

Acts 18:9–10

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.”

“Be Not Afraid” Acts 18:9-10

INTRO:

Have you ever really been discouraged? The Psalmist in **Psalm 77** knew a little of what it was to be discouraged. He wrote in **verses 2-3**, *“In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord. My hand was stretched out in the night without ceasing; my soul refused to be comforted. I remembered God, and was troubled; I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed Selah.”* Even God’s choicest servants need comfort and encouragement at times.

When we find the Apostle Paul in Corinth in **Acts 18**, he was discouraged and needed of encouragement. Our Lord encourages him with a vision that includes two commands and two promises.

I. Two Commands

II. Two Promises

I. Two Commands

A. In **Acts 18**, we find Paul reeling from a hard road of ministry.

1. Before he set out on this missionary trip, the Apostle Paul had a falling out with his first ministry partner, Barnabas over John Mark.

2. Then as he began his trip, he found that the Holy Spirit had a different idea than he did about where he was to minister. He finally ended up at Troas waiting for God’s direction. At Troas he experienced the famous Macedonian vision.

3. You would think knowing you were in will of God in terms of ministry everything would go very well. Contrary to what you might think, Paul and Silas ended up in Jail in Philippi, were run out of town in Thessalonica and Berea, and laughed off Mars hill in Athens. After all of this, he came to Corinth, alone. Silas and Timothy had not yet joined him.

4. Although some were saved, some have gotten very angry with Paul. Because of all this, we can understand what Paul wrote in

1 Corinthians 2:1-4 *“And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.”*

The Apostle Paul was “*damaged goods*” when he arrived at Corinth and that is why God encouraged him.

B. To encourage the Apostle Paul, our Lord appeared to him in a vision. The Lord said,

“Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent, for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many in this city who are my people.”

This vision has two commands and two promises. The first command is:

“Do not be afraid.”

1. At least eighteen times in the New Testament we read of this command from the lips of the Lord Jesus. Thus we understand God's children, at one time or another, may be afraid. In **John 14**, Jesus told His disciples.

“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.”

Don't be afraid, reason with your heart.

2. If the Apostle Paul could be afraid, we can be also. The answer to fear is the promises and presence of God. We will see that here.

C. The second command was keep on speaking the Gospel. The Lord commanded, ***“go on speaking and do not be silent.”*** Fear had threatened to make Paul silent. Fear can make us silent also. The word does not get out to others unless we put out the effort to speak to them.

II. Two Promises

A. The support for the Lord's two commands is found in the two promises the Lord made. First, He said, do not be afraid, and speak, ***“for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you.”***

1. The greatest promise the Lord can promise us, He pledged to Paul. Paul was not to be afraid because the Lord Jesus Himself would be right there with him as he ministered.

2. This echoes two important verses. First, the promise to Israel in **Isaiah 41:10**.
“Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.”

The second is the Great Commission.

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen.”

B. The second promise is: ***“for I have many in this city who are my people.”***
God’s plan for Corinth was a church. Many people who would be converted are already in that town.

C. Let’s see if we can’t apply this.

1. Are we discouraged and hurt? Paul was at this time. Psalmists were at times. Martin Luther and Charles Spurgeon knew times of discouragement. We also can have them. The answer to these times is always a fresh appreciation of the Lord’s presence. I have long appreciated a verse given to Judah which follows in **Isaiah 41:13**.

“For I, the LORD your God, will hold your right hand, saying to you, ‘Fear not, I will help you.’”

2. The Lord has much people in this place. How will we find them? We find them by speaking the Gospel to the people in any way possible.

“Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent, for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many in this city who are my people.” Acts 18:9-10

Hymn #46 God Leads Us Along