

Lesson 23- Acts 18:1-28

A Church in Corinth?

Corinth was a prosperous, Greek city on the isthmus just below the mainland. It was destroyed by the Romans in 146 B.C. and rebuilt in 46 B.C. by Julius Caesar. Corinth became the capital of the area and was a key center of trade. When Paul visited there from 49 to 51 A.D., it was known for its extreme wealth, lavish luxury, blatant immorality, and obsessive worship of a plethora of idols from multiple cultures.

Paul and his companions spent a significant amount of time in this most unlikely place preaching the Gospel. Corinth was the home of the Temple of Aphrodite, also known as Venus, the goddess of love. It's not surprising that Corinth was known as the "sin city" of the region, an area filled with sexual immorality.

In spite of these circumstances, God would provide all that Paul needed. Here Paul would share the transforming message of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. A year and a half later, a church was established with people who had been called out of sin and darkness into salvation and light (1 Corinthians 1:2).

The Book of I & II Corinthians

When Paul visited Corinth, he was visiting a place full of pagan temples and idol worship. The new believers faced the challenge of living for Christ while surrounded by a culture that indulged in blatant and shameless public sinfulness. A few years later, Paul wrote two letters to the Corinthian believers to encourage them in the midst of their ungodly culture.

Read the following verses in I and II Corinthians where Paul gives practical instruction for Christian life and messages of hope. Write the letter of the phrase in the blank that summarizes the corresponding Scripture.

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| <u> b </u> 1. I Corinthians 6:18-20 | c. Though we are weak, remember God's power can be seen though our weakness – His grace is sufficient |
| <u> e </u> 2. I Corinthians 10:12-13 | |
| <u> d </u> 3. I Corinthians 15:51-52 | d. Believers will be changed from their earthly (perishable) bodies, and will get an imperishable, immortal body when Jesus comes again |
| <u> a </u> 4. II Corinthians 7:8-10 | |
| <u> c </u> 5. II Corinthians 12:9-10 | |
- a. Sorrow over sin, when it brings repentance, is good, even though it seems unpleasant at the time
- b. Run away from immorality, specifically sexual sin – you've been bought with a price
- e. We all experience temptation, but we can trust that God will always provide a way for us to resist the temptation

Into the Word: Acts 18:1-28

Trace Paul's route from Athens to Corinth, a large city 45 miles southwest that had a population of about 200,000 people.

1. Paul arrived in Corinth not knowing anyone there. He found a couple who would become his friends and co-workers both in sharing the Gospel and also in trade—tentmaking. Who were these friends and how did they happen to be living in Corinth? vv.1-3

He met Aquila and his wife, Priscilla. They were in Corinth because the Roman emperor Claudius had expelled all the Jews from Rome.

2. Describe what Paul was doing besides tentmaking.
 - v.4 *He was reasoning with the Jews and Gentiles in the synagogue.*
 - v.5 *Started preaching Scripture to the Jews.*
 - How did the Jews respond? What did Paul do next? Why? vv.6-7
Resisted and blasphemed. He preached to the Gentiles. Why, He publicly gave up on the Jews, they did not want to hear his message

However, Paul was encouraged when the leader of the synagogue believed in the Lord. Many more Corinthians believed and were baptized.

3. God encouraged Paul by a vision (vv.9-10).
 - God commanded:
 - a. *Do not be afraid.*
 - b. *Keep on speaking and do not be silent.*
 - God promised:
 - a. *God was with Paul.*
 - b. *No one would attack Paul.*
 - c. *God had many people in the city of Corinth.*

After a year and a half in Corinth, some Jews accused Paul of preaching a religion that went against Rome. Paul was brought to trial before the governor, Gallio.

4. Paul was about to defend himself from the charges made against him when the proconsul or governor spoke. Why did he dismiss the case? vv.14-15
The proconsul told the Jews that since it was a matter of their own religion, and no crime had been committed, he wasn't interested in hearing the case.

With Gallio unwilling to consider the case, the Jews had to be driven out of the courtroom. Sosthenes was violently beaten in Gallio's presence. What did Gallio do following this violence? vv.16-17 *Gallio did nothing.*

Chart Paul's travels on your map (vv.18-22). This concluded Paul's second missionary journey.

Paul's tentmaking friends, Priscilla and Aquila, accompanied him to Syria. After a short visit to Ephesus, Paul landed at Caesarea and greeted the church there. He returned to Antioch, his home base.

