

1 Corinthians 1:1-9

The Beginning

Acts 18 – see how this all got started!

V.1 After these things Paul departed from Athens and went to Corinth. {Setting of the story - Corinth

A) Paul comes to Corinth on the heels of his ministry in Athens.

B) Recall – Paul’s ministry in Athens didn’t go very well –

1) He preached an amazing message at the Areopagus – 3 reactions Ridicule – listen Later – some received

C) Paul left Athens and headed to Corinth - about a 50 mile journey.

Important that we understand what kind of city Paul was coming to in Corinth

A) Athens had a Population 10K Roman citizens 50K slaves

B) Corinth was a major Metropolis – 200k Roman citizens – 500k slaves –

1) More than 10 times the population – The size alone would be intimidating

C) Favorite retirement spot for Roman soldiers

Its very position made Corinth a key city of Greece.

A) Greece is almost cut in two by the sea.

B) On one side was what was known as the Saronic Gulf with its port of Cenchrea,

1) and on the other the Corinthian Gulf with its port of Lecheum.

C) Between the two there is a neck of land less than five miles across and on that isthmus stood Corinth.

D) NOTE: All north/ south traffic in Greece had to pass through Corinth

1) Corinth was called "The Bridge of Greece."

E) Corinth was a great commercial center. "the market place of Greece."

Corinth was also a Sports town – they hosted the Isthmus Games which were 2nd only to the Olympic Games.

A) They had their favorite events – favorite athletes – they were into this

B) And Like a lot of sports towns – Corinth also had a reputation for being a Party place.

C) The name Corinthian was synonymous with Party Animal.

1) in any kind of play in the theater – when a Character was from Corinth they were always portrayed as a Drunk.

D) Type cast –

Corinth was also a city given over to Idolatry – the most popular was the goddess Aphrodite.

A) In the center of the city was a temple dedicated to Aphrodite,

B) Every evening one thousand prostitutes would emerge to offer themselves to men as an act of worship to the goddess of sensuality.

Bb) There was a saying, "Not every man can afford a journey to Corinth."

C) Today they might have said – What happens in Corinth stays in Corinth.

1) Today we have our struggles with Porn – they were dealing with the real thing.

It was to THIS CITY that Paul had come and God would do some amazing things there.

A) Something that we need to remember – we who are living in the wickedness of this day and age.

B) God is still working – God is still on the move – the book of Acts is still being written

1) Acts of the HS thru the church is still being written
REVOLUTION

C) So Paul arrived in Corinth

V.2

2 And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla (because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome); and he came to them. 3 So, because he was of the

same trade, he stayed with them and worked; for by occupation they were tentmakers

It was customary for Jewish fathers to teach their sons a trade, even if the sons were going to be rabbis.

A) Paul's **trade was tentmaking**, It was a skill which he used to support his ministry at Corinth.

B) Thru it He met this amazing couple – worked with them and stayed with them.

C) They would end up partnering with Paul in the ministry of the Gospel.

D) I love how the Lord **will use similarities in things to bring people together.**

1) Surfing – sports - Profession- love of Music or Art

4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, {Pattern} and persuaded both Jews and Greeks.

5 When Silas and Timothy had come from Macedonia, Paul was compelled by the Spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus is the Christ. 6 But when they opposed him and blasphemed, he shook his garments and said to them, "Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean.

This was a way of saying – you are responsible for your own judgment.

A) Paul was clean because he preached Jesus to them but they rejected him. **They would be judged for that**

From now on I will go to the Gentiles."
Jews riled up

7 And he departed from there and entered the house of a certain man named Justus, one who worshiped God, whose house was next door to the synagogue.

I love this heart in Paul – this is not working – I am going to fish somewhere else. –

A) But I am going to keep fishing

B) And an amazing thing happened **V8 Then Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, {The head guy believed on the Lord with all his household.**

And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized.

C) So here we see that God was working in a mighty way – people were getting saved – the word was going out –

1) Great helpers in Aquilla and Priscilla – Timothy and Silas were there

D) But - Paul's heart was suddenly filled with Fear – Anxiety ridden –

1) How do we know that?

