

Church Plant in Sin-City

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[0:00] Take your Bibles and turn to Acts chapter 18.! We're going to read the first 22 verses.!

with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all the Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them, and because he was a tent maker as they were, he stayed and worked with them.

Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks. When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ.

But when the Jews 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 clear of my responsibility. From now on, I will go to the Gentiles.

Then Paul left the synagogue and went next door to the house of Titus, Justice, a worshiper of God. Crispus, the synagogue ruler, and his entire household believed in the Lord, and many of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptized.

[1:27] One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a 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.

So Paul stayed for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God. When Galileo was pro-council of Achaia, the Jews made a united attack on Paul and brought him into court.

This man, they charged, is persuading the people to worship God in ways contrary to the law. Just as Paul was about to speak, Galileo said to the Jews, If you Jews were making a complaint about some misdemeanor or serious crime, it would be reasonable for me to listen to you.

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. And so he had them ejected from the court.

Then they turned on Sosthenes, the synagogue ruler, and beat him in front of the court. Galileo showed no concern whatever. Paul stayed on in Corinth for some time.

[2:38] Then he left the brothers and sailed for Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila. Before he sailed, he had his hair cut off in Sincere because of a vow he had taken.

They arrived at Ephesus, where Paul left Priscilla and Aquila. He himself went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. When they asked him to spend more time with them, he declined.

But as he left, he promised, I will come back if it is God's will. Then he set sail from Ephesus. And when he landed at Caesarea, he went up and greeted the church, and then went down to Antioch.

We have in the New Testament two letters from the Apostle Paul that begin with these words, to the church of God in Corinth.

Now that may sound ordinary enough to us until we remember two things, what Corinth was and what the church of God is.

[3:43] Corinth was to the ancient world what Amsterdam is to Europe or what Las Vegas is to the United States.

It was Sin City. Now it was also the capital city of the Greek province of Achaia, the most prosperous commercial city of Greece, because it was positioned along a heavily traveled trade route, both of land and sea.

And that would mean that ships and caravans would be constantly coming and going. And so its commercial wealth drew people like dead meat draws flies.

They were coming to Corinth. Its population swelled. And it also meant that sailors and traveling salesmen constantly filled the streets.

And when they came to town, there was plenty to entertain them in the way of wine and women. In fact, whenever a Corinthian was portrayed on a Greek theater, throughout the Greek world,

throughout the Roman world, he would be portrayed drunk.

[4:57] That should tell you something about the reputation of Corinth. In fact, it was a pagan city with temples to the gods of Egypt, Rome, and Greece.

You could find it all here in Corinth. But the most famous of all was their temple to Aphrodite, the goddess of love. It boasted, the temple boasted of a thousand temple prostitutes.

And so famous was the immorality of Corinth that it even gave the Greek language additional words. So instead of speaking of someone being sexually immoral, you could just say they were a Corinthian.

That's the meaning of the word in classical Greek. They even made a verb out of it to Corinthianize, meant to commit fornication.

And it's into this sin city that Paul came armed with nothing but the gospel of Jesus Christ, determined to preach nothing but Christ and him crucified.

[6:06] And so he came and he preached, not with words of human wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power. And something amazing happened.

Filthy, wicked Corinthian sinners, in love with their sins, turned in faith to Jesus Christ and were gathered together into the church of God in Corinth.

Paul writes a few years later and reminds this church what they were. Just three years later, he writes 1 Corinthians, a letter to them, and reminds them what they were before the gospel came to their town.

Sexually immoral, first words out of his mouth. Idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, homosexual offenders, thieves, greedy, drunkards, slanderers, and swindlers, and swindlers.

Such were some of you. But you were washed. You were sanctified. You were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

[7:21] Amazing what God did in Corinth. Corinth. So here in perhaps one of the most unlikely places of the Roman Empire, converts were made to a holy Jesus and the church of his holy saints was planted.