BEGINNING THE 3rd MISSIONARY JOURNEY

Trace Paul's travels through the region of Galatia and Phrygia according to verse 23 on a map.

5. What was he doing along the way?
He was strengthening the believers.
6. Verses 24-25 introduce us to a believer by the name of *Apollos* from the city of Alexandria, now living in Ephesus. He was knowledgeable in the Scriptures, eloquent, and enthusiastic.
7. Paul left Priscilla and Aquila in Ephesus. How did they help Apollos? v.26
They took him aside and explained the way of God to him more accurately.

Apollos then traveled across the Aegean Sea to the region of Achaia. There he was a great help to believers, even publicly refuting the Jews to prove that Jesus was the Messiah.

New Idea: Paul the Tentmaker

In Acts 18:3 we learn something new about Paul—that he earned his living as a tentmaker. In those days, tents were constructed of leather. He willingly worked alongside those he ministered to and likely used his workshop as a place of witness.

While in Corinth, Paul wrote to the church in Thessalonica and explained his reasons for working as a tentmaker. Second Thessalonians 3:8-9 says that he did not wish to be a burden to anyone and he wanted to be an example to others. Paul didn't want the message of Christ to be hindered by anything, even his need to make a living.

On the other hand, Paul makes the point in I Corinthians 9:7 and 11, that just as a worker in any other

profession deserved payment for his or her work, Paul had a right to expect payment as well. Paul was willing to give up this right so that no one would be distracted from his preaching of the Gospel (I Corinthians 9:12).

[TM note: Today there are many tentmaker ministries around the world in which Christians minister the Gospel while supporting themselves in the marketplace with their skills and education. Sometimes tentmaker missionaries enter a country through secular employment because the country prohibits full-time Christian missionary efforts.]

Memory Verse

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.
I Corinthians 6:19-20

Extra Memory Challenge

I Corinthians 3:6

I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth.

Discussion Questions

Each teacher should encourage, as much as time permits, discussion and inquiry on the part of students. Not every aspect of the following questions is addressed here, and students may have thoughts related to but not mentioned in this guide. The obligation of the teacher, then, is to understand as deeply as possible the Scriptures that are being discussed, in order to answer as well as possible any questions a student might have.

1. Read Colossians 3:23-24. “Whatever you do, do your work heartily as for the Lord . . .” How does this impact your schoolwork, things you do at home, or work for which you get paid? How do we respond when our effort is not recognized by people?
Believers have a different motivation for their work—no matter what their job, they are working for the Lord, and not merely for themselves or their boss. It is a great gift and blessing to have the ability to work.
2. Read Acts 18:9-10. Such a vision from God must have been a great encouragement to Paul. Paul had assurance from God that he was not alone. We, like Paul, are upheld by a powerful God. What difference does it make to know that we are safe in His care?
While answers to this question will vary quite a bit, the major focus of the answers should be that God is faithful to protect, uphold, and sustain His children. In verses like Isaiah 43:1-3a, God provides us with the same assurance. II Corinthians 13:14 – the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

Daily Devotions

Sunday:	I Corinthians 1:1-9
Monday:	I Corinthians 1:10-17
Tuesday:	I Corinthians 2:1-8
Wednesday:	I Corinthians 2:9-16
Thursday:	I Corinthians 3:1-9
Friday:	I Corinthians 3:10-23
Saturday:	I Corinthians 4:6-17

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH: THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF THE AFLC

* Fundamental Principle 11

According to Fundamental Principle 11, cooperation among congregations is voluntary. In other words, joint activities cannot be imposed upon a free congregation. It is good when congregations work together freely.

1. Congregations in the book of Acts such as at Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, and Corinth were certainly free and separate. What were they free to do? Acts 17:2, 10-12, 17; I Corinthians 16:19

Fellowship and pray for one another. They were free to teach and preach the Word of God. They were free to defend the Word and truth in the synagogues where they were at.

2. Why must the freedom of the congregation be preserved?

A congregation bound by regulations or restrictions imposed by other congregations may find itself either unable to fulfill its obligation or in disagreement with its obligation. In either case the spirit of the fellowship is compromised or hurt. A free congregation understands its possible sphere of activity and its present limitations. Left to decide on its own, it can go forth led by the Word and Spirit.