

Acts 18:1–28 — God’s Grace in a City of Vice

After Paul’s message in Athens, the response was mixed: a few believed, some delayed, and others mocked. So Luke moves us forward:

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

Corinth: A Dark City, a Big Harvest

Corinth was famous for moral corruption. It was prosperous, strategic, and spiritually rotten—an international crossroads where money, pleasure, and idolatry mixed freely. Yet this is exactly the kind of place where God loves to display what grace can do.

Paul came to Corinth and met a Jewish couple:

“And he found a certain Jew named Aquila... with his wife Priscilla... and because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and worked; for by occupation they were tentmakers.”

Paul was willing to work with his hands so the gospel would not be hindered. When support came later, he devoted himself more fully to preaching and teaching. Either way, his priority was clear: make Christ known, and make disciples who would last.

Practical Application:

God’s calling is not fragile. If you must work while you serve, work with integrity. If God provides support so you can serve more, receive it with gratitude. The point is faithfulness, not image.

Witnessing Without Controlling

Paul reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath. When Silas and Timothy arrived, Paul pressed the message clearly:

“He testified to the Jews that Jesus is the Christ.”

Some opposed him fiercely:

“And 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.’”

Paul’s statement is not cruel; it is sober. He had fulfilled his responsibility as a witness. We are called to testify to the truth; we are not able to manufacture repentance in another person. Conversion is God’s work in the heart, but rejecting the truth carries real accountability.

Practical Application:

You cannot argue someone into salvation. Love them, speak truth clearly, pray faithfully, and leave the results with God. Don’t confuse “faithful witness” with “pressure tactics.”

A Church Begins Next Door

Paul moved next door to the synagogue:

“And he departed from there and entered the house of a certain man named Justus... And Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his household. And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized.”

God even reached leadership in the synagogue. In a city known for impurity, the Lord began to build a people set apart for Himself.

The Lord Strengthens His Servant

Then the Lord spoke to Paul:

“Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; for I am with you... for I have many people in this city.”

Fear is not defeated by bravado. Fear is defeated by the presence of God. The Lord did not tell Paul, “Nothing hard will happen,” but He did promise, “I am with you.” And He revealed something Paul could not see: in the most unlikely place, God already had “many people” He intended to save.

“And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.”

Notice what Luke emphasizes: not eighteen months of religious hype, but steady teaching. Churches become strong through Scripture-rooted discipleship, not through endless excitement.

Challenge for Believers:

Are you building your life on steady truth or chasing spiritual novelty? Commit yourself to the Word—patiently, consistently, humbly. Over time, it makes believers durable.

Gallio and God’s Quiet Protection

The Jews brought Paul before Gallio:

“This fellow persuades men to worship God contrary to the law.”

Gallio refused to treat it as a criminal matter and dismissed the case. God used a Roman official’s judgment to shield the work. Sometimes the Lord protects His people through miracles; other times through ordinary providence—timing, laws, leaders, and circumstances.

“If the Lord Wills”

Paul left Corinth with Aquila and Priscilla and came briefly to Ephesus. The people wanted him to stay, but Paul said:

“I must by all means keep this coming feast in Jerusalem; but I will return again to you, God willing.”

That phrase matters. It is not a throwaway line. It is a posture: plans held in open hands.

Practical Application:

Make plans, but don’t idolize them. Hold them under God’s authority. A surrendered life says, “If the Lord wills.”

Apollos: Mighty in Scripture, Humble in Spirit

Luke introduces Apollos:

“An eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures... fervent in spirit... knowing only the baptism of John.”

Apollos had strong biblical skill and sincere zeal, but his understanding was incomplete. Then something beautiful happens:

“When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.”

Apollos’ greatness is not only in his eloquence. It is in his humility. A gifted man was willing to be taught. And Aquila and Priscilla served him quietly, privately, and effectively—helping him grow without humiliating him.

Challenge for Believers:

Can you receive correction without defensiveness? Can you help others grow without trying to control them or embarrass them? Pride ruins gifts; humility multiplies usefulness.

Apollos in Corinth: Planting and Watering

Apollos went to Achaia and strengthened believers:

“For he vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ.”

Paul planted in Corinth. Apollos watered. God gave the increase. That pattern is still God’s way: different servants, different roles, one Lord, one gospel, one glory.

Practical Application:

Don’t idolize personalities in ministry. Thank God for His servants, but keep your eyes on Christ. The messenger is not the Savior.

Invitation to Non-Believers

Corinth proves something: no city is too corrupt, and no life is too tangled for the grace of God. Jesus saved us when He shed His blood on the cross. And the resurrection declares that He is God, Savior, and Lord.

If you have lived far from God—whether through open sin or quiet self-rule—turn to Him now. Repent. Put your trust in Jesus Christ. Ask Him to forgive you, to cleanse you, and to make you new. He does not save people who “deserve it.” He saves people who come to Him.