So right around 50 to 52 AD, Corinth was no longer only famous for its immorality, but it now also had in town a monument to the conquering grace of God, to the saving, sin-cleansing power of Christ's blood that's able to save even the most defiled of sinners.

What a glory to Jesus Christ, whose blood can make the foulest clean, his blood availed for me. To have a church of God in Corinth, built with depraved and ruined sinners, redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.

It was one of Christ's standing miracles, one of the ancient wonders of the world, to have a church of God in Corinth. Now, how did it happen?

The first half of Acts 18 tells that story. Paul stayed in Corinth longer than he did in any other city that he visited on his first and second missionary journey.

[8:47] But it was not an easy stay. And we find that the Lord Jesus needed to give Paul great encouragements here in Corinth in a way that we don't see him receiving in other places.

I want to draw out several of these God-given encouragements to his servant Paul and trust that we too will taste that encouragement for us as we're called along with Paul and every other believer to make disciples of all the nations, of all the cities, of all kinds of sinners and to bring them to Jesus Christ.

Well, the first encouragement that we find is the encouragement of fellowship with fellow workers. The encouragement of fellowship with fellow workers.

When Paul was driven out of Thessalonica, he left behind his co-workers, Silas and Timothy, and he went alone. He was actually escorted down to Athens where they then left him alone in Athens to wait for Silas and Timothy.

He ministered there in Athens by himself. And now he comes to Corinth, another 50 miles on from Athens, and he's alone. Alone to face a whole city, a city of sin, a city of stiff opposition to the gospel.

[10:13] Alone to face his own doubts, his own fears, his own temptations of the world around him, of his own flesh, and of the devil himself. Alone.

But the Lord Jesus did not leave Paul alone for long, but provided encouragement for him by way of the fellowship of the saints.

Even in filthy Corinth, he brought fellow believers, fellow workers to Paul. First of all, we see that in this wonderful Christian couple, Aquila and Priscilla.

Paul later describes them this way. My fellow workers in Christ Jesus who risked their lives for me. Not only I, but all the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them.

Aquila and Priscilla. Now since Corinth was a great commercial city, we're not surprised to learn that it had a significant Jewish population.

[11 : 19] After all, the Jews are famous worldwide for their skill in business. It's been that way for a long time. Still that way today.

So not surprisingly, there was a significant population of Jews in this prospering city of Corinth carrying on business. And that meant there was also a Jewish synagogue in Corinth.

And as his custom was, Paul would go there first. And on every Sabbath, he was trying to persuade the Jews and the God-fearing Greeks that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah promised in their scriptures.

And perhaps it was that synagogue that Paul first bumped into Aquila and Priscilla, this Jewish couple. They were Jews by birth who had settled in Rome and had established themselves in their tent-making business.

But it just so happened that an anti-Jewish sentiment broke out among the Roman Empire at this very time. And the Jews, who seemed to be always stirring up trouble, a rebellious lot, so upset the emperor Claudius that he fed up with them, ordered all Jews to leave Rome.

[12 : 41] Well, now Aquila and Priscilla have a decision to make. Where do we go now? They just so happened to choose Corinth of all the cities and places in the world, some 700 miles away from Rome.

Now, we're not sure of all their reasons for choosing Corinth. Perhaps they had relatives and friends there who said, hey, the business is good in Corinth, come. It did have this Jewish population and a synagogue and lots of business opportunity.

So, for one reason or another, they chose Corinth. And they just so happened to arrive in Corinth shortly before Paul came to town. And it just so happened that their paths crossed in this highly populated city.

No, I've been saying this just so happened. This was not happenstance, was it? This wasn't just luck. It wasn't just that the events fell out in this way just randomly.

No, this was the work of our all-wise and sovereign Lord who determines the very steps of a man. Proverbs 16 and verse 9.

[13 : 57] In his heart, a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps. His every step determined by the Lord.

