

WORSHIP

SUGGESTED WORSHIP SONGS:

Only A God Like You, Great Things, You, Here in Your Presence, Pass It On

WELCOME

What is your line of work or career? What do you like about it? What do you find difficult about it?

WORD

ACTS 18:1-5

After these things he left Athens and went to Corinth. ² And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, having recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. He came to them, ³ and because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and they were working, for by trade they were tent-makers. ⁴ And he was reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath and trying to persuade Jews and Greeks. ⁵ But when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul began devoting himself completely to the word, solemnly testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ.

*Continue reading the succeeding verses of **chapter 18**.*

We find Paul at the beginning of **Acts 18** in the city of Corinth, a highly-commercialized and corrupt cosmopolitan center. Like many of our big cities today, the Corinthian culture was highly-materialistic and sexually permissive.

Acts 18:2-4 narrates how Paul worked as a tentmaker, and how he found a Jewish couple who came from Italy after Emperor Claudius ordered all Jews out of Rome. Aquila and Priscilla were the husband and wife tentmaking team that Paul eventually worked and stayed with. Now **while Paul was making tents, he witnessed** to both Jews and Greek in the area every Sabbath (**v.5**). When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia (presumably with financial support for Paul from the church), Paul was able to devote more time proclaiming the word (**v.5-6**). Whether Paul had to work to support his needs as he shared the gospel, or whether he was financially supported by the church so he can devote most of his time in the ministry, Paul never stopped witnessing to others where he lived and worked. How about us? We do not have to be in fulltime ministry work to be witnesses for Jesus. **We are witnesses for Christ right where God has placed us** at home, in the marketplace, even while on vacation or engaged in recreational activities!

Though Paul was a faithful witness for Christ, not everyone accepted his message. He faced opposition from the Jews which led him to focus his ministry to the Gentiles (**v.6-8**). Among his non-Jewish contacts, Paul found more open hearts to the gospel such as Titius Justus who lived right next to the Synagogue, as well as the leader of the Synagogue, Crispus and his family; many Corinthians also believed and were baptized (**v. 8**). In **verses 9 to 11**, the Lord commands and assures Paul that he will not be harmed as he continues to speak for Christ in that city.

Paul must have felt afraid of facing more opposition and needed God's direction and reassurance of His presence (**v.10**). God gives us what we need to obey Him, as witnesses for Jesus in every place He directs us to go. However, we must be careful to not claim that God promised us a trouble-free life as we proclaim Jesus. In this instance (**v. 9-11**), God gave Paul a specific command and a specific promise for protection. The Lord did not promise that Paul will have no more troubles for the rest of his life, but for that specific period of time, God assures His servant protection from all "attacks" (**v.10**).

In fact, Paul once again faces opposition from the Jews (**v. 12-17**). Though Paul was spared, the Synagogue leader, Sosthenes bore the brunt of the Jews' hostility towards Paul. This episode marked the end of Paul's stay at Corinth, and he embarked on the next part of his journey. This time, he took with him his "Dgroup", Aquila and Priscilla and together they travelled to Ephesus where he left them as he continued on to visit the church in Caesarea and then the church in Antioch (**v.18-22**). Paul exemplified how he followed God's direction every step of his missionary journey (**v. 21**). He did not make plans based on his own desires or even the desires of people around him. Let us follow Paul's example such that as we witness for Christ, we continue to obey God's will, not our own plans or desires.

Acts 18:23 "And having spent some time there, he left and passed successively through the Galatian region and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples". How do we "strengthen" our fellow disciples? We need to be connected to a small group for regular encouragement and accountability. Paul must have shared to these disciples about his own struggles, showed them his scars from the beatings and stoning he had to endure for the gospel, and

WORD (cont'd)

how God has shown himself to be sovereign in Paul's life and ministry. In the same way, when we are meaningfully connected to a Dgroup, we share in each other's trials, encourage one another with who God is, and remind each other of God's great promises in His word.

We must witness as we work, as Paul did. But more than just following Paul's example, he instructs us in **Colossians 3:23** to work for the Lord with all our hearts. How are we to work for the Lord? **1 Peter 2:12** commands us to keep our behavior excellent among unbelievers, because "people listen with their eyes", and when they see our good deeds, they will come to give glory to God someday (see also **1 Peter 3:1-2**, **1 Timothy 4:12**). We should not only witness with our words, but with our behavior.

At the end of Acts 18, we meet Apollos, an eloquent man who knew the Scriptures well. Though he was a very well-

educated man, he was willing to learn more about God. Aquila and Priscilla became his mentors, and as a result, Apollos became a powerful messenger and defender of the gospel. **Acts 18** ends with these words concerning Apollos: "he greatly helped those who had believed through grace for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, demonstrating by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ" (**v.27-28**).

Paul witnessed while at work, he took with him Aquila and Priscilla who witnessed to Apollos and mentored him, and Apollos became a powerful witness of Christ to others as well. Let us witness while we work, and disciple others in a small group so that they too, can witness while they work, and disciple others who will do the same for the glory of God!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)

1. How were you encouraged to be a witness for Jesus while you work from our Acts 18 study?
2. What practical step in the coming week will you take so that your behavior before your officemates/bosses will be excellent?
3. Who are you discipling so that they can become witnesses for Jesus as well?
(Or, who will you disciple so that they can become witnesses for Jesus as well?)

WORKS

PRAY CARE SHARE IN ACTION

Pray for your workplace — your bosses, officemates and clients. Ask God to give you wisdom and show you who is most open to the gospel and make plans to share to that officemate. If God leads you to share the gospel to the person who is most resistant to Christ, obey God and trust Him to work in that person's life as you witness to them.

WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

I. Thanksgiving

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives

II. Country and the World

- Upright and moral governance of Public Servants
- A God-centered Philippines
- Repentance and Salvation

III. Church

- That CCF Members would honor and love God and make disciples
- Elders, Pastors, Leaders, and Families
- Ministries and Churches worldwide

IV. CCF Facilities

- Worship and Training Center
- Prayer Mountain

V. Personal Concerns

- Deeper intimate relationship with God
- Righteous living
- Salvation of family and friends