

“God Is Faithful!”
2 Corinthians 1:1; Acts 18:12-19

Introduction:

1. Please Turn Back In Your Bibles With Me To:
 - Acts 18 - Where We Have Been For The Last Couple Of Weeks:
 - As An Introduction To Our Series:
 - On Paul’s Second Letter To The Corinthian Church!
 - Because - Right Here In Acts 18:
 - We Find The Very Beginning Of That Church!
 - And In 18:11 We Read - “And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them!”
 - So - For A Year & A Half - Paul Stayed In Corinth:
 - Preaching The Gospel:
 - And Planting A Church!
 - And This Was The Second Longest Period Of Time He Stayed In Any One Place Among His Newly Formed Churches!
 - The Corinthian Church:
 - Was A Very Special Church To Paul!
2. But It Was Sometime:
 - During Those 18 Months That:
 - Paul Experienced:

1. *A Fresh Challenge!*

- To The Ministry Of The Gospel In That City!
 - And It Is That Fresh Challenge That We Come To This Morning:
 - In 18:12-13 - “And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat, / Saying, This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law!”
 - Now - Imagine What Must Have Been Going Through:
 - The Mind & Heart Of Paul At This Time!
 - Paul Had Already Experienced Weakness & Fear & Trembling When He Arrived In Corinth!
 - And So Late One Night - In 18:9-10 - The Lord Himself Came To Paul To Encourage Him:
 - And Said - “Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: / For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city!”
 - But That Was Then!
 - What Was Happening Now?
 - ***A Fresh Challenge!***
 - Not Just To The Ministry:
 - But To Paul’s Faith!
 - This Was A Fresh “Trial Of Faith!”
 - Just Look At What Happened!
- He Was Antagonized By The Jews!
 - The “Jews” Kept Up Their Assault On Paul:
 - The Whole Time He Was In Corinth!
 - Even When He Left The Synagogue & Started Preaching & Teaching In The Home Of Justus - The Jews Remained Jealous & Zealous Against Him!
 - But It Didn’t Take Long For The Jews To Take Matters Into Their Own Hands!
 - Because Then:
- He Was Apprehended By The Jews!
 - “When Gallio Was The Deputy Of Achaia, The Jews Made Insurrection With One Accord Against Paul, And Brought Him To The Judgment Seat!”
 - The Anger Of The Jews Toward Paul:
 - Reached The Boiling Point:
 - And They Found Paul & Physically Forced Him To The Middle Of The City Of Corinth - Right In Front Of What Was Known As The “Bema!”
 - The “Bema” Was A Large Raised Platform:

- Made Of Stone - Where The Roman Official Would Serve As Judge:
 - For Both Private & Public Matters!
- And So - The Jews Were Trying To Get:
 - Gallio - The Roman Official - On Their Side:
 - Against Paul & Against The Christians!
 - And Then:
- He Was Accused By The Jews!
 - 18:13 - "Saying, This Fellow Persuadeth Men To Worship God Contrary To The Law!"
 - Paul Was Accused Of Being A Law-Breaker!
 - Not Just The Jewish Law - But Even The Roman Law!
 - The Jews Claimed That:
 - He Was Disturbing The Peace:
 - And Posed A Grave Threat To The Political & Religious Order There In Corinth!
- And After All This:
 - There Paul Stood - In The Middle Of An Angry Mob:
 - Right In Front Of The Judgment Seat:
 - Face To Face With A Roman Judge:
 - Perhaps Feeling All Over Again:
 - Very Much Alone!
 - What Was Going Through His Mind?
 - Was He Wondering About:
 - The Promises God Had Made To Him:
 - Earlier?
 - Of His Presence!
 - Of His Protection!
 - Of His People?
 - Where Were Those Promises Now?
 - Where Was The Lord Now?
 - Would God Be Faithful To Paul Now:
 - When He Needed Him The Most?
 - Have These Kinds Of Questions & Doubts Ever Come To Mind:
 - When You Faced A Fresh Challenge In Your Own Life?
 - Or A New Trial Of Your Own Faith?
 - You Need To Be Ready:
 - For These Fresh Challenges To Come Your Way!
 - 1 Peter 4:12 - "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you!"
 - Fresh Challenges & Fiery Trials:
 - Are Nothing New In The Christian Experience!
 - Not For Paul! Not For You!

