

1 After these things Paul departed from Athens and went to Corinth.

Corinth was a major city of the Roman Empire, at an important crossroads of trade and travel.

Corinth was a key city of Greece by virtue of its location. At the very bottom of Greece there is an isthmus — a neck of land less than five miles across. Corinth was called "*The **Bridge of Greece.***" - *Diolkos - track*

Corinth was **infamous** for its immorality. To be called "a Corinthian" was to be labeled a drunken fornicator. In Greek theater, whenever a "Corinthian" was shown on the stage he was shown drunk. A "*Corinthian companion*" was another title for a prostitute.

Sexual immorality was permitted and promoted as a part of the worship of Aphrodite. The temple had one thousand priestesses of Aphrodite who were sacred prostitutes.

One ancient writer described Corinth as a town where "none but the tough could survive."

Paul once again dove right into this mess of a place because he saw Jesus as the one who would be the Hero of these broken lives — even as Jesus was the Hero of his own life. He knew that Jesus could redeem and rescue **any** sinner because Jesus had saved the one man whom he knew to be the biggest sinner in the world.

We must not be afraid of the "Corinthian" fringe of the world we live in. Who is going to reach the "Corinthian" in your life? If **we** don't have a heart for the "Corinthians" it's because we have somehow forgotten that before meeting Jesus we were as lost as the worst "Corinthian"!

If **I** don't have a heart for the "Corinthians" it's because Jesus crucified for me is no longer the love my life!

If we don't have a heart for the "Corinthians" it's because we have somehow forgotten that 'God crowns not our merits but his grace.' (Augustine).

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.

It is implied, though not clearly stated, that Aquila and Priscilla were at this time Christians. Persecuted

[Romans 16:3-4](#) 3 Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, 4 who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.

Aquila and Priscilla are an amazing couple — amazing examples of what it looks like to love Jesus and live on mission. They dedicated their hands, hearts, and homes to the work of the Lord.

3 So, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and worked; for by occupation they were tentmakers.

Paul's tentmaking was an important part of his ministry. Though he recognized his right to be supported by those he ministered to ([1 Corinthians 9:7-14](#)), he voluntarily supported himself in his missionary and preaching work so that no one could accuse him of seeking converts for the sake of enriching himself ([1 Corinthians 9:15-18](#)).

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

Reasoned — This word is used 5 times in the Book of Acts to describe the way Paul engaged both Jews and non-Jewish people with the Gospel (Acts 17:2;17 Acts 18:4;19 Acts 24:25). It means *to say thoroughly, i.e. discuss - dialogue* This word challenges each of us to have a good grasp of the Gospel, and engage

Isaiah 1:18 *“Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.*

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.

When Timothy came, he brought news about how the Christians in Thessalonica were remaining steadfast in the faith ([1 Thessalonians 3:6-10](#)). This brought Paul great joy, spurring him on in ministry

According to [2 Corinthians 11:8-9](#), while Paul was in Corinth, financial support arrived from the Christians in Philippi, and he was able to put aside tentmaking for a while and concentrate more fully on the task of building the church in Corinth.

(Jer 20:9 KJV) *Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.*

testifying to the Jews that the Christ was Jesus — “*Testifying*” has its root in the word *martus* from which we get our English word *martyr*. Paul’s words and life declared — “*I am willing to die for this fact!*”

“Am I **living** for the Gospel?” If you aren’t willing to **live** for Jesus you’re not likely to be willing to **die** for Jesus. By the way — Living for Jesus is the most compelling case for the Gospel in the eyes of an unbelieving world.

6 But when they opposed him and blasphemed,

opposed = *antitássō*; from *antí*, against, and *tássō*, to arrange. It means — To set an army in array against, to arrange in battle order. - hostility

The way they opposed Paul was to blaspheme or **revile** him. **revile** = To hurt the reputation or smite with reports or words, speak evil of, slander,

Behind all human opposition is the opposition of the devil.

Ephesians 6:12 *For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.*

Satan opposes God and all of God’s redemptive work in the lives of sinners. He hates seeing rebels redeemed and reconciled to God by faith in Jesus. When we invade his territory he responds with hostile opposition. He does not want to relinquish a single person who is his partner in his rebellion against God. That’s what he did in Thessalonica and Berea by way of the unbelieving Jews who rejected the Gospel.

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Opposition is **usually** proof that God is at work, and this ought to encourage us. **Charles Spurgeon** — *The devil never kicks a dead horse!*

he shook his garments and said to them, “Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.”

He shook his garments: This was a dramatic way of expressing *his* rejection of *their* rejection.

