

- C. Paul leaves for Syria
  - i. Aquila and Priscilla go with Paul.
  - ii. Paul gets a haircut.

Witherington: “we should relate the vow here to Paul’s thankfulness for being kept from harm in Corinth,” and that perhaps Paul took a vow “to remain unshorn in response to the vision he had.”

### LIVE THE STORY

*The Gospel is intended to be learned and lived in community. The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups as an aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.*

- Do you think Paul’s arrival in Corinth “in weakness, fear, and trembling” (1 Cor. 2:3) was connected at all to his experiences in the cities leading up to that moment? Why or why not?
- In your serving Christ and His people, have you ever experienced serious discouragement? If so, why? What brought you through that time?
- Are you currently discouraged and in need of renewed courage or assurance that your service for Christ matters?
- What do you think of the statement: “If you are a Christian, but haven’t experienced weariness, or opposition, then either you will experience it, or you just aren’t serving” ?
- Unbelievers reading Paul’s life, or hearing a message like this, might wonder, “Why would anyone sign up for that?” How would you answer this?
- The Gospel came to the Corinthians freely, but was clearly not free to Paul, or the Macedonians (Philippians). For whom is the Gospel to be free? And who is the bear the cost?
- In Paul’s vision (18:9-10), what do you think brought encouragement to him? Does anything surprise you about the vision?
- There are a lot of earthly rulers mentioned in this text who seem to be in control of people’s lives. Where in the text does it show that Christ Jesus is truly the One in control?

## Discouragement, Encouragement, and Success in the Mission

Jerry Cisar — November 16, 2014

Text: Acts 18:1-18

### Paul’s Arrival in Corinth (1 Corinthians 2:3; 4:9-13)

- A. Paul was affected by difficulty, mistreatment, weariness, and rejection, but not defeated by them.
- B. Though opposition challenged and shaped Paul’s ministry, he was strengthened through Christ’s call and assured of success in the mission.

### I. Christ Directs the Mission even through Discouraging Circumstances (1-8)

- A. Opposition may shape the mission, however opposition isn’t ultimately in control.
- B. The Arrival of Silas and Timothy
  - i. The Gospel comes to people freely, but it cost someone.
  - ii. “Your blood be on your own heads!” (6)
    - a) Ezekiel 33:2-4
    - b) Paul leaves...and goes next door.
      - With Prominent Members of the Synagogue
  - iii. Many Gentile Corinthians believed and were baptized.

## II. Christ Calls Forth Courage in the Messenger (9-11)

### A. How would Paul have the courage to stay?

- i. Previous Visions in Acts
  - a) Cornelius and Peter (Acts 11:18)
  
  - b) Ananias and Paul (Acts 9:15-16)
  
  - c) A Man of Macedonia (Acts 16:9-10)
- ii. This vision has a promise like Jeremiah's call. (Jer. 1:5-8)
  - a) Jeremiah was called to be a *"prophet to the nations"* and was rejected by the people of Israel.
  - b) Jeremiah was commanded to speak.
  - c) Jeremiah is commanded "Do not fear...for I am with you to rescue you."
- iii. This vision has a purpose. (10)

### B. The Lord Jesus commanded Paul to be courageous!

- i. Many times the Lord commands courage.
  - a) Joshua 1:3-7
  
  - b) Isaiah 41:10-11
- ii. How is Paul to muster up this courage?
- iii. Paul is not the center of Paul's mission; Christ and His people are.

### C. Do we have a promise?

- i. Romans 8:28-39
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- ii. 1 Corinthians 14:1, 3

## III. Christ Sovereignty Assures Success in the Mission (12-18)

- A. Though there have been earthly rulers all over this scene, there is only One who is truly Ruling—the One Paul keeps telling them is the Messiah King!
  - i. Christ is sovereignly in control of the mission and calls us to courageously trust Him.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - ii. Gallio refuses to get involved telling them to deal with it themselves.
  
- B. Gallio drives them out... but not before Sosthenes, the new synagogue ruler, gets a sound beating.
  - i. *"But Gallio paid no attention to any of this."*

Tannehill: *"...the final sentence of the scene does not present Gallio as a clearheaded administrator, guided by a strong tradition of Roman justice, but ...as a Roman official who is indifferent to the suffering of a troublesome Jew."*

- ii. Sosthenes that traveled with Paul (1 Corinthians 1:1)