

Acts 18:1-17 Bible Study

1. What things discourage you in being a Christian and following Jesus? What things encourage you?

2. Read Acts 18:1-4. Why doesn't Luke just tell us that Paul and Apollos "spoke the word"? (see also 2 Cor 5:11)

*Luke is using Paul and Apollos as models for all Christians. Sharing the gospel can never merely be a matter of passing on information. It is always speaking a message that calls for a response, so we need to expose false arguments & presuppositions, answer questions and above all seek to **persuade** others that they ought to submit to Jesus. This can never be coerced, but reasoning and persuasion are always to be used.*

3. Read Acts 18:5-8. Read Also vv27-28. Are Paul and Apollos being 'judgemental' in these scenes? What can we add to our discussion from Q.2?

It is not judgemental to make a clear statement that you disagree with someone and think they are wrong. This does not mean that you are condemning them. But at times it is the only way to make absolutely clear that their position (rejecting Jesus) is lethal!

4. Does Paul's statement on v.6 mean that he would no longer speak to Jews?

No – Crispus, a senior Jew in Corinth, was obviously converted. Paul refused to speak to them in their synagogue or relate to them as a whole, but in the house next door he continued to speak to anyone who came to him. There are times when we must give up trying to speak to people in groups and yet still be open to speak to people from that group individually.

5. Read Acts 18:9-17. Why do you think the Lord gave Paul this vision? Read also 1 Cor 2:3.

He was fearful, perhaps discouraged, and probably ready to move on. But the Lord is the one orchestrating the spread of the gospel and he wants a longer ministry from Paul to Corinth because he has "many people" there.

6. Recent Roman Catholic teaching has suggested that there are people in the world who are Christians (and therefore saved) without realising it. eg People from other religions who are really worshipping God without knowing it. Do these verses support such an idea?

No. In fact, the opposite. Jesus wants Paul to stay in Corinth so he can proclaim the gospel and in hearing it, people believe and be saved. They are not saved without hearing and believing. Read Rom 10:17.

7. v.10 is one of many expressions of the doctrine of predestination – the reality that God chooses us, we don't choose him. Whenever the Bible expresses this doctrine, it is always as an encouragement to Christians, not a matter for speculation. How is it an encouragement to Paul here? How does it encourage you? Other passages you might look up include John 10:3-4, 16; Rom 8:28-31; Eph 1:3-6; 1 Thess 1:2-5; 1 Peter 1:1-6.

Perhaps discuss Acts 18:10, then give people in pairs one of the other passages to look up, discuss and report back to the group.

8. It is possible that Paul came to Corinth very discouraged. He would still be recovering from the beating he received in Philippi, he would remember being forced to leave Thessalonica after only three weeks and so was greatly concerned for the new Christians there (1 Thess 2:17-3:8) and his stay in Athens was brief, with few responses and much indifference to the gospel, and he arrived in Corinth alone. In what ways do you think Paul found encouragement during his stay in Corinth? What examples are here for us?

Aquila & Priscilla were most likely believers – Paul needed the encouragement of other Christians, he was no Lone Ranger! His fellow workers arrived, with financial support from Macedonia – see Phil 4:15, and news from Thessalonica – 1 Thess 3:6f, and the Lord's vision gave him the words Jesus had given all of his disciples in Matt 28:20 – "I am with you". Fellowship and mutual encouragement and God's word are core factors in being encouraged and continuing in the faith – pray as a group that we will pursue these things.