V.9

9 Now the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision, "Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent;

A) The Lord appeared to him in a vision saying – Don't be afraid. **FEAR NOT! –**

B) Why did the Lord say that? – Paul was afraid

C) Question - **Why would Paul get fearful at this point?**

1) He is anticipating the pattern – here we go again

D) Seen this before - People are really going to get mad that Crispus got saved

1) Paul was beginning to realize that wherever he saw external gain, it was followed by **personal pain.**

From Paul's perspective, the immediate future was perfectly predictable.

A) Soon there would be a riot, and he would be beaten

B) He was like a boxer who knows what is coming when he answers the bell.

C) But truth be told – Paul was worrying about troubles that he was not facing yet.

D) One Scholar referred to it as **Borrowing trouble**
1) playing the what if game – what if that happens – what if this doesn't come thru. What if Goes wrong!

That is a terrible habit in which we all engage.

A) Half the time we are worrying about things we have no control over to begin with.

B) So Paul is starting to be filled with Anxiety –

1) Which is encouraging – the great Apostle Paul was a lot like us.

C) The Lord meets Paul in this moment

"Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; 10 for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city."

The Lord gave Paul in this moment 3 words of encouragement

#1 The Reminder of His Presence. – I am with you

A) Psalm 23 this past weekend

B) Even though I pass through the valley of the Shadow of death –

1) **I will not fear – you are WITH ME**

C) The Lord gave Paul a reminder of his presence

#2 A great Promise – no one will attack you to hurt you;

A) Now this was new – Paul had been accustomed to being beaten –

B) Acts 14 – 4 chapters earlier – stoned at Lystra

1) Acts 16 beaten and imprisoned in Philippi

C) That was the pattern that Paul was becoming used to in his ministry

D) Now he gets this promise of protection from the Lord – but he had to believe it – act on it

1) Step out in confidence

E) TRIED AND PROVEN - A promise is of no value unless it is acted on.

So Paul is reminded of Jesus presence with him He is reminded of the Lord's protection over him

A) #3 The Right Perspective about the city. – I have many in this city.

B) Jesus wanted Paul to see opportunities and not challenges.

C) That is what happens when we factor the Lord into the equation- See opportunities

Some people only see Challenges – Sometimes those people can be a drag.

A) I love those who see possibilities and opportunities

B) Jonathan and Armor bearer – let's just see what the Lord might want to do. – LOVE IT

C) Fear sees obstacles – faith sees opportunities and possibilities – Paul would be a man of FAITH

¹¹ And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

A) Second longest place that he Pastored – Ephesus 3 years

B) God established a good work in Corinth

C) Paul was teaching them – ministering to them for 18 months -

1) But it wasn't all smooth sailing

¹² When Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul and brought him to the judgment seat, ¹³ saying, "This fellow persuades men to worship God contrary to the law."

¹⁴ And when Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, "If it were a matter of wrongdoing or wicked crimes, O Jews, there would be reason why I should bear with you. ¹⁵ But if it is a question of words and names and your own law, look to it yourselves; for I do not want to be a judge of such matters." ¹⁶ And he drove them from the judgment seat. ¹⁷ Then all the **Greeks took Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, (He must of replaced Crispus)** and beat him before the judgment seat. But Gallio took no notice of these things. ¹⁸ So Paul still remained a good while.

D) Lesson: God's presence and promise do not mean their will not be opposition.

1) Usually it means there will be even more opposition

E) The enemy wants to discourage us to quit – Paul didn't quit -¹⁸ So Paul still remained a good while.

Now here is what is interesting to note about Paul's ministry in this Metropolis in Corinth

A) He comes to Corinth this pagan – immoral huge city after dealing with the intellectuals in Athens

B) He seems to change his approach in coming there

C) Turn 1 Corinthians 2

And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. ² For I determined not to know anything among you except **Jesus Christ and Him crucified**. ³ I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. ⁴ And my speech and my preaching *were* not with persuasive **words of human wisdom**, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵ that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God

D) Some have suggested that this was a direct response to – the lack of reception in Athens

1) Could be true

But regardless -one thing that this points out that was a stable for Paul in his ministry

A) He emphasized the centrality of Christ in his preaching and teaching

B) Paul probably would have loved and agreed with our Simply Jesus – theme of ministry

C) All about – all for – all to – Jesus! (Our Focus)

1) That was his deal as well!

