

THE BOOK OF ACTS: THE WORK AND GROWTH OF THE CHURCH

October 29, 2013

38. Paul Proclaiming Christ in Corinth

Acts 18:1-17

The work and the growth of the church involve proclaiming Jesus as savior and speaking about his resurrection because it is what provides us with hope eternal. Christians must keep on speaking as witnesses of Christ so as to continue to build the kingdom He established. Christians cannot afford to be silent, even though actions speak louder than words. Jesus gave the early believers and us the injunction to “go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit”. You can never make disciples without speaking or by being silent. Christians must proclaim Christ to the world. The work of proclaiming Christ is not for the preachers only but for every child of God. The only prerequisite is that you need to have the Holy Spirit in you first. Jesus told His disciples before his ascension “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

Now the Holy Spirit has already come and we must be His witnesses by proclaiming Him as savior and Lord who has defeated Satan, sin and death due to His resurrection. The disciples followed through with the injunction to be witnesses for Christ. Last week we learn of Paul proclaiming Jesus Christ in Athens, the city where people did nothing but sit and listen to new ideas; a city full of idols, some people that worshipped the true and Living God, and a host of philosophers. The result of Paul’s proclamation of Christ in Athens is that prominent people like Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, also a woman named Damaris, and a number of others believed in Jesus Christ. After he left Athens, Paul went to Corinth and we learned that he had another profession. He was a tent maker. In Corinth he met Aquila and Priscilla who were tent makers and partners in proclaiming Christ with him. God knows how and when to allow people that understand us to cross our paths! God will send people to help you in the work of the ministry. Some will attack you but He will send others to defend you. So keep on proclaiming Christ to others like Paul did thereby winning people to Christ. Through Paul’s witness in Corinth Crispus, the synagogue leader, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptized.

Thus our text for today reads, “After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. 2 There he met a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them, 3 and because he was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and worked with them. 4 Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks. 5 When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah. 6 But when they opposed Paul and became abusive, he shook out his clothes in protest and said to them, “Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent of it. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.” 7 Then Paul left the synagogue and went next door to the house of Titius Justus, a worshiper of God. 8 Crispus, the synagogue leader, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard Paul believed and were baptized. 9 One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: “Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. 10 For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city.” 11 So Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God. 12

While Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews of Corinth made a united attack on Paul and brought him to the place of judgment. 13 “This man,” they charged, “is persuading the people to worship God in ways contrary to the law.” 14 Just as Paul was about to speak, Gallio said to them, “If you Jews were making a complaint about some misdemeanor or serious crime, it would be reasonable for me to listen to you. 15 But since it involves questions about words and names and your own law—settle the matter yourselves. I will not be a judge of such things.” 16 So he drove them off. 17 Then the crowd there turned on Sosthenes the synagogue leader and beat him in front of the proconsul; and Gallio showed no concern whatever” (Acts 18:1-17).

Mt Traveler members, as we conclude this sermon on today please allow me to summarize it as follows. The work and growth of the church involves:

- Being born again or accepting Jesus Christ as Lord and savior; and becoming part of the household of God as a believer.
- Every believer allowing the Holy Spirit to do the work of the church through them.
- Keeping God’s instruction in Paul’s vision: “Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city”.
- Believers proclaiming Jesus Christ as the way to salvation, peace and happiness.
- Evangelism as the way of winning people to Christ thereby building God’s kingdom and causing church growth.
- This is what the work and growth of the church is all about. And let the church say, “Amen!”

To become part of the household of God as a believer, and be saved, have peace and happiness; and do the work of the church to cause healthy church growth, you must first know Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and savior and then allow the Holy Spirit to empower you. If you have not, we invite you to come, repent, and humbly accept Jesus Christ into your heart and life by faith. I hope you will make room in your heart for Him today! Then confess with your mouth your faith in Him that He died and rose again to save you from your sin through the shedding of His blood on Calvary, and you will be saved and become part of God’s family and kingdom. Then ask Him in prayers to empower you through the Holy Spirit with wisdom, courage and boldness to do the work of the Church to cause its continual growth. May God bless you as you humbly open your heart to provide room for Him as the choir leads us in a song!

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Mt. Traveler Missionary Baptist Church, Waverly, Alabama
Synopsis of Sermon Preached by Rev. R. D. Jacobs, Evangelist

THE BOOK OF ACTS: THE WORK AND GROWTH OF THE CHURCH

October 13, 2013

39. Priscila & Aquila Mentoring Apollos

Acts 18:18-28

We continue the sermon series “THE WORK AND GROWTH OF THE CHURCH” as Paul nears the end of his 2nd missionary journey in Chapter 18. After preaching for 1 year and 6 months in the city of Corinth to the Gentiles, after the Jews refused to receive his words, Paul

took his leave with Aquila and Priscilla. They then enter the city of Ephesus where Paul leaves “them there” to live among the People and as his custom was Paul entered the Synagogue and Preached Jesus as Christ through the scriptures. After doing so they desired that he remain there but he consented not as the city of Ephesus had Priscilla and Aquila there to mentor the new believers. Paul then sailed from Ephesus to Caesarea and saluted the church as he ends his 2nd missionary trip in Antioch. (Acts 18:18-19)

