

Lesson 17
Acts 18:1-22

When the going is tough, don't quit!

Memory Verse: 'One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: "Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent.'" (Acts 18:9 NIV)

To the Philippian jailer, Paul preached Christ as the personal Saviour of individuals. To the Jews in Thessalonica, he presented Him as the promised Messiah. To the intellectual Gentiles in Athens, he proclaimed Him as the proven Judge of all humankind—appointed by the One True God.

Paul left Athens and now arrived in Corinth without Silas and Timothy. He had sent to Timothy to Thessalonica (1 Thess. 3:2) and Silas to Macedonia (18:5), perhaps Philippi (cf. Phil. 4:16). but they joined him in Corinth later (18:5; 1 Thess. 3:6). So he went alone! The going was tough, but the apostle did not give up. He was determined to magnify Jesus Christ and the cross, to depend on the Holy Spirit, and to present the gospel in simplicity (1 Cor.2:1–5).

Corinth, with its 200,000 people, would not be the easiest city in which to start a church. Corinth's reputation for wickedness was known all over the Roman Empire. (Rom. 1:18–32 was written in Corinth!) Thanks to its location, the city was a centre for both trade and travel. Money and vice, along with strange philosophies and new religions, came to Corinth and found a home there. Corinth was the capital of Achaia and one of the two most important cities Paul visited. The other was Ephesus.

Archaeologists have also discovered the remains of temples dedicated to: Melkart, the god of sailors; to Apollo, the god of music and poetry; and to Asclepius, the god of healing; and there were others.

When Paul entered Corinth he was fearful (1 Cor. 2:1-5), probably because of the wicked reputation of this city and perhaps because his fellow workers were not with him. It was as though Paul had left Boston and had landed in Las Vegas.

In Corinth, Paul is still having the usual trouble with the Jews. They force him out of the synagogue, so he goes and preaches in the house of Titius Justus, a Gentile God-fearer who lives next door (18:5-7). Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believes (18:8; cf. 1 Corinthians 1:14), and later possibly the new ruler of the synagogue, Sosthenes, also believes (18:17; cf. 1 Corinthians 1:1).

In spite of the constant opposition, Paul keeps preaching, and during the year and a half that he stays in Corinth the church grows (18:9-11). On one occasion when the Jews attempt to lay a charge against Paul and the governor refuses to hear them. He looks upon Paul's party as a group within Judaism, and sees the dispute as a religious matter that the Jews will have to settle themselves (18:12-16). The local people, seeing that the governor is unsympathetic to the Jews, take the opportunity to express their anti-Jewish feelings by beating up one of the Jewish leaders (18:17).

When God opens doors, the enemy tries to close them, and there are times when we close the doors on ourselves because we get discouraged and quit. As Paul ministered in Corinth, the Lord gave him just the encouragements that he needed to keep him going, and these same encouragements are available to us today

Scriptural Reading: Acts 18:1-22

Things to learn: 1) Devoted helpers and opportunities 2) Assurance of the Word 3) Keeping with God's Will

Read the introduction to this study and Acts 18:1-22

Questions:

Q1. How does God provide for Paul's ministry in Corinth in the midst of opposition (Acts 18: 1 - 8)?

Q2. What did Paul hold firmly in reaching the "lost" with the Gospel in Acts 18:9–17?

Q3. Paul had attempted to reach the province of Asia earlier (Acts 16:6). Now the Lord wills him to go there, but from the west rather than from the east in Acts 18:18. What was the result of keeping in God's will for Paul in the remaining part of his journey? (Refer Acts 18:18–22).