Everything from the emperor's decision to expel the Jews from Rome, from Aquila and Priscilla's decision to move to Corinth, to Paul's decision to go there next with the gospel, from the timing of their arrival, for the crossing of their paths, the fact that Paul was trained in tent making and that that was the trade of Aquila and Priscilla and so stayed at their home and worked at making tents with them.

All of this, you see, was the sovereign Lord of Providence governing the affairs of man to fulfill his loving purpose for one of his lonely servants that he might enjoy the fellowship of fellow workers standing with him there against the great enemy in Corinth.

And so, the Lord brings fellow workers to Corinth. Marvel at the ends to which the Lord goes to meet the needs of his people. You know, this is the same Lord as we sang.

The same yesterday, today, and forever. Still bringing people together. Still bringing coworkers together. Encouragement together. And we worship him and we love him for that.

[15 : 28] Now, it's not clear exactly when Aquila and Priscilla were converted. Were they converted before they came to Corinth? Maybe up in Rome? Or were they converted very early on as they heard the gospel from Paul in the synagogue?

We're not told, but very early on, if that were the case, they were dear believers. And what is clear is that they became dear lifelong friends of the Apostle Paul and valuable fellow laborers in the cause of Christ and his church, Aquila and Priscilla.

Beautiful thing to see husband and wife laboring together for the greatest cause in the world. Now, don't miss the importance of Christian fellowship then. You need it for your encouragement. judgment. Jesus says so. He sent out his disciples two by two, didn't he? Not by themselves.

And so he does not leave Paul alone for long in Corinth. Two are better than one. If one falls down, the other can help him up.

[16:33] But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up. You need to be with your brothers and sisters a lot. Let us not give up meeting together as some are in the habit of doing.

Why not? But let us encourage one another and so much the more as you see the day approaching. We need to be together when the church gathers that we might encourage one another.

Not even the great Apostle Paul is left long without it. fellowship of fellow workers. So let's be moving towards our brothers and sisters.

That's surely one of the applications of this. Let us consider then when we come together how we might spur one another on. How we might encourage one another to a life of love and good deeds which is the holiness to which our Savior has called us.

Would you consider that this week? who will you encourage? Who will you come alongside of? Who will you spend some time with? Who will you pray with? Who will you visit?

[17:47] Who will you encourage this week? The devil gains a dangerous foothold in our lives by isolating us from the body of Christ.

He can beat up on the guy that's all by himself. But oh, we're blessed to be in a body and with the saints who can remind us of the gracious promises and love of our God in our troubles.

So remember that lonely, shut-in, forgotten brother or sister serving the Lord in the way of suffering according to his will. Remember the missionary on the foreign field.

Remember yourself as you're working for the Lord. Don't work alone. Be sure that you get with someone and share the troubles and the sorrows and the discouragements of your life and of your ministry and pray together about your work.

There's much to discourage us in the work of the Lord. Remember to pray for and encourage those brothers and sisters serving on lonely mission fields where there are very few Christians.

[18:59] The encouragement of fellowship and of fellow workers. So that's the first encouragement that Paul receives from the Lord. He's now working six days a week making tents to provide for himself and then every Sabbath he's going into the synagogue to preach Christ to the Jews.

Well the second encouragement that Paul received was by the arrival or I should say this is under the same encouragement of fellow workers but the second group of fellow workers was Silas and Timothy.

They arrived from Macedonia so they caught up with him and when they came they not only brought encouraging news of what God was doing in the folks the church at Thessalonica but they also brought gifts financial gifts for Paul and the ministry team which meant that Paul was now free to quit his day job of making tents and now with these gifts from the church he could plunge full time without distraction into the gospel labors there in Corinth and that's what he did.

Still offering Christ to the Jews but now doing it every day. Well at some points the Jews became so opposed to Paul and his message that they got abusive.

