

Approaching God

Read this portion of Psalm 36 and begin with an opening prayer

How priceless is your unfailing love, O God! People take refuge in the shadow of your wings. They feast on the abundance of your house; you give them drink from your river of delights. For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light. (Ps 36:7-9)

Prayer: Thank you, Father, for waking me to this day in which your light exposes the stingy cheapness of sin, and at the same time, reveals the wild, relentless, and open beauties of your love in Jesus. Help me to take refuge in your strength and abundance today in all that you have before me. Amen

Acts 18:1-11

Passage Introduction: The Church Founded at Corinth

Paul's journey progresses to the city of Corinth, a crossroads between east and west (18:1). Corinth was on an isthmus and had ports on both the east and west sides of the city. Thus, travelers would come from all sides of the Mediterranean, including North Africa. Corinth became a center of economic and political influence. Presumably, this is why Paul only spent a few weeks in Athens but more than a year in Corinth on this second missionary journey (v 11). Paul desired to spend time evangelizing and discipling Christians in this city of influence.

Bible Reading, Study & Meditation

Start with Engaging the Text: Take a few minutes to highlight, circle, or underline key words.

Aquila & Priscilla:

Priscilla and Aquila were Jews who at one point had lived in Rome but were ejected by Claudius. They moved to Italy and finally reached Corinth, where they were able to start a business. They, like Paul, were tentmakers.

vs. 6

Shaking garments was a gesture of rejection, much like shaking the dust from one's feet (cf. 13:51).

Acts 18:1-11 - 1 After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. **2** There he met a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them, **3** and because he was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and worked with them.

4 Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks. **5** When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah. **6** But when they opposed Paul and became abusive, he shook out his clothes in protest and said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent of it. From now on I will go to the Gentiles." **7** Then Paul left the synagogue and went next door to the house of Titius Justus, a worshiper of God. **8** Crispus, the synagogue leader, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard Paul believed and

Your blood be on your own heads reflects Ezekiel's words about God's prophetic watchman (Ezek. 33:1-7). "Blood" means "the responsibility for your judgment by God."

were baptized. **9** One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: **"Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. 10 For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city."** **11** So Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God.

Questions for Reflection & Meditation

- What are 2-3 things you learn or observe about God in this passage?
- What are 2-3 things you learn or observe about you, other people, humanity in general?
- Are there any commands to obey in this passage? What are the 3 imperatives given in vs. 10? How are they significant and relevant for every believer?

Key Takeaway:

As you read today's passage, what are 1 or 2 main takeaways that you wrote down in the margins? How would you briefly summarize your observations and meditations for today?

Close in Prayer:

Paul came to Corinth in considerable trepidation (1 Corinthians 2:3), it was a city known for its moral laxity. And yet Jesus tells Paul that he has "many people" in that city who will respond to the gospel. Do any modern instances come to mind of the gospel being readily received by people whom one would have supposed most unlikely to pay attention to it? Praise God for those instances and pray for courage to pursue more.