We will see that emphasis on Jesus throughout this epistle – in fact look how Paul starts

Paul, called to be an apostle of **Jesus Christ** through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,
² To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in **Christ Jesus**, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of **Jesus Christ** our Lord, both theirs and ours:
³ Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord **Jesus Christ**.

It has been said you can often tell what or who is important to someone by how much it comes up in conversation.

A) Paul mentions the name of Jesus Christ – 4 times in these three verses

B) Did you notice the other name he mentioned?

Sosthenes

C) Recall Sosthenes was the chief ruler of the synagogue,

1) and thus, probably the chief conspirator in bringing Paul before the Roman magistrate.

D) Which is why the Greeks beat him – causing trouble that they didn't need

Now if this is the same Sosthenes and most think it is

A) The same guy leading the uprising against Paul, and now the companion of Paul.

B) Been said – throw a rock into a pack of dogs and the one that gets hit barks the loudest

C) Sosthenes was barking loud – but it could have been heavy conviction –

1) He became a follower of Jesus

Notice a few things about Paul and his audience and we will be done.

A) Paul's calling

1) An Apostle – of Jesus Christ - Apostle sent on

B) By the will of God – answered a call

His Audience

A) The Church of God which was in Corinth

B) Note it wasn't the Church of Paul – or even the Church of Corinth – Church of God

C) They had been purchased with the blood of Jesus

D) We are a part of the Church of God in Vista

E) But I also like that Paul doesn't ignore their link to the city. – Role to play in the city

1) Heart for their city

to those who are sanctified in **Christ Jesus**, called to be saints,

A) Sanctified means set apart - Saints = called out one's - called to something - JESUS

B) Idea Set apart for something – For the Lord

1) set apart from something – worldliness of the city – not the city itself

C) They were to reach the CITY

D) Important to note – they were in the city and they were to be FOR THE CITY

1) But they were also to be set apart from the worldliness of the city

So Paul is writing To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:

They belonged to the big C Church

A) With all in every place –

B) The body of Christ is made up of many people from many different lifestyles – places

C) But we are one in the Lord

Now many of you are familiar with the church in Corinth – its problems

A) Abusing the gifts of the Holy Spirit - Suing each other / DIVISIONS

B) Guy sleeping with his step mom – the church wasn't doing anything about it

1) Abusing of communion – Drunk

C) People engaged in sexual immorality

1) Disputes over eat food sacrificed to idols

D) This church had a lot of problems – YELP

But before we go tonight I want you to see Paul's heart for this group – how he describes them

⁴ I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus, ⁵ that you were enriched in everything by Him in all utterance and all knowledge, ⁶ even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you, ⁷ so that you come short in no gift, eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁸ who will also confirm you to the end, that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

V.5 Enriched in everything – blessed

V.6 Their testimony was confirmed

V.7 Spiritual gifts are flowing

V.7 Eagerly awaiting the Lord's return

Is Paul just blowing smoke here?

A) No he is revealing something that we often forget

Every Christian is still a work in progress

B) We don't expect a two year old to be living on his own overnight – Josiah – pack your bags

C) Why do we do that in the church.

1) People come into the body with baggage – from their life experiences – takes time to grow

D) Takes time for the Lord to deal with our stuff and we have to be willing.

Been said – Jesus did save us to leave us the way we are – he wants to transform us

A) ⁹ God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

B) That is what we are going to see in this book – Yes the church had some good things going on

1) But it wasn't a perfect Church- the perfect church doesn't exist – GIVE IT TIME

C) Church is full of sinners –

This is what we will see in this letter – God doesn't let them be in their sin –

A) Paul addresses it – expects change – instructs them in the way of RIGHTEOUSNESS

B) That is the Lord's heart for us!

C) He is not going to make it easy for you to stay in your sin!

D) He loves you.

Next week Paul addresses the Division in the Church