They got abusive and it's at that point that Paul having born long with him finally shook off his clothes as if to get rid of any dust from the synagogue to separate himself from this blasphemous people who are rejecting Jesus Christ and he shakes off his clothes and says I'm free from your blood I warned you now your life and your destiny is upon yourself it wasn't it's no longer my fault I've told you the gospel I've told you you're perishing and I've offered you the savior your blood is on your own head from now on I will go to the Gentiles that was his *modus operandi* wasn't it to the Jew first and then when he was rejected he would turn to the Gentiles it was that way in his earlier cities we find it the same in Corinth so opposition rejection persecution it's all so discouraging to gospel workers but the Lord had further encouragement for his servant

[21:31] Paul and it came in the form thirdly of Titius Justice a Gentile God fear who also came to the synagogue and who had heard Paul and had believed on the Lord Jesus and trusted in him and wanted now to further the cause of Christ in Corinth so Titius Justice made available what he had a house a home and he offered that home as a preaching place to the apostle Paul now it just so happened to be right next door to the synagogue what a convenient location and how it must have raised the wrath of the Jewish leaders for now as those are attending synagogue every Sabbath and are growing weary under the heavy burden of a Christless legalism that says to them week in and week out if you are to be saved you must save yourself by obeying all the commandments of God and they go to synagogue and they hear that message week in and week out and then on the

way home they walk by and look in at the Christians and see the smiles on their face and hear the singing of the praises of God of a Savior who so loved them that he came to earth and lived the perfect life and obeyed all the commandments for them and then laid down his life as a sacrifice and suffered the wrath of God that was due them for all their breaking of God's commandments and now gives them free and full salvation

I mean how do you compete with that you can't it's like the two little lemonade stands in the development there where you live and there's one stand and they're selling salt water right from the ocean three dollars a bottle and just next door there's fresh spring water and it's free and everybody's walking away from the three dollar a bottle salt water with sour looks on their faces and long faces and everybody here's coming away singing glad they found water living water that they will never thirst again well that's the way it was here in Corinth the synagogue and right next door a gospel station to proclaim free and full salvation purchased by Jesus Christ not us you don't compete with that they couldn't compete with that get this even Crispus the synagogue ruler jumped ship along with his entire household who believe the gospel of Jesus

Christ receive full and free salvation and were baptized and not only the synagogue ruler himself but a whole host of many other Corinthian Gentiles they too heard of one who sets free from the bondage of sin and lust and brings us into the glorious liberty of the children of God well here was the second encouragement then from the Lord in Corinth not only fellowship of fellow workers but the encouragement of many new converts isn't it encouraging to have new converts in a church if a farmer plants seeds in the spring time and yet for all his labor reaps no harvest in the fall he will be discouraged but the joy of harvest more than compensates for all the work he puts in all year long and when believers witness and witness and pray and witness and meet with rejection after rejection it's easy to get discouraged it's easier to think why bother hearts are so hard hearts are so indifferent they simply don't care about Jesus and eternal life and we're tempted to give it up oh but just one conversion sets our hearts singing sets the church singing sets the angels in heaven singing what is the joy when we meet at the other end of this building where we have our baptismal and we hear the testimonies of people who've been saved out of all kinds of different backgrounds and sin but they all were slaves of sin and Satan they all deserve to go to hell but in one way or another they were forced to come to see that they were lost sinners and couldn't save themselves and they threw themselves upon

Jesus mercy and found mercy with the Lord and now they're there to tell everyone what the Lord has done for them is it not a joy are those not some of the high days of the church the life of a church well does that not encourage us to keep planting gospel seeds keep speaking a word for our savior well it's just that way Paul comes from Athens where he's preached to idolatrous philosophers and there were just a few converts there not many now he comes to corrupt Corinth and he meets with abusive rejection of the Jews and then a rich harvest the synagogue ruler no less and his household and many more Gentile Corinthians this is the gospel coming with a demonstration of the spirit's power and it brought no small encouragement to the apostle Paul and his growing team but you know that even more encouragement was needed for Paul to stay the course in Corinth and so the Lord Jesus came with that needed encouragement to his servant one night verse 9 says the Lord spoke to Paul in a 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 I think sometimes we have a hard time relating to the apostle Paul and I think sometimes we get the wrong idea about the apostle we think he's some superhero who was not like us that none of this rejection none of this hatred this persecution stuff ever got to him he had a rhinoceros hide and it never penetrated and caused him any grief any pain any fear that it just rolled off him like water off a duck's back well that would be a wrong conclusion to draw about the apostle that would be to be grossly mistaken about

