

Acts: The Gospel Gone Viral  
Lesson 38 “Victory at Corinth”

I. We have been studying through *Acts* and how the gospel went viral through various revivals in the first century. This is what caused the gospel to spread so rapidly in the first century.

A. Most recently we have been looking at Paul’s second missionary journey and how everywhere he went he saw both a revival and a riot. ex: Philippi, Thessalonica, Athens.

B. Today we are going to look at Paul’s ministry in a city where he founded one of his most famous churches; the city of Corinth.

1. In Paul’s day, Corinth was a famous commercial center with two harbors (shipping and receiving) and was known for idolatry and sexual immorality. **It was more Vegas than Vegas.**

2. Some commentaries says in classical Greek, Corinthian meant to practice fornication and a Corinthian companion was a prostitute. They worshipped Aphrodite (sex goddess).

C. Our theme for today is one of victory in the face of immense hardship. Today we are going to see Paul overcome tremendous persecution and continue to minister in Corinth for 18 months. We will also see one of the most important and favorable legal rulings in history regarding the practice of Christianity. This happened because of Paul’s bravery.

II. Victory at Corinth

A. **Acts 18:1-8 Initial Ministry at Corinth**

1. After being laughed out of Athens, Paul came to Corinth and connected with Priscilla and Aquila who would become some of his great ministry partners.

2. Paul worked as a tentmaker to support himself. **Ministry is spelled work.**

a. Paul’s example is a great one to follow. He ministered from his relationship with God and not for money. He didn’t burden new communities he came to with supporting him with a salary.

b. This doesn’t mean it’s wrong for ministers to be supported by churches.

*1 Corinthians 9:14 those who preach the gospel should live of the gospel.*

Paul just laid down this right to compensation to not offend.

c. Later we will see how he received offerings from the Philippian church.

3. Again we see Paul ministering in the synagogue to Jews and Greeks (God-fearers) even though he was called to the gentiles. **I’m not saying he was entirely wrong to do this because there were gentiles at the synagogue, but one does wonder if he would have had more success and less hardship if he would have just focused on the gentiles.**

4. When Silas and Timothy arrive, Paul responded to the stirring (pressing) of the spirit and testified (gave witness to the fact) that Jesus was the Christ.
5. When the Jews opposed Paul and blasphemed, Paul departed and said he was turning to the Gentiles (his calling). He then started having church next door at the house of Justus. Paul was highly confrontational!
6. Interestingly when Paul separates himself to his true calling (the gentiles), the head of the synagogue, Crispus, believed and got baptized - **1 Corinthians 1:14**. Many more Corinthians did as well. Revival starts through obedience.

### B. Acts 18:9-11 Paul's Encounter with the Lord

1. Kenneth Hagin - often when God speaks to us in spectacular ways it's because we haven't been listening to the written word/inward witness of the spirit or because hard times are ahead and he's preparing us.
2. My example from early 2009 - praying for financial increase and God spoke **Matthew 7:24-27** to me about building on the rock when storms come. I didn't like the word, but it strengthened me for the hardship that was ahead.
3. Randy Clark example of 1994 - invited to go to Toronto to hold a meeting and he was very fearful. Was called the night before he went and given a prophetic word. "If you go, I'll back you." It put faith in his heart and when he went to Toronto many were touched by the power of the Holy Spirit, had divine encounters, people were healed, delivered from depression, and the outpouring of the spirit lasted 12 years. Has helped change our world. ex: Heidi Baker

### C. Acts 18:12-17 Great Legal Victory

1. The Jews accused Paul of teaching people to worship contrary to the law. Gallio who was proconsul of Achaia heard the charges and then said he wasn't going to do anything because Paul hadn't violated Roman law. He said he wasn't going to judge matters concerning the Jewish law.
2. This is a big deal because the Romans typically required any nation they conquered to worship their own gods and Caesar, however over the years the Jews had been so difficult to control, they gave them an exception to where they didn't have to worship Caesar. This ruling would be recognized to give Christians the same legal rights the Jews had under Roman law. **Massive legal victory!**
3. The Greeks beat Sosthenes who was the ruler of the synagogue. Apparently, Gallio and the Greeks were more against the Jews than they were against Paul. Interestingly, Sosthenes eventually converted to Christianity. **1 Corinthians 1:1**.

III. Conclusion - Many times we want to be delivered from hardship and often God's plan is to deliver us through the hardship and transform situations around us. It's in these situations our faith in the midst of our greatest fears leads to our greatest victories! Faith isn't the absence of fear! Faith is obeying God in the face of fear.

A. Call Up Prayer Team

B. Pray Closing Prayer