Paul then set out on his 3rd missionary journey as he returns and strengthens the believers in other cities that he had previously traveled. (Acts 18:23) Meanwhile, the Bible returns to the city of Ephesus and this married couple of Priscilla and Aquila. And, a learned man with a thorough knowledge of the scriptures who passionately spoke came to Ephesus. (Acts 18:24) And when they saw this man, Apollos, only knew John’s Baptism they took him unto them and mentored him by expounding to him the way of God more perfectly. (Acts 18:25-26)

Here we see mentoring - which involves helping a believer Mature and involves Correction. The idea of mentoring involves the Spiritual Growth of a believer from a babe in Christ to a Mature Christian in the faith. This is not the time that a person is Saved but it is the process of growth that a Believer experiences. For a Christian can be saved for 20yrs but may not have experienced Spiritual growth for each of those years. So a mature Christian can help a babe in Christ come to the Fullness of the faith through their many trials, tests, and testimonies. These build the strength of their faith and belief in God. Mentoring helps the maturation process of a believer as well as does Correction. There are times that a Christian needs further advising, instructing, and correcting from a mature person in the faith. This is for the edification of the Believer and must be received with the spirit of humility and spoken with Grace to build and not destroy. The way that a Believer receives correction can be a strong indicator of their Spiritual age. A young Believer may be offensive and/or offended as a mature Christian can receive it and grow! But both are important to the Growth of the Believer.

Apollos received this correction with the right mindset and we see that he matured to a point where he was commended by the Church as he was going to mentor new believers in Achaia. (Acts 18:27-28) This is the Kingdom work of God to bring all believers to the fullness of the Faith. Mentoring should begin when one accepts and believers in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

Mt. Traveler Missionary Baptist Church, Waverly, Alabama
Synopsis of Sermon Preached by Rev. B. C. Datiri, Pastor

THE BOOK OF ACTS: THE WORK AND GROWTH OF THE CHURCH

October 20, 2013

40. Paul Proclaiming Christ in Ephesus

Acts 19:1-22

To be effective in the work and the growth of the church every Christian needs to be a witness for Jesus Christ and proclaim Him as Lord and savior in the power of the Holy Spirit; leaving the results to the Holy Spirit. For, it is the Holy Spirit that has the power to convince, convict and convert any person. The work and the growth of the church cannot be effectively accomplished

without Holy Spirit's help.

Paul made this very clear during his third missionary journey that landed him in Ephesus. Mentoring and discipleship was foremost in the life of the first century Christians even as they were lead by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit would always confirm the words spoken by these Christians. Always remember that the Holy Spirit is the God in you that helps you at all times to proclaim the Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit grants you discernment to determine the state of individuals in their relationship with God. It was the Holy Spirit that helped Aquila and Priscilla to mentor Apollos. With the help of the Holy Spirit Apollos became a powerful minister in proclaiming the Christian faith alongside with Paul. To the extent that one time Paul will write to the church at Corinth, "For when one says, 'I follow Paul,' and another, 'I follow Apollos;' are you not mere human beings? 5 What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe — as the Lord has assigned to each his task. 6 I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. 7 So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. 8 The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labor. 9 For we are co-workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building" (1 Corinthians 3:4-10). While Apollos was proclaiming Christ in Corinth, the Holy Spirit led Paul to Ephesus. He encountered some disciples there and the Holy Spirit helped Paul to discern that these disciples had not realized the need of the Holy Spirit in their Christian walk. In fact, their response is that they have never heard that there is a Holy Spirit. The lesson to learn from today's text is how many Christians are out there that are unaware of who the Holy Spirit is and whether they know that they received Him when they believed? You need to know for yourself that you received the Holy Spirit when you believed and accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and savior. It is the Holy Spirit that came into your heart to indwell you and be the God in you!

Thus our text for today reads, "While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples 2 and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" They answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." 3 So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?" "John's baptism," they replied. 4 Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." 5 On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. 7 There were about twelve men in all. 8 Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God. 9 But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. 10 This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord. 11 God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, 12 so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them. 13 Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, "In the name of the Jesus whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out." 14 Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. 15 One day the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know about, but who are you?" 16 Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding. 17 When this became known to the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus, they were all seized with fear, and the name of the Lord

Jesus was held in high honor. 18 Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed what they had done. 19 A number who had practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly. When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to fifty thousand drachmas [for minimum wage in America this would be about \$2.8 million as drachmas is equivalent to a day's wage]. 20 In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power. 21 After all this had happened; Paul decided to go to Jerusalem, passing through Macedonia and Achaia. "After I have been there," he said, "I must visit Rome also." 22 He sent two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia, while he stayed in the province of Asia a little longer" (Acts 19:1-22).