So - Like Paul:

- When You Start To Wonder About God's Faithfulness:

* Then - You Need To Remember:

2. ***The Fresh Confirmations!***

- Of The Faithfulness Of God:
 - Which We Read About In 18:14-17 - "And when Paul was now about to open his mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you: / But if it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look ye to it; for I will be no judge of such matters. / And he drave them from the judgment seat. / Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment seat. And Gallio cared for none of those things!"
 - Whenever You Face Those Fresh Trials & Temptations:
 - You Need To Remember That It Is ***In*** Those Times That God Reveals & Confirms His Faithfulness To You In Fresh Ways!
 - Even As He Did For Jeremiah - Lamentations 3:21-23 - "This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope. / It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. / They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness!"

- And So - The Lord Confirmed His Faithfulness To Paul:
 - Right There In The Middle Of Corinth!
- It Was A Fresh Confirmation:
- Of The Providence Of God!
 - Because - 18:14 - “And When Paul Was Now About To Open His Mouth, Gallio Said Unto The Jews!”
 - Just As You & I Would Do - Paul Was Likely Thinking & Praying & Preparing:
 - For What To Say - And **Just** As He Was:
 - About To Open His Mouth & Make His Defense:
 - Gallio Spoke Up First!
 - And - No Doubt - **This Was Of God!**
 - God Stepped In & Stopped Paul From Speaking:
 - By Directing Gallio To Speak Up Instead!
 - Now - I Wonder:
 - How Many Times Has God Done This For Us?
 - How Many Times Has The Lord Prevented Us From Speaking Or Writing Or Responding
 - In Order To Spur On His Own Plan?
 - God Had A Special Plan In Place Already!
 - And Even Though Paul Was Ready To Speak:
 - He Didn’t Even Have To Open His Mouth!
 - Because God Was Able To Work Out His Will Even Without Paul’s Words!
 - Ultimately - God Was & Is Sovereign & In Complete Control!
 - Need To Remember This!
 - God Confirms His Faithfulness:
 - Through His Providence!
 - And Sometimes Our Own Silence May Be God’s Golden Means To Further His Work!
 - May God Give Us Wisdom To Know When To Speak & When To Be Silent!
 - But We Also See A Fresh Confirmation:
 - Of The Promises Of God!
 - As Paul Was Forced Before The Judgment Seat:
 - He May Have Wondered About Those Promises:
 - The Lord Gave Him That Night!
 - But Now, All He Had To Do Was “Stand Still” & “See The Salvation Of The Lord!” Because:
 - The Lord’s Promise Of His People:
 - Was Confirmed!
 - Remember - Jesus Told Paul - You Are Not Alone - “I Have Much People In This City!” (18:10)
 - And Now - Even In Their Own Accusation:
 - The Jews Said - “This Fellow Persuadeth Men!” (18:13)
 - Many People - Both Jews & Greeks - Were Hearing The Gospel For The First Time:
 - And Were Responding By Faith In Jesus Christ!
 - The Lord Was Faithful To His Promise!
 - Also:
 - The Lord’s Promise Of His Protection:
 - Was Confirmed!
 - Remember - Jesus Also Told Paul - “No Man Shall Set On Thee To Hurt Thee!” (18:10)
 - But Hadn’t The Jews Already:
 - “Set On” Him?
 - And Assaulted & Apprehended Him?
 - Yes - But Not Yet “To Hurt Him!”
 - And So - As Gallio Spoke - Paul Waited:
 - To See If The Lord Would Be Faithful To His Promise:
 - To Protect Him!
 - And He Was!
 - 18:15-16 - “But if it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look ye to it; for I will be

- no judge of such matters. / And he drave them from the judgment seat!”
- And Paul Was Free!
- Providing Yet Another Fresh Confirmation Of:
- The Lord’s Promise Of His Presence!
- “I Am With Thee!” (18:10)
- And - “I Will Never Leave Thee Nor Forsake Thee!” (Hebrews 13:5)
- **Remember The Faithfulness Of God!**
- When Danger Looms Before You!
- When Doubts Flood Your Mind!
- When Discouragement Overwhelms Your Heart!
- **Remember The Faithfulness Of God!**
- Remember - “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: **but God is faithful**, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it!” (1 Corinthians 10:13)
- So - Be Ready For Fresh Challenges:
- To Your Faith!
- But Then - Remember The Fresh Confirmation:
- Of God’s Great Faithfulness!
- “For He Is Faithful That Promised!” (Hebrews 10:23)
- And Then:

* You Can Respond With A:

3. Fresh Commitment!

- To Your Faithful & Gracious God!
- This Is What We Find Taking Place:
- In 18:18-19 - “And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow. / And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews!”
- Now - I Don’t Know About You - But I’m Not Sure I Would Have Wanted To “Tarry There” In Corinth!
- But Paul Did! For Around 18 Months!
- When The Lord Graciously Confirmed:
- His Faithfulness To Paul:
- Paul Gratefully Renewed His Commitment To The Lord!
- It Was A Fresh Commitment:
- To The Work Of The Lord!
- “And Paul After This Tarried There Yet A Good While!”
- He Could Do So - “Not Doubting Of The Promises Of God, And Of His Power And Faithfulness To Fulfill It!” (Gill)
- And What Did Paul Do As He “Tarried There?”
- He Kept On - 18:11 - “Teaching The Word Of God Among Them!”
- Paul Spent Enough Time There In Order To Establish Those New Christians In The Faith!
- And Only Then He - “Took His Leave Of His Brethren!”
- But We Also See Paul Renewing His Commitment:
- To His Walk With The Lord!
- 18:18b - “And sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow!”
- So - Just Before Paul & Priscilla & Aquila:
- Sailed Off From Greece - They Went To The Port City Of Cenchrea - Just 9 Miles East Of Corinth!
- But While There - Paul Shaved The Hair From His Head - “For He Had A Vow!”
- Now - For A Jew - A Vow To The Lord Was A Very Serious & Solemn Thing!
- “It Was Common For The Jews To Make Such Vows To God, As An Expression Of Gratitude, Or Of Devotedness To His Service!” (Albert Barnes)
- So - This Could Have Been A Nazarite Vow Or Another Kind Of Vow By Paul:
- But It Seems To Have Been Done As A Special Response To The Lord!
- And What Had The Lord Done For Paul?

- He Had Promised His Presence!
- He Had Promised His Protection!
- He Had Promised A People!
- And The Lord Was Faithful To All Of His Promises!
 - Paul Must Have Been So Overwhelmed With Gratitude For God's Grace To Him:
 - That He Wanted To Commit Himself To The Lord In A Special Way - In The Only Way He Knew How - With A Vow!
- And So Paul Devoted Himself:
 - To The Lord - Who Had Delivered Him:
 - From All His Fears!
 - He Could Say From His Heart:
 - The Words Of David - Psalm 34:3-4 - "O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together. / I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears!"
- And Then - We See Paul Renewing His Commitment:
 - To The Word Of The Lord!
 - 18:19 - "And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews!"
 - And He Had So Much To Tell Them!
 - About The Word Of God As Well As The Faithfulness Of God:
 - To Him! And To Them!
 - Has The Lord Graciously Confirmed:
 - His Faithfulness To You?
 - Through His Word? Through His Promises?
 - Then - Like Paul - You Should:
 - Gratefully Renew Your Commitment To:
 - The Lord!

Conclusion:

1. Won't You Make A Fresh Commitment:
 - To The Lord Today?
 - To The Work Of The Lord?
 - To The Word Of The Lord?
 - And Especially To Your Own Walk With The Lord?
 - Just Think About Him:
 - And His Amazing Grace:
 - And Faithfulness To You!
2. It Doesn't Take A Vow:
 - Like The One Paul Made To The Lord In The Book Of Acts!
 - But It Does Take This:
 - Romans 12:1 - "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service!"
 - What Better Way Is There:
 - For You To Thank The Lord:
 - For All He Has Done For You Than To Commit Yourself To Seek Him & To Serve Him:
 - Every Single Day In A Fresh New Way!
 - How Will You Respond:
 - To The Faithfulness Of God:
 - In Your Life Today?

Grace Baptist Church
Stephen Elmer, Pastor
 4245 North 200 West
 Greenfield, Indiana 46140
 317-326-2362
www.sermonaudio.com/wordofgrace
www.growatgrace.org
pastor-elmer@hotmail.com