

MEMORY VERSE: “Now the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision, “Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city.”

Acts 18:9, 10, NKJV

LESSON STUDY INTRO

This week’s lesson introduces us to the church in Corinth and the work of Paul for their salvation.

1. The context of Corinth is important (Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri)

- Geographically strategic
 - Commercial center for Paul’s self-supporting work making tents (Ac. 18:1-3).
 - Route for travel, giving access to even broader mission work.

It is recorded that Paul labored a year and six months in Corinth. His efforts, however, were not exclusively confined to that city... He made Corinth his headquarters... Several churches were thus raised up. LP 109 (Qtly, Fri, par 4)

- Chronologically significant
 - First and Second Corinthians were written between 55AD and 57AD (from Ephesus and Macedonia, respectively) during Paul’s third missionary journey, several years after his initial stay in Corinth because of reports of significant problems in the church and in response to several questions they had inquired of him (see 1 Cor. 1:11; 7:1).
 - “Paul went to Corinth during his second missionary journey. Luke informs us that Paul stayed there a year and a half.” Qtly, Mon, par 3
- Culturally challenging
 - Corinth was steeped in idolatry and corresponding immorality.
 - Paul wrote to address these and other issues that were being tolerated or even practiced by Corinthians Christians (see Qtly, Thu).

2. Paul was an “apostle of Jesus” (Sun)

- Though Paul supported himself in ministry, he nonetheless understood himself to be a true apostle (1 Cor. 1:1; Gal. 1:1).
 - Paul’s apostleship met the criteria of having been a personal associate of Jesus (Ac. 9:1-6; 1 Cor. 15:3-10; Gal. 1:11-17).

Here, in the solitude of the desert, Paul had ample opportunity for quiet study and meditation. He calmly reviewed his past experience and made sure work of repentance. He sought God with all his heart, resting not until he knew for a certainty that his repentance was accepted and his sin pardoned. He longed for the assurance that Jesus would be with him in his coming ministry. He emptied his soul of the prejudices and traditions that had hitherto shaped his life, and received instruction from the Source of truth. Jesus communed with him and established him in the faith, bestowing upon him a rich measure of wisdom and grace. AA 125

- Following his debate in Athens (see Acts 17:22-33), Paul tried a different approach in Corinth:
 - Instead, Paul determined “to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.” (1 Cor. 2:2)

While in [Athens], he had sought to adapt his style to the character of his audience; he had met logic with logic, science with science, philosophy with philosophy. As he thought of the time thus spent, and realized that his teaching in Athens had been productive of but little fruit, he decided to follow another plan of labor in Corinth in his efforts to arrest the attention of the careless and the indifferent. AA 244 (Qtly, Fri, par 1)

- You don’t win confidence by being intellectual; you win confidence by being personal.

3. Christ sees potential where we often don’t (Wed)

- Paul initially planned to leave Corinth as an unproductive field...
“Paul... considered Corinth a very questionable field of labor, and determined to leave it. LP 106, 107
- ...But Jesus personally instructed him to stay (Acts 18:9, 10).
“Paul understood this to be a command to remain in Corinth, and a guarantee that the Lord would give increase to the seed sown. Strengthened and encouraged, he continued to labor there with great zeal and perseverance for one year and six months. A large church was enrolled under the banner of Jesus Christ. Ibid.

CONCLUSION

“Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians is very relevant to our time, as well. After all, don’t we, to some degree, face some of the same issues in many of our churches today? This letter has much to say to us. It is ‘one of the richest, most instructive, most powerful of all his letters’ (AA 301).” Qtly, Thu, par 2