[28 : 56] Paul rather the truth is this and it's an important lesson I don't want you to miss that even the strongest Christians need strong encouragements the very best Christians and who would argue that we're not studying the life of one of them when we're studying the apostle Paul the strongest Christians need the strongest of encouragements Martin Luther was a bold champion if there ever was one a champion for the gospel in the protestant reformation in Germany and throughout Europe and he stood against cardinals and bishops and popes and emperors with an uncompromising loyalty to Jesus Christ and the gospel and always with threats constant threats upon his life and he once remarked many persons to whom I often seem to be cheerful in my

outward appearance suppose that I am always walking on roses but God knows what my true condition is a lot of people are misunderstanding me they think one thing of me but God knows the truth he sees how weak

I am he sees how fearful I am he sees how tempted I am discouraged yea depressed tempted to despair and needing encouragement well here's the apostle Paul here's the bold lion if there ever was one apparently as we look on fearless in battle for his Lord we've seen him hated stoned and left for dead dragging himself up to go to the next city we've seen him beaten and in prison chased out of one town after he just keeps going just keeps on going witnessing undeterred standing all alone before the idolatrous philosophers at Athens and say saying that you must repent or Jesus Christ the living resurrected Jesus will judge you for your idolatry amazing boldness to stand alone in that

Areopagus and we can have a hard time relating to him we find ourselves on Tuesday afternoon with an opportunity to speak about Christ to our neighbor or work associate and we just freeze up we're paralyzed by fear just a fear of what their response will be even just not what they'll say but what will they think of me there's no stones in their hands there's no prison there's no rods to be just what they might think of me and we find we're such weaklings that we we zip our lips and we don't give a word for our savior and then we look at Paul and we say he's not like us but these two verses before us are a window into Paul's heart that tells a different story where we see that he was indeed a man of like passions as we are that we do that he was a man who struggled with the fear of man look at the Lord's words to

Paul in verses 9 and 10 do not be afraid now why did Jesus come to Paul and tell him that if he didn't have any fear you know what Calvin says here he says the Lord never wastes his words on one that doesn't need them so that if he says to a Paul do not be afraid it's because Paul is fearing indeed the very words in the Greek could be translated stop being afraid stop being afraid the reality was is that Paul had real fear in the face of real danger and his fear silences our witness so Paul was being tempted to shut his mouth to move on to be silent and so

Jesus says keep on speaking do not be silent you know that's the enemy's aim that's that's why the threats keep coming to the apostle it's to shut him up as long as he's quiet he won't receive the threat and danger it's the same with you and me it's the devil's aim to shut us up he is so hateful of humanity that he wants hell people who are on their way to hell to get there and so he's trying to shut up Christians from telling them their danger and that there is a way to eternal life and so Satan has all these schemes but no small part of them is just to keep your mouth zipped and he often uses threats and fears and what will they think and what will they say and how will I look and all the rest and Paul knew something of that struggle or Jesus never would have needed to say to him keep on speaking Paul do not be silent even as he was shaking off the dust from his clothes in the synagogue he saw the murder in the eyes of those

[34:38] Jews and he had seen that look before he had seen it in Lystra it was that look that caused him to pick up stones and to stone him and leave him for dead from one city to the other he had seen that look in the eyes of these Jews and now the abuse in Corinth would only be growing as the synagogue crowd was dwindling and the next door meeting place was swelling greater animosity and Paul knew what they were capable of he knew that they would not be satisfied just to keep Paul out of the synagogue they would not rest until Paul was out of their district or six feet under and Paul felt that he felt the threats he was afraid and in need of great encouragement indeed he tells the