Blood be upon hands vs heads - doing vs decision - Pontious Pilate - Matt 27

Matthew 7:6: *Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces.*

When people are determined to reject the gospel, we shouldn't keep trying, until the door opens again.

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.

Hard-joined - shared a wall - Imagine a worship service going on right next door to the synagogue

8 Then Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his household. And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized.

Crispus was one of the few in Corinth whom Paul personally baptized ([1 Corinthians 1:14](#)).

Many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized: [1 Corinthians 1:26:](#) *For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.*

9 Now the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision, “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.”

God always speaks **with purpose** - and there was a **purpose** for these words to Paul. The word of God was burning in Paul. He had friends come along side to serve and supply. He was opposed but he persisted. There was an awesome work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of men and women who had been living in the moral and spiritual darkness that was Corinth.

It would appear that Paul was fearful, ready to run. But the Lord Himself steps in and stops any such move on Paul's part. He tells him, ***“I have many people in this city.”***

We cannot see what God can see. Satan will often use that to discourage us. There's a great example of this in the Old Testament in the life of the prophet Elijah. After his showdown against the prophets of Ba-al on Mt. Carmel, he was chased by queen Jezebel. When he finally stops the Lord speaks to him.

1 Kings 19:9-10 *There he came to a cave and lodged in it. And behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and he said to him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”*

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The answer to that question is — NOTHING! He had gone from boldly challenging the people of God to turn their backs on idols to serve the living God, to hiding in a cave! There was a reason he was hiding in a cave doing nothing.

¹⁰He said, "I have been very jealous for the Lord, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away."

THAT was Elijah's perception of the state of thing. Here was God's -

***1 Kings 19:18** Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him."*

HERE'S THE POINT — When we look at the cultural, spiritual and moral darkness around us we need not be afraid, and we need not despair. Don't be deceived by what your human eye is seeing. What God did in Corinth can be true of your world!

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

Paul was in Corinth a year and a half, which seems to be longer than in any other city where he founded a church. His ministry at Corinth is described simply: **teaching the word of God among them.**

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."

By going to Gallio (possible pushover), they tried to stop Paul's preaching legally, and punitively.

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.

Here we go again - Before Paul could defend himself, Gallio did it for him - none of my business, - Jesus promised - no attack - hurt

17 Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment seat. But Gallio took no notice of these things.

Beat up somebody today! So they beat **Sosthenes**, the leader of the synagogue. Crispus was replaced ([Acts 18:8](#)) by **Sosthenes** – who later himself gets saved. ([1 Corinthians 1:1](#))

18 So Paul still remained a good while. Then he took leave of the brethren and sailed for Syria, and Priscilla and Aquila were with him. He had his hair cut off at Cenchrea, for he had taken a vow.

The **vow** was almost certainly the vow of a Nazirite (Numbers 6). Usually this vow was taken for a certain period of time and when completed, the hair (which had been allowed to freely grow) was cut off and offered to the Lord at a special ceremony at the temple in Jerusalem. The purpose of the vow of a Nazirite was to

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express a unique consecration to God, promising to abstain from all products from the grapevine, to not cut one's hair, and to never come near a dead body. Lent and Ash Wednesday - 6 Sundays + 40 days

Courage: courage consists of three factors, three parts, three aspects: **commitment to a principle, identification of danger if you act on that principle, and acting in spite of the danger.**

Commitment to a principle, you have to love something, someone or "someones" more than your own safety, more than your own happiness, more than your own comfort, or it is not courage. Jesus + Gospel

Identification of danger if you act on principle. Unless you know there's danger, your action can't be courageous. Beatings/stonings & imprisonment

Acting in spite of the danger. Courage is not the absence of fear. It's acting in spite of the fear. Courage is doing the right thing no matter what the danger.

Courage is the presence of something else that enables you to overcome the fear. Isaiah 41:10 - Fear not, I am with you. for I have many people in this city.

Heb 12:1-3 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.

Courage is not the absence of fear; it's the presence of joy. Jesus was able to face the cross for the joy that was set before him.

Joy is saying, "It doesn't matter what happens, because Jesus Christ has courageously faced the ultimate problem of my life, which is sin and evil and eternal death.

Therefore, no matter what happens here it'll be alright.

Only Jesus went into hell for a heavenly cause. Only the Christian God is a God of courage, and he did it for you.

If you see him taking on the big giants and the big dangers for you, you can take on the little dangers, because there's a self-forgetfulness that comes from joy, knowing what Jesus has done for you.