

What Gospel Mission Requires

Chris Patton

March 13, 2022

Text: Acts 18:1-17

Acts 18:1–17

Paul in Corinth

[1] After this Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. [2] 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, [3] and because he was of the same trade he stayed with them and worked, for they were tentmakers by trade. [4] And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and tried to persuade Jews and Greeks.

[5] When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul was occupied with the word, testifying to the Jews that the Christ was Jesus. [6] 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.” [7] 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. [8] 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. [9] And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, “Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent, [10] 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.” [11] And he stayed a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

[12] But when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews made a united attack on Paul and brought him before the tribunal, [13] saying, “This man is persuading people to worship God contrary to the law.” [14] 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. [15] 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.” [16] And he drove them from the tribunal. [17] 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. (ESV)

Introduction

- When it comes to “missions”, we as American Christians very easily connect with and find joy in supporting missionaries and church plants in other parts of the world.
- For most, what is more challenging is to view ourselves as “missionaries”, as it were, and to live with a “mission mindset,” right here at home, where we are at.

- God gave His church the Book of Acts, in order to impart a deep sense of purpose and mission to every follower of Jesus Christ — no exceptions!
- Jesus said to His disciples and us --“You shall be my witnesses (Acts 1:8)”
- Our fundamental call and mission as disciples of the Lord Jesus — regardless of where we may live — is to bear witness -- together -- to the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- The question of the hour is---IF we are to be effective witnesses, in this community and at this time -- What exactly is required of us?
- This morning we consider three requirements of gospel-mission drawn from this narrative.
- Effective Gospel mission requires: Teamwork, Faithfulness, and Confidence

1. Teamwork

- In this passage, the gospel went forth mightily in Corinth..and a new local church was established.
- How did it happen?
- Well you’ll notice, it wasn’t just one guy. It wasn’t just the amazing Apostle Paul planting a church all by himself.
- Rather, the church in Corinth was planted through a team of brothers and sisters laboring together for the cause of Christ -
- The couple: Aquila and Priscilla, who opened their home to the Apostle Paul.
- Silas and Timothy: Paul’s ministry associates.
- Titius Justus as well:
- Titius Justus’ home became a primary outpost for the Gospel in Corinth, and, assuming he was married, his wife must have been a heroic servant too, showing remarkable hospitality.
- There’s an important principle here that has implications for us as a church:
- Gospel-mission is about teamwork.
- Gospel-mission — is about a team of individuals, contributing their respective gifts, talents – time, energy, and money to achieve a common goal.
- And that goal is a strong, vibrant, healthy local church that serves as an outpost for the Gospel in a particular region.

One article notes, “He [Billy Graham] assembled this team in the early 1950s, and they continued with him until they died....Billy Graham always spoke in glowing terms about his “team,” and he emphasized that their faithful service was a key element in the success of his ministry.

- Our story in Acts reminds us - as a local church, we here together, are a team!
- And each member of this team, team Grace Community Church, has a critical role to play.

2. Faithfulness

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.”
 -- Acts 18:6

- Paul's example helps us to see-- while it IS our responsibility as disciples of the Lord Jesus to proclaim Christ, it is NOT our responsibility to convert anyone.
- That is God's responsibility! Ultimately, God ALONE is the one who saves! Not the Apostle Paul and Not us either!
- Our responsibility is to be faithful to share the gospel

3. Confidence

And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, "Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent, 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." And he stayed a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them. -- Acts 18:9-11

- What gave Paul confidence is that God told Paul that he had many in this city who are my people.
- In other words, there was a specific group of people God had sovereignly pre-determined to save in Corinth and God tells Paul essentially 'I want to use you to save them.'
- With that assurance, in the midst of fierce opposition, Paul stayed, proclaiming the Gospel.

...Luke's emphasis reflects Paul's conviction, based on Christ's own assurance to him. Thus the sovereignty of God in grace gave Paul hope of success as he preached to deaf ears, and held up Christ before blind eyes, and sought to move stony hearts. His confidence was that where Christ sends the gospel there Christ has his people—fast bound at present in the chains of sin, but due for release at the appointed moment through a mighty renewing of their hearts as the light of the gospel shines into their darkness and the Savior draws them to himself...Paul's confidence should be our confidence too. — JI Packer

- Packer goes on to give very wise pastoral counsel, in part as application of this passage. He says that in the work of evangelism, in the work of gospel-mission - the confidence that God alone saves - should cause us to be bold, patient, and prayerful.

Questions for Discussion/Application:

- Re-read the text, Acts 18:1-17. What initial observations and insights do you have from reading this text?
- We see in Corinth, that Gospel mission requires teamwork. Look again at the passage. Who are the names of the people who were involved in the work?
- What does teamwork in the local church look like? What are some of the ways you have served in our church that have been particularly meaningful to you? Are there other ways you are feeling led to possibly serve?
- Re-read vs.6. What lessons can be drawn from vs.6?
- For you, what does faithfulness in the area of evangelism look like? What is your plan for personal outreach and evangelism? What unbelievers personally are you seeking to reach out to?

- Re-read the Sermon Recap under point #3 above. How is God's sovereignty in salvation an encouragement to evangelism?
- Consider taking time to pray for the lost--that God would help us to be faithful to our call to proclaim Christ and that God would use us to save many.