

The Perils and Joys of Church Planting - Acts 18:1-17
Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading

Notes from the Sermon

The cities of our country and the world are complex places defined by the density and diversity of their population. These metropolises are often plagued with crime and corruption, immorality, and decadence. Furthermore, the political ideologies that exist in cities often differ from suburban and rural neighborhoods. Responding to the struggles and issues facing cities like our own can be so difficult, and for many believers these areas are viewed with skepticism and even distaste. It is easy to write off a broken neighborhood of a city as God-forsaken and beyond hope. Yet, there is a hope for the urban core of our city and every other broken community.

In our story this week Paul travels to another city, but it is not just another city. Corinth was a metropolis in Greece, sitting as both a sea port and trade route. It had become the economic center of the Roman Empire. Corinth sat on an isthmus, with only three miles separating the Aegean and Adriatic Seas at its narrowest point. This Isthmus was also the only land connection between Peloponnese to the rest of Greece. Corinth was a Roman colony in the First Century and was probably the most Romanized city in Greece when Paul arrived. But it was also an incredibly immoral and decadent city. The Acrocorinth (high city of Corinth) held a temple to the goddess Aphrodite, the goddess of love, which was filled daily with temple prostitutes as men “worshiped” the goddess. Add to that the city was generally filled with traveling sailors and you get a city that resembled Bourbon Street in New Orleans, with every weekend being Mardi Gras. It might have been a city we skipped if we knew the wickedness, immorality, and idolatry in the city. But not Paul. And I believe that his response ought to teach us our response to the brokenness in the metropolitan areas of our culture. But more than this, Paul’s response should be our hope for every neighborhood.

Paul enters Corinth, and he does what he always did. This begins with Gospel proclamation, preaching Jesus both in the Synagogue and in the cultural marketplace. Of course, this gets him in trouble, as the end of our text points out. Yet, we find both Jews and Gentiles believing. Gloriously, in Corinth the baptized converts into the faith include Crispus, the ruler of the Synagogue (think lead elder). He and his whole household join a community of believers being disciplined and they become a church bearing witness of Jesus in a city. Now, usually at this point the persecution of Paul causes him to leave the city, but the Spirit has a different plan for Paul in this, the most immoral of all the cities he will visit. God tells Paul to stay, keep preaching and leading this newly planted church as they figure out their mission in Corinth. So Paul’s ministry in Corinth lasts 18 months as he makes disciples in this new Corinthian church. This church will be a light for the city, and provide the Gospel for Corinth in both proclamation and demonstration. This is church planting, Gospel, community, mission.

At Genesis we have a passion for church planting. It is our desire to be a church planting church, and to see churches planted in neighborhoods all over the Lou and around the world. For us, this is more than wishful thinking, it is core to our mission and identity. We want to be involved in the raising up of church planters and teams of people who will go to various places to plant. We want to financially fund them as they go out, and provide all kinds of support for both the planting pastor, his team, and the new disciples who follow Jesus in that church. We want to go and give missional support to these new churches. Our pastor is highly invested in church planting, working with our two networks to do assessments, training, and coaching for church planters. Furthermore, Pastor Mike teaches church planting at Missouri Baptist Network. On top of this, Genesis is involved in two church planting networks, the Send Network from Great Commission Baptists and the Acts 29 Church Planting Network. Both networks work to plant churches here and all over the world. And like Paul, both networks have significant initiatives to take the Gospel to the urban core of our largest cities and plant churches in the various urban neighborhoods of these cities. We give and partner

to be a part of this effort.

We do this because we firmly believe two things. First, that church planting provides the greatest hope for any city, be it First Century Corinth or Ferguson, MO. While the way church planting is done may differ in different context, the basic idea is the same everywhere, Gospel, community, mission. Proclaim the Gospel while giving demonstrations of Gospel transformation in a city or neighborhood. As the Gospel is made known some will believe, so we make disciples. Those disciples become a Gospel-shaped community in their city and are sent into their neighborhood as an outpost of the mission of God to make Jesus known. Our second belief is that churches plant churches. This means that it is our calling to be involved in the planting of new churches. And it takes the whole church to take the whole Gospel to the whole world.

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Leviticus 10	Leviticus 11	Leviticus 12	Leviticus 13	Leviticus 14	Leviticus 15	Leviticus 16

Reading from this past week: Acts 18:1-17

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: Acts 18:18-28

Family Worship

Song - *Christ the Sure and Steady Anchor*

<https://youtu.be/CMC2IWYDk18>

Gospel Project

Unit: Warnings to the People

Story: Joash wanted to obey God

Big Picture Question: What is repentance?

Answer: Repentance is turning from sin and turning to Jesus?

Scripture: 2 Kings 12

New City Catechism

Question #41: What is the Lords Prayer?

Answer: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil..

Verse: Matthew 6:9

Scripture

Acts 18:1-17

- Paul plants a church in Corinth, but he is not alone. How does Luke point out that it is a team effort, and who is a part of this team as the church gets planted?
- Why is church planting so important as we seek to make the Gospel known in different contexts and neighborhoods?
- What are some ways you could be more aware and involved in the planting of new churches?

Prayer

*Pray for our current church planting relationships with Bayless Church, Faith Community Bible Church in Jennings, and Good Shepherd Church in Cayambe, Ecuador.

*Ask God to help you discover how you can be involved in the Gospel proclamation and demonstration and in the planting of new churches.