

Refuge City Church — August 21, 2022

“Don’t Give Up” [Acts 18]

Introduction

- **Last time:** Paul had 3 different experiences in 3 towns; Thessalonica, Berea, Athens; [Know. Study. Share.](#)
- **Today:** Paul winds down his 2nd missionary journey by traveling to Corinth and Ephesus.
- **Think:** With feelings of tiredness, frustration, lack of break-through, financial hardship, etc. *Why* do we get to the point of quitting?

Verses 1-11

- Paul travels from Athens to Corinth.
 - Corinth was a major Roman city; one of the largest in the region.
 - It was known for its rampant sexual immorality [[temple to Aphrodite; goddess of love; tradition states there were close to 1,000 ‘religious prostitutes’](#)]
 - Paul would later address this immorality as it infected the church.
 - **1 Corinthians 5:1**, “It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans...”
 - Initially traveling to Corinth alone, it’s there he meets Aquila and Priscilla, who would become solid ministry partners.
 - He spends time with them as they share the same trade; tentmaking.
 - Paul is finding that financial provision to allow him to carry on with 100% focus is drying up.
 - He pursues what he needs to do in order to maintain his ministry.
 - Verse 4 tells us that he didn’t stop ministry. Rather, a larger portion of his focus needed to be on self-preservation.
- Frustration in the midst of Fulfillment [[vs. 6-8](#)]
 - We see Paul lash out against the hostility he’s receiving from the Jewish population. [[vs. 6](#), “...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.’”]
 - A phrase commonly used in Scripture to depict *rejection*.
 - Paul and Barnabas did this in Antioch of Pisidia: **Acts 13:51**, “But they shook off the dust from their feet against them and went to Iconium.”
 - Jesus told his disciples to do the same: **Luke 9:5**, “And wherever they do not receive you, when you leave that town shake off the dust from your feet as a testimony against them.”
 - **Ezekiel 33:2-5 NLT**, “Son of man, give your people this message: ‘When I bring an army against a country, the people of that land choose one of their own to be a watchman. When the watchman sees the enemy coming, he sounds the alarm to warn the people. Then if those who hear the alarm refuse to take action, it is their own fault if they die. They heard

the alarm but ignored it, so the responsibility is theirs. If they had listened to the warning, they could have saved their lives.” ... Paul is a ‘watchman’.

- On par with the rest of his journey. You think he’d be used to it by now.
 - Sometimes it can be difficult to shrug off hostility/barriers in life & ministry, and at times it causes us to focus on the negative, rather than the positive that’s happening at the same time **[matter of perspective/missional focus]**.
- Look at what was happening at the same time as all this opposition... the Great Commission is being fulfilled. **[Matthew 28:19-20]**
 - **“Go therefore”**: Paul and his team were carrying on in mission despite the opposition, persecution, beatings, and prison time.
 - **“Make disciples”**: people are getting saved left and right; churches being established.
 - **“Baptizing them”**: **vs. 8**, “... And many of the Corinthians hearing Paul believed and were baptized.”
 - **“Teaching them”**: **vs. 5 & 11**, “Paul was occupied with the word... And he stayed a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.”
 - **“I am with you”**: **vs. 9-10**, “Do not be afraid...for I am with you...”
 - **QUOTE**: “To walk by faith means to see opportunities even in the midst of opposition. A pessimist sees only the problems; an optimist sees only the potential; but a realist sees the potential in the problems.” [Warren Wiersbe]
- So consider and cherish these promises with you. When opposition in life & ministry come, you can recite:
 - One of the names given to our Lord & Savior is *Immanuel*, which means “God with us”.
 - **Isaiah 41:10**, “fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”
 - **Isaiah 43:1-2**, “...He who created you...He who formed you: ‘Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you.’”

Verses 12-17 [Summary]

- In another coordinated attack by the Jewish leadership in Corinth, Paul is brought up on charges of breaking the law **[similar to what happened in Philippi and Thessalonica]**
- Here we see God’s providence & promise fulfilled by protecting Paul. **[vs. 10]**
- The Roman proconsul, Gallio, declares that it’s not a legal matter, but rather a religious interpretation issue.
 - Essentially declaring Christianity is acceptable/tolerable in Roman territory.
 - The people can’t stand this announcement/lack of involvement, and severely beat the new leader of the synagogue **[Sosthenes; who may have found Christ as he is mentioned in 1 Corinthians 1:1]**

- From his persecution, he may have turned to Christ and found community in the church in Corinth; along with Titus Justus, Crispus, and their families.

Verses 18-23 [Summary]

- Paul, along with Aquila and Priscilla, leave Corinth and head for Syria [Israel].
- The 2nd missionary journey is winding down, and Paul sets his mind to head to Jerusalem to report to the 'mother church' all that has happened.
- On their journey, they stop in Ephesus [Asia; southwestern Turkey]
 - **Remember:** The Holy Spirit inhibited them from ministering in that region at the beginning of this journey... Now the door is open.
- In the now developed/trusted relationship he has with Aquila and Priscilla, Paul leaves them in Ephesus to encourage the church in that region. [1 Corinthians 16 tells us they opened their home to the church]
- Paul visits the church in Jerusalem, gives his report, and then travels to Antioch for a time, and then Luke records he heads back out, thus beginning his 3rd missionary journey.