Corinthians in his letter to them I came to you in weakness and in fear and with great trembling one of the other windows into the heart of the apostle Paul bold apostle that he was is what I think is his number one prayer request pray for me he's writing to churches pray for me why Paul what would we ever pray for you for you're a strong superhero of a Christian pray for me when I open my mouth words would be given me that I might speak the gospel clearly and boldly as I ought because I find reasons not to speak it clearly and boldly I find reasons in my heart to cut off the sharp corners of the message and not to tell people the truth and just to give them a nice message and just to shut my mouth pray for me pray for me that I might speak this glorious gospel with boldness what do these windows into the heart of the apostle

Paul teaches they teach us that if Paul was ever bold for Christ and in witness it was not him we've looked in on him we've peeked in through these windows and he's telling us if ever I have been bold it's been because of the Holy Spirit who's been given to us as power for witness so pray for the

Spirit to come in power upon my ministry well these last three encouragements then from the Lord Jesus and this vision in which Jesus speaks to Paul come from this vision and they all come to encourage Paul to stay the course there in Corinth and to keep speaking the gospel they come from the Lord's words to Paul in verse 10 the third encouragement then we've seen the encouragement of fellow workers the encouragement of many new converts now thirdly the encouragement of Christ's presence do not be afraid why for I am with you

I am with you now we're told that do not be afraid or fear not is the most repeated command in the Bible and that being true I would also posit that the number one reason for not being afraid given in the Bible is because I am with you and we don't have time to look at all of it it was to Jacob to Moses Moses is called just to go and to lead the Israelites out of Egypt and he's scared I will be with you that's given Joshua I'm to lead these Israelites into the promised land that's occupied by nations greater and stronger than us and the Lord says go and I will be with you the prophets called to speak the truth to a disobedient nation that didn't want to hear the truth and hated the truth speakers God says I will be with you stand up and speak the words

I give you on and on David down in the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil why not David because thou art with me you see it's the presence of Christ with his people that is the reason for not being afraid so Jesus before he leaves gives his disciples that great commission think of them just just a little band of eleven disciples and Jesus says no I want you to go to all the world to make disciples to me I want you to baptize them and to teach them to obey everything that I've commanded you can you imagine a little group of eleven men us the world disciples of Jesus that this world so hated that they crucified him and lo

[39 : 59] I am with you always to the end of the age oh there it is Jesus the one who has all authority in heaven and on earth is the one who will be with us it's not just us eleven men it's us and Jesus and so they went and they turned the world upside down with their gospel and so you see that was the word that Jesus brought to Paul Paul you're not alone in Corinth you're never alone because in this work of making disciples of the nations I'm with you I'm with you in Lystra in Derbe in Pisidia in Antioch I'm with you in Thessalonica in Athens and I'm with you here in Corinth so do not be afraid I'm with you I'm with you dear Christian drink it in you you're never there at the water cooler witnessing to your work associate alone no Jesus is at your right hand and he's there to help you it was an old promise that

Jesus gave to Paul it wasn't something new and dear Christians we don't need new promises we just need greater faith in the old promises and that old promise that I'm with you was brought again to Paul and it was personalized by our Lord Jesus and I ask you believer do you not know the same thing you're reading of scripture and you're sitting under the word of God preached does not the Lord Jesus come to you and bring that word with power to you fresh power fresh faith to believe an old promise with new confidence and so you go in the strength of your Lord that's the first encouragement that Jesus gives as he talks with Paul he points him to the promises if ever were to live and encourage lives we've got to familiarize ourselves with the promises and especially of Jesus presence that he's always with us oh we say if only the Lord would come to me in a vision and tell me he's with me we have this more sure word of what more can he say than to you he hath said to you who for refuge to

Jesus have fled well there was the encouragement of Christ's presence and then there was the encouragement of Christ's protection no one is going to attack and harm you you know Christ can promise such because he has authority all authority in heaven and on earth over everyone and everything and so all of our enemies will breathe only if Jesus gives them the next breath so Jesus can promise his people they will not harm you how can he promise because all he has to do is say no more breath for Mr.

