; I will not fear.  
What can man do to me? (Ps 56:9b-11)

<sup>9</sup> And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, “Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent, <sup>10</sup> for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many in this city who are my people.”

Spurgeon:

“I am the subject of depressions of spirit so fearful that I hope none of you ever get to such extremes of wretchedness as I go to,” (“Joy and Peace in Believing”)

“I wonder every day that there are not more suicides, considering the troubles in this life, (“Chastisement”)

“The Road to sorrow has been well trodden, it is the regular sheep track to heaven, and all the flock of God have had to pass along it” (“The Fainting Hero”)

“An ointment for every wound, a cordial for every faintness, a remedy for every disease. Blessed is he who is skilled in heavenly pharmacy and knows how to lay hold on the healing virtues of the promises of God!” (“Obtaining Promises”)

“To be cast down is often the best thing that could happen to us.” (“Sweet Stimulants for the Fainting Soul”)

“It is an unspeakable consolation that our Lord Jesus knows this experience.” (“The Roots of Depression”)

#### **Stage 4: Long-Term Discipleship (18:11-17)**

<sup>11</sup> And he stayed a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

<sup>12</sup> But when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews made a united attack on Paul and brought him before the tribunal, <sup>13</sup> saying, “This man is persuading people to worship God contrary to the law.” <sup>14</sup> But when Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, “If it were a matter of wrongdoing or vicious crime, O Jews, I would have reason to accept your complaint. <sup>15</sup> But since it is a matter of questions about words and names and your own law, see to it yourselves. I refuse to be a judge of these things.” <sup>16</sup> And he drove them from the tribunal. <sup>17</sup> And they all seized Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him in front of the tribunal. But Gallio paid no attention to any of this.

#### **Paul Returns to Antioch (18:18-22)**

<sup>18</sup> After this, Paul stayed many days longer and then took leave of the brothers and set sail for Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila. At Cenchreae he had cut his hair, for he was under a vow. <sup>19</sup> And they came to Ephesus, and he left them there, but he himself went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. <sup>20</sup> When they asked him to stay for a longer period, he declined. <sup>21</sup> But on taking leave of them he said, “I will return to you if God wills,” and he set sail from Ephesus.

<sup>22</sup> When he had landed at Caesarea, he went up and greeted the church, and then went down to Antioch.