Mt Traveler members, as we conclude this sermon on today please allow me to summarize it as follows. The work and growth of the church involves:

- Being born again or accepting Jesus Christ as Lord and savior; and becoming part of the household of God as a believer.
- Every believer knowing that the Holy Spirit resides in them
- Every believer allowing the Holy Spirit to do the work of the church through them.
- Believers proclaiming Jesus Christ as the way to salvation, peace and happiness.
- The Holy Spirit confirming the Word of God being proclaim through signs, wonders and miracles.
- Evangelism as the way of winning people to Christ thereby building God's kingdom and causing church growth.
- This is what the work and growth of the church is all about. And let the church say, "Amen!"

To become part of the household of God as a believer, and be saved, have peace and happiness; and do the work of the church to cause healthy church growth, you must first know Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and savior and then allow the Holy Spirit to empower you. If you have not, we invite you to come, repent, and humbly accept Jesus Christ into your heart and life by faith. I hope you will make room in your heart for Him today! Then confess with your mouth your faith in Him that He died and rose again to save you from your sin through the shedding of His blood on Calvary, and you will be saved and become part of God's family and kingdom. Then ask Him in prayers to empower you through the Holy Spirit with wisdom, courage and boldness to do the work of the Church to cause its continual growth. May God bless you as you humbly open your heart to provide room for Him as the choir leads us in a song!

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Synopsis of Sermon Preached by Rev. R. D. Jacobs, Evangelist

THE BOOK OF ACTS: THE WORK AND GROWTH OF THE CHURCH

October 27, 2013

41. The Riot in Ephesus

Acts 19:23-40

We continue the sermon series "THE WORK AND GROWTH OF THE CHURCH" as Paul is ministering in the city of Ephesus where the convicting, convincing, and converting power of the Holy Spirit caused many in that city who practiced divinations to confess their sins and show

their deeds by the burning of their books of witchcraft that equaled an estimated over 2 million dollars (USA). (Acts 19:9-20) Paul then, listening to the guiding of the Holy Spirit, placed on his heart to go to Rome after he visited Macedonia, Achaia, and Jerusalem so he sent Timothy and Erastus ahead of him to prepare the way. (Acts 19: 21- 22)

After such a powerful moving of the Holy Spirit in Ephesus there was no small stir or conversation about “The Way” for many spoke about God did through Paul by the power of the Holy Spirit, even an angry silversmith named Demetrius. (Acts 19:23-24) What happened in Ephesus was astonishing because the city was an Idol Worshiping city. An Idol is anything that is worshiped as a god besides the True & Living God. It is the worship of a creation and not the Creator. Ephesus was a city with a history of Greek Mythology and their chief goddess was Artemis/Diana (LATIN) who was the daughter of Zeus and Leto. She was the Greek goddess of the moon the goddess who watched over nature for both humans and animals. She was the patron deity of wild animals and the great mother image who gave fertility to humankind. In Ephesus there was a great temple, The Artemesion, dedicated to her worship. The selling of miniature models of the temple was common for worship by the Ephesians and also was a good business for the silversmiths; so when this business was threatened by Paul’s ministry no small stir occurred. (Acts 19: 25-28)

Because of this situation two of Paul’s traveling companions found themselves in danger; they were Gaius & Aristarchus. The angry silversmiths started a riot and captured them in a theater. (Acts 19:29) It is a reminder for us, that as we do the work of the Church and share the Gospel in the Power of the Holy Ghost situations that look like they are not for our good will come. Situations that look as though they will be bad for us will also come. We may find ourselves in situations that seem like a riot, as a riot is defined as disorder or panic and we find ourselves in situations that cause us to be confused, disoriented, hopeless, scared, fearful or even despaired. These are Situations that cause us to doubt God or His plan or will for our lives. They even cause us to question God’s purpose or involvement in our lives. I am sure this is how Paul’s two traveling companions felt as they were surrounded in the Theater by this riotous mob who were angry and Paul nowhere in sight. (Acts 19:30-34)

For us, in these times, it is a reminder that God is always with us in every situation. Even if there are no friends or family near God is always near and present with us! God has a plan, purpose and design for our lives for he knows our beginning and end. So even when it does not look like an event or situation will work out for our good we need to remember that God can turn around any situation for His glory and our good. That is because he is not an idol but a Living God who can do anything. Our God can even turn the most impossible situation around to turn out good. In the midst of this riot where it seemed that Gaius & Aristarchus would die God used a town clerk to calm the crowd down and reason with them to let Gaius & Aristarchus walk out the Theater alive and free!! (Acts 19: 35-41)

We serve a living God who is Sovereign who posses all powers and is the rulers of all things in heaven and Earth. He rules and works according to His eternal purpose even through events that seem to contradict or oppose His rule. We serve a living God who is Providential an all wise sustainer of creation and man and it is for us to come to and know the Creator and the only True and living God - Jesus Christ. We must only trust and believe in Him and he will forgive us of our sins and cleanse us and redeem us.