

“The Power To Persevere!”
2 Corinthians 1:1; Acts 18:6-11

Introduction:

1. Please Head Back With Me In Your Bibles:
 - To The Book Of Acts:
 - Chapter 18 - Where We Are Joining The Apostle Paul:
 - On His 2nd Missionary Journey!
 - And In This Chapter:
 - We Find The Birth Of A Church!
 - The Church Of Jesus Christ In The City Of Corinth!
 - And So - To Begin Our Series In 2 Corinthians - We Are Starting Right Here Where It All Begins!
2. Now - Last Sunday:
 - We Looked At The Kind Of Place:
 - Corinth Was!
 - The City Was Very Comfortable, Yet Very Corrupt:
 - And It Posed New Challenges For Paul’s Ministry Of The Gospel!
 - And Yet - This Is The Place:
 - God Wanted Paul To Go:
 - Even Though Those Challenges Caused Him Great Personal Sorrow & Suffering!
 - Remember How Paul Felt When He First Arrived In Corinth?
 - 1 Corinthians 2:3 - “And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling!”
 - And Yet - When We Come To Acts 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 & Served In Corinth:
 - Which Is The Second Longest Period Of Time Paul Stayed In Any One Place Among These Newly Formed Churches!
3. Now - What Could Have Caused Paul:
 - To Remain In Such A Place:
 - And Persevere In His Service For The Lord?
 - This Will Be Our Focus This Morning:
 - The Cause & The Power Of Paul’s Perseverance!
 - Which We Read About - Beginning In:
 - Acts 18:6-11 - “And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles. / And he departed thence, and entered into a certain man’s house, named Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue. / And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized. / Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, 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. / And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them!”
4. Have You Ever Felt Like Paul:
 - In Your Christian Life & Walk?
 - Living “In Weakness, And In Fear, And In Much Trembling?”
 - Especially When You Feel Like You Are Trying To Live For & Please The Lord:
 - The Best You Know How?
 - This Can Apply To:
 - Any & Every Area Of Your Christian Life!
 - Like Your Christian Testimony:
 - Where You Work!
 - When You Feel So Weak In Your Witness!
 - Like Your Christian Parenting:
 - In Your Family!
 - When You Feel So Helpless, Even As You Try To “Bring Them Up In The Nurture & Admonition Of The Lord!” (Ephesians 6:4)
 - Like Your Christian Service:
 - In The Church!

- When You Feel Like There Are So Few Results For The Effort & The Service That You Do!

- These Feelings Are Very Common:

- To Christians! And The Lord Knows How We Feel!

- This Is Why He Tells Us Through Paul:

- In A Couple Of Places - "Be Not Weary In Well Doing!" (2 Thessalonians 3:13; Galatians 6:9)

- In Other Words - **Persevere!**

- Even Though The Work Of The Lord:

- May Cause You To Grow Weary!

- Even Though The World:

- May Cause You To Grow Weary - And Feel Weak & Afraid!

- God Offers His Own:

- Comfort & Encouragement To You:

- So That You Will **Persevere** - As You Live For & Serve The Lord:

- In Your Daily Life & Walk!

5. So - How Can You Persevere?

- How Can You "Be Not Weary In Well Doing?"

- Find 3 Ways In These Verses! First:

1. **Keep Your Conscience Clear!**

- For The Christian - God Uses Your Biblically-Informed Conscience:

- To Keep You On The Right Track:

- And To Help You To Persevere!

- When Paul Arrived In Corinth - "As His Manner Was" - He First Went To The Jewish Synagogue To Preach The Gospel!

- And Even Though There Was Some Interest:

- Among The Jews & The Gentiles There:

- For The Most Part - The Jews Rejected Paul & His Message! See This In:

- 18:6 - "And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed!"

- It Appears From These Words:

- That Paul's "Reasoning" With Them About Jesus Was Both Clear & Convincing!

- But The Jews Refused To Be Convinced & Believe!

- And No Matter How Powerful Paul's Message Was - They Purposefully & Wilfully Rejected The Gospel Message - Like An Army Getting Ready To Fight!

- To The Jews - The Message Of The Gospel Was "Fighting Words!"

- Now - This Response Must Have Been Very Discouraging To Paul!

- After All - The Jews Were His People!

- And In Romans 10:1 - He Stated - "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved!"

- And So - Paul's Heart Was Breaking For His People:

- Even As We See & Hear Paul In The Rest Of 18:6 - "He shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean!"

- He's Not Saying This With Any Pleasure, But With Great Pain!

- But He Knew That He Had Been:

- Faithful In His Witness For The Lord!

- And His Conscience Was Clear!

- And So - Following The Instructions Of Christ - He Vividly Expressed God's Rejection Of Them:

- By Shaking The Dust Of His Robe!

- **IE:** Which They Would Have Understood Quite Clearly! Never Wanting To Take Gentