

Acts 18:1-17 "In Corinth" 10/6/2024

Intro & Review:

What would we do if the building was on fire? What would we do if a barbarian horde was descending on our city? How would we behave and talk to each other if a tornado were headed our way?

Estimates vary, but about **1000** churches are closing in the US every year net of new plants.

This occurs during Paul's second missionary journey.

Last time we saw Paul and his companions they were in Athens.

We looked at the idea of **contextualization**.

The events we will look at took place in **Corinth**.

Information about Corinth: You can look at the map in the back of your Bible to see exactly where Corinth was. It was on an isthmus and had two ports. It second only to Athens in wealth. Of course, Paul later writes two canonical letters to the church which we have in our New Testament. According to v11, Paul stayed there a year and a half.

Today we will look at bivocational church planting, and pastoring, covenant baptism and Calvinism.

I. Household Baptism v8 -Four accounts in the book of Acts.

In the book of Acts, when someone wants to join the New Testament people of God known as Jesus followers, "the way", or "Christians", they and their families are baptized. The only reason this makes sense is if we understand that Baptism, like circumcision for Jews, was an identification with the covenantal people of God. It was an act of initiation into the covenant. The thing that gets a lot of us is the idea that it was not just for the one making the profession of faith, but like Abraham and all converts to Judaism, it was for their whole family. We see this four times in the book of Acts. The head of the house is converted, and he, along with all of his family and servants are baptized, regardless of their profession. This doesn't mean that they are all now saved. They themselves must profess Christ and be born again. However, it does

mean that they have now received God's grace of introduction into the people of God. The four examples in Acts are as follows:

First, in 10:48 Cornelius and his household are baptized.

Second, in 16:15 The "Lord opened Lydia's heart" and she and her household were baptized.

Thirdly, in 16:33-34 the Philippian jailer and his household because **HE** believed (2x)

Fourthly, in our passage today, 18:8 we see Crispus and his household believed and were baptized.

This was the pattern for most of church history for 1600 years.

We will talk a little more about baptism later because today we are baptizing two children.

One of the reasons that churches fail is because of anemic teaching on the importance of the Christian households. Weak households lead to weak churches.

II. Doctrines of **Grace** v10 a.k.a. Calvinism

V10 does not make sense if you're an Arminian or some form of compatibilist or open theist or anything other than a Calvinist. Calvinism can explain in a very logical and cogent way, all of the alleged passages that contradict the system. The same cannot be said of alternate positions of molinism or Leighton Flowers' benign attempts to "De-calvinize" Acts.

Acts 2:23 and 4:28 both talk about how God predestined to sacrifice Jesus for sins.

Acts 13:48 says that "as many as were appointed unto eternal life believed." The straightforward implication is that the reason some didn't believe, is because they weren't appointed, while others were. We have no way to know, so we proclaim the good news to all.

Acts 16:14 says concerning Lydia, that "the Lord opened her heart to pay attention to the things spoken by Paul." Again, the obvious implication is that God opened Lydia's heart. He obviously didn't open everyone's because they didn't all believe.

Issue of name: We don't care about "Calvinism" per se. We care about what the Bible teaches. We prefer the term "Doctrines of Grace" as it more accurately describes the collection of ideas taught in the Bible concerning soteriology, that is, how God saves people.

*The other systems are left with huge holes in their theology and end up in one of two places: absurdity or **heresy**.* Some are happy to be inconsistent. We have words for that phenomenon such as: absurdity, nonsense, ridiculous, and irrational. To be a consistent non-calvinist, one must necessarily become a heretical open theist. They posit that God is risking by offering salvation to people who are free to accept or reject it. They also hold that God does not predetermine the outcome. Greg Boyd is the primary scholar that adheres to this view.

Such a view requires a view of God that is unbiblical and incompatible with the historic faith. That is what the early church would call an “opinion” or heresy. It is outside the boundaries of “the faith once delivered to the saints.”

See R.C. Sproul’s [What is Reformed Theology](#), or [The Five Points of Calvinism](#) by Dabney

Another reason churches fail is because of weak theology. This man centered, nonsense whatever you want to call it, molinism, libertarian free will, compatibilism, open theism, it’s all some kind of condemned Arminianism. A man centered theology is no theology at all. It is vanity.

III. Pauline Church Planting v3

V3 Paul and Aquila and Priscilla were **tent** makers. Tents were made of leather, or fabric, not canvas like today. They were not made in factories with machines but were sewn together leather hides done at a tannery. We know from other passages such as 1Cor 4:12 and 2Thess 4:11, that Paul indeed worked with his hands. It was common for even educated men in Jewish times to learn a trade prior to higher education.

Notice how different this is from today. We have sissy, so called pastors, that don’t know how to work with their hands at all. All they know how to do is be a quasi-academic or teach and preach. In the east Texas vernacular that I come from, they’ve never “hit a lick.” They don’t know what it’s like to get dirty or use force to get things done. They’ve lived sheltered, sterile lives away from the grunge of real life. They’ve never been in the culture of men, but instead have lived their entire existence in the well-mannered culture of refined couth women. All men should learn to do some kind of manual labor, whether some construction related field, farming, or energy extraction. Being a roughneck is a good place to learn. This kind of work forges determination in a man and makes him tough physically. He will need that to protect and provide for his family. Unfortunately, we’ve set up a system where pastors seem to be exempt from that.

For the record, I'm happy to report that while paying my own way through private Bible college and seminary, I not only pastored a church but also bailed hay and cut firewood for a living. Prior to that, I worked in construction, lawncare and was a mover. I've been a shade tree mechanic and financial advisor among other things. I have a job now. We have about 300 guys working out here. I don't get paid by MRC. I serve because I want to. We give financially as well. This deal is costing me, and I wouldn't have it any other way. I'm happy to serve, and give, and work. I love it. I'm not asking anyone to do what I'm not doing.

Going back to the issue of soft pastors, times have changed. When things are good and we can afford to pay pastors, great. There is a Biblical precedent for that, and I don't think it's wrong to pay pastors. But this is not the situation we find ourselves in today. Culture has changed from what it used to be. Abandoned and closed church buildings litter both, our small towns and big cities. Once thriving congregations are gone and lost to time. We are witnessing the death of a bygone era of Christian influence and paganization. This is happening on our watch men. As a whole, churches are dying, and Christianity is on the retreat in the US.

Another issue is the so-called celebrity pastors who fleece the sheep every chance they get. They are shock jocks and seem more concerned about social media followers and growing their own personality cults. Most of the time, they love the heretical health/wealth, prosperity gospel. They are wolves in sheep's clothing.

Where are the men who are willing to suffer and sacrifice and serve? Where are the men who will fight for the bride of Christ and not compromise with cultural appropriation? Where are the men who are willing to give up their rights to payment so that the work of the ministry will be funded? Where are the men who will pray for and engage in long hours and hard work for the sake of the gospel? Where are the tough guys who enlarge their capacity.

I'm asking all of our men to do as we do. Have a job, a career, a business. Provide for your family. Bust your rump. Work hard. Work smart. Don't be lazy. Lead your family well. Love your wife and catechize your kids. Lead at home and lead at church. Do the work of the ministry. Lead, serve, teach, take on more responsibility. Don't shrink back. Pray for bigger shoulders. Extend your reach. Take on more than you can handle and then grow into it. When you start seeing cracks, you can start saying no but until then, keep saying yes. "Can you...?" YES. "Will you...?" YES! Put your hand to the plow and don't look back. Join in the great adventure. Be spent for the kingdom. If you want to save your life, you must lose it. Full speed ahead. For the gospel. For our God. For our families. For Christ's church. For the kingdom. For our neighbors. For our home. If this sounds like a pump-up message, good! Get fired up. Get focused. Get on with living instead of just getting by.

This is a call to men with fire in their eyes and the Holy Spirit in their souls. Are you just going to sit idly by while the country burns and your kids go to hell? Or, are you going to discard the paradigm you were taught and immerse yourself in the Scriptures? Are you going to just keep on with business as usual or are you going to be intentional about your marriage, parenting and career? Are you going to live for comfort, ease and entertainment? Or, are you going to do spiritual and physical battle?

We have a perfectly designed system to get the results we are currently getting. If we don't like the way things are going, we have to do something different. Your extended family may think you're crazy. Your friends may think you've lost your mind. Your coworkers may think you're a religious fanatic. Who cares? The country is burning. The barbarians have already taken over. They're not at the door of the gates. They've already infiltrated the media, institutes of higher education, the banking system, and many of the largest corporations. If you don't think so and you say to yourself that this extreme alarmism is uncalled for, I'm praying that God will open your eyes to the truth of the situation. If you think that this is all an overreaction and is just another form of the inevitable existence of evil, you've chosen to be ignorant of the data. You've chosen to bury your head in the sand and pretend that everything is ok. You're that meme where your house is on fire and you're sitting at the kitchen table saying, "everything is fine."

I'm calling for extremism. I'm calling for a wartime mentality. I'm calling for extraordinary effort. Don't hold back. Don't back down. Get up early. Stay up late. Quit quitting. Stop crying and whining and complaining. Get to work building. Pray like you've never prayed. Love like you've never loved. Work like you've never worked. Find another gear. Change your mentality. Suck it up and stand tall. Breathe it in and have no regrets. Pray for bigger shoulders and more capacity.

Be a man of Issachar (1Chr 12:33.)

*Be a renaissance **man**.*

Paul had been educated in the school of Gamaliel and was previously a Pharisee. His occupation was that he owned a tent making leather tannery. Now, he was a traveling church planter, sometime tent making leather worker, and author.

Immature boys can only do one thing at a time. Know how to change oil, build a house, invest your money, study the Bible, and shoot a gun. Do it all. Get to work. Pray. Trust God. Love your wife. Raise your kids. Serve the church. Give of your time and resources. Don't get overwhelmed. Take on more responsibility. Be a man. Prioritize, communicate, and execute.

Naïve dreamers wait around for better circumstances. Now is the time.

Paul was a tentmaking church planting author. I doubt he had much free time. I also doubt that he complained about not having much free time. Now is the time.

Application and Conclusion:

1. Read and **study**: 1Chr 12:32; Dt. 25:4; 1Cor 9; 1Tim 5:18
2. What are the data points concerning the **decline** of Christianity? (see: The rise of the Nones)
3. What specifically needs to **change** with you and your family?

Closing Prayer:

Father, thank you that you have not left us in the dark but have given us Your word. Help us to be faithful to it. And now, as we take the Lord's supper, we remember the death of the Lord Jesus, that He gave His life as a ransom for many. In His name we pray, Amen.