Verses 24-28

- Here we see the importance of accountability, community, and discipleship.
- In just a few verses, we're told a tremendous amount about Apollos.
 - Eloquent, competent, fervent, good teacher, bold and courageous!
 - Yet he lacked something very important... the full [more complete] knowledge of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, and salvation by grace.
 - He only knew of the baptism of John [repentance]... which tells us that some of John's disciples and/or his teachings had traveled all the way to Alexandria in northern Egypt.
- Aquila and Priscilla take him aside and explain more accurately the things concerning Jesus, His salvation by grace, and the Holy Spirit.
- Apollos now had a more complete knowledge of scripture, and carried on in his passion to make Jesus known!
 - His ministry in Corinth would flourish, as Paul wrote about him to the church later on.
 - **1 Corinthians 3:6**, "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth." [we'll return to Ephesus next chapter]

Application/Conclusion

- *Opening Question:* With feelings of tiredness, frustration, lack of break-through, financial hardship, etc. Why do we get to the point of quitting?
 - Possible answer: "Well, duh! I'M quitting because I'M tired. I'M frustrated. I'M not seeing any break-through in all MY hard work. I'M not getting paid enough

for everything *I'M* doing. *I'M* tired of beating my head against the wall for seemingly nothing. *I quit!*"

- We've all been there. We've all experienced these feelings. Some of you may be in that place now!

- Allow me to encourage you with some particular steps to take as you continue in life & ministry.

1. **First & foremost**

- Remember who gave you life in Jesus' name, and what He desires for you!
 - **John 10:10**, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."

2. **Consider your 'little'**

- **QUOTE:** "And so, be of good faith and valiant for the Truth. For the Truth can live in the jails. Fear not the loss of the fleece, for it will grow again. And follow the Lamb, if it be under the beast's horns or under the beast's heels, for the Lamb shall have victory over them all." [George Fox; *Quaker (1624-1691)*]
- What little you have planted in you **[faith]** will overcome every obstacle that you will encounter; great or small.
 - **Matthew 17:20**, "...if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you."
 - **Luke 16:10**, "One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much."

3. **Desire service**

- **QUOTE:** "What we need in the Christian life is to get believers to *want* to do God's will as much as other people want to do their own will." [Hannah Whitall Smith; *The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life, 1870*]
- *How* you serve the Lord in life is as important, if not more, that *what* you do.
 - **Philippians 2:13**, "for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure."
 - **Psalms 37:3-4**, "Trust in the Lord, and do good; dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness. Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart."

4. **Seek peace *in* adversity**

- **QUOTE:** "No matter how hard we try, our lives will never be without strife and grief. Thus, we should not strive for a peace that is without temptation, or for a life that never feels adversity. Peace is not found by escaping temptations, but by being tried by them." [Thomas A Kempis; *Monk (1380-1471)*]
- Consider the source of your adversity... it is from within or an outside influence? Regardless, where your mind is set will determine your course of action.
 - **1 Corinthians 10:12**, "Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall." [Galatians 2:20, "...no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me."]
 - **Romans 12:2**, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."
 - **2 Corinthians 10:5**, "We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ,"

5. **Community is a must!**

- **QUOTE:** “I have community with others and I shall continue to have it only through Jesus Christ. The more genuine and the deeper our community becomes, the more will everything between us recede, the more clearly and purely will Jesus Christ and his work become the one and only thing that is vital between us... Christian brotherhood is not an ideal which we must realize; it is rather created by God in Christ in which we may participate.” [Dietrich Bonhoeffer; *Pastor (1906-1945)*]
- Paul entered Corinth “**in weakness and in fear and much trembling**” [1 Corinthians 2:3], until he found Aquila and Priscilla.
- Consider the same for Lydia and the Philippian jailer, the Bereans, Silas, Timothy, Luke, Aquila & Priscilla, Titus Justus, Crispus, Sosthenes, Apollos, and all others.
- We’re not meant to go through life alone!
 - T.E.A.M. = Together Everyone Achieve More!
 - Your inborn need for accountability/discipleship and encouragement *will be* fulfilled when you purposefully set yourself in community.
 - The full weight and measure of what God has called you to do will be accomplished through community.
 - **Ephesians 2:19**, “...but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,”
 - **1 Corinthians 12:12, 25-26**, “For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ... that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.”
- So when you get to point of wanting to quit, remember...
 - God created you and loves you. He sent His Son Jesus to give us life abundantly!
 - Consider the faith you have placed in Him. Albeit small, true faith can move mountains!
 - Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desire to carry on!
 - Set your mind on the things of God, and you will have peace in the midst of your adversity!
 - Surround yourself with other Christians in consistent community. It is there you’ll find discipleship & encouragement!