Persecutor distract him turn him away he has all sorts of instruments to protect his people but this was the promise to Paul Jesus says stay and preach on Paul because I'm with you and I'm with you to keep men from harming you here in Corinth it was a special promise for Paul in this special place Paul will end up giving his life for the gospel that's not a breaking of Jesus promise he's saying here in Corinth Paul they will not harm you and that safety would not be due to the Jews kindness but only due to the presence of Christ shielding him by his love the Jews did try to harm Paul didn't they we had it read and Paul's just getting ready to make his defense they're saying that he's teaching some religion that's contrary to our Roman law and Paul's just ready to make his defense and he takes a breath!

the provincial proconsul interrupts him the judge interrupts him and says you know there's nothing here worthy of coming into my court in the first place this has something to do with you Jewish laws and names and words Jesus of Naz whatever it has no place in my court now get out and he dismissed the whole case evidently some of those Corinthian Gentiles with that anti Jewish sentiment fell upon Sosthenes synagogue ruler who had replaced the other that was converted Crispus and now Sosthenes is the new synagogue ruler and it appears that the townspeople the Gentiles rose up with their hatred of the Jews and beat him right in front of the judge Gallio and Gallio just turned a blind eye didn't didn't interrupt their beating!

[44 : 52] smiling to see the Jews getting what they were getting yes the protection you see the protection so that not only did Paul not get hurt but one of his persecutors got beat up and that's not the end of the story folks there are sweet surprises in the Bible when Paul writes his first letter to the Corinthians it's from Paul and our dear brother Sosthenes oh another synagogue ruler converted joining the ranks of the apostles team and promoting the gospel that he once persecuted yes there's no reason to not believe it's the same Sosthenes protection protection and and and what what this did for Paul was just freedom it freed him to go about his work you don't have to worry about someone harming you

Paul that was the thing that was causing him fear at night and now I can forget about that Jesus is with me to protect me and he said that no harm would come to me here and it freed him to go on preaching the gospel there was a fifth and last encouragement for Paul to stay on in Corinth and to continue preaching and it's the encouragement of Christ's people yet to be converted Jesus says go on preaching Paul because I am with you and no one will arrest and harm you because I have many people in this city now he's not just making a statement about the population of Corinth there were many people in Athens and the Lord didn't tell him to stay on in Athens and preach few converts he moved on but now he's in Corinth and yes there's been many that believed and Paul's afraid and he's thinking of moving on as he always did whenever the persecution got so bad that they would drive him out of stay and preach because

I have many people in this city I have them they're mine in what sense are they yours Lord Jesus well in the very sense that the whole New Testament speaks though they were not yet converted they were his they were his by election for God the father chose them in Jesus Christ before the foundation of the world to be his he predestined them to be his children the children of God and he gave them to his son from eternity past here these are yours now go and redeem them by dying for them Jesus spoke of them often father I want those you have given me to be with me he said those given to him Jesus the good shepherd says in John 10 and verse 16 I have other sheep other sheep that are not of this sheep fold of

Israel the Gentiles I have sheep in the Gentiles and I must bring them also they too will listen to my voice and there shall be one flock and one shepherd with Jews and Gentiles in them well you see these other sheep that Jesus has have not yet been gathered into the fold they're Gentiles they haven't even heard the gospel yet when Jesus spoke these words but he knew that he was going to send his church into all the world to preach the gospel and that these who were his would listen and would respond in repentance and faith to the invitation to come to Christ and be gathered in to the one fold do you get the encouragement in this it's the encouragement for Paul to keep on preaching the gospel in Corinth though the prospects to the human eye are discouraging the Jewish Corinthians hate you and they hate your gospel and your Christ the

Gentile Corinthians love their idols and their lusts yet from these I still have a people many chosen people who also must come to salvation and they only will come to salvation if they hear the gospel so stay and preach Paul because I have many people in this city sweet encouragements what was the effect upon Paul well we read it in verse 11 so Paul stayed for a year and a half teaching them the word of God what encouragement all his fears and doubts were answered with Jesus presence Jesus protection and the fact that Jesus had people here so Paul is encouraged to keep preaching and knowing that they will come they will repent they will come to Christ they will hear the voice of the good shepherd and will come and will follow him and will be saved and so he stays there another year and a half and knew the constant stream of more converts as the church of Corinth was being filled with

[50 : 20] Gentiles and Jews who were lost and came to faith in Christ it's been charged that if you believe the doctrine of election that God has given to his son a people that he is going to save that you'll stop witnessing but can you see it had the exact opposite effect on Paul Paul was thinking

about stopping his witness in Corinth and the thing that made him stay and preach on was the fact that God had a people there he didn't have a star on their foreheads or a stripe on their back no way for Paul to see who they were he just knew Jesus has a people out here and in hearing the gospel they'll hear the voice of the son of God and will come so I'm going to preach it in the confidence that he has a people and they will come when they hear the gospel it encouraged it let it encourage you dear Christian rejection after rejection people not not being saved by your witness there's a people out there who have been chosen before the foundation of the world and they will come how do I know that there's still some that haven't come because Jesus hasn't come back because as soon as the last one is saved he'll come back and it's the end of the age it's the day of judgment it's heaven and hell forever and ever but the last one has not come so they're out there keep preaching I have my people and this nerves us then to go to the vilest of sinners even

Corinthians and to call them to come to Christ Paul would later write to Timothy and say I endure everything for the sake of God's elect that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory they've not yet obtained it but I keep preaching I keep preaching this gospel that they might obtain that salvation and enjoy eternal glory well how do we know that they will come Jesus said it all that the father has given me will come to me there it is all that the father has given Paul I've got many there in Corinth and all every single one of them that the father has given me will come to me and whoever comes to me I will never cast out so have you come my friend if you come to this Jesus you say I don't know if I'm elect so I don't know if I should come you're under the direct immediate command to come you must come he calls you he commands every man everywhere to to repent and come to

Christ that's the that's the word for you you don't need to know whether you're elect the open door of the gospel says over it whosoever will may come and he commands you to come come and as you come and trust in Jesus and have your sins washed away in his blood you will turn around and look over that door it will say chosen in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world and you'll fall down in worship to realize that it was his choice of you when you were unlovely when you were dead in trespasses and sin and never ever would have chosen Christ no matter how many Pauls were sent to preach to you you would have rejected to your dying day and then spend eternity in hell but God in mercy chose you and sent his spirit to you to unplug your ears to unblind your eyes so that you would see something in Jesus you otherwise never would see and say I want him and I come to you Jesus and I receive you and I receive salvation in you and to know that that was the grace of God choosing you before the foundation of the world so what do we have a church of God in Corinth a monument to the sin cleansing power of the blood of the lamb church of God in Bremen a monument to the sin cleansing power of the blood of the lamb there's no different gospel is there whether it's philosophers in Athens vile sexually immoral people drunkards in Corinth we all need Jesus we're all sinners we can't save ourselves cast yourself on this savior be washed be sanctified be justified in his blood and then go and tell go and speak because I'm with you and I will be with you to the end of the age father thank you for sending your son to shed his blood for sinners and to purchase us for God thank you that we have been saved from our sin from our Christless religion from trusting in our deeds and and our religious rights and brought to the savior thank you that that message that was preached next door to the synagogue has found us here and that we have heard of this savior who gives free and full salvation and have trusted and found him good to his promise bring others today to believe and to be saved and send us forth then with a song on our face in our hearts and on our tongues to tell the world of our gracious savior we ask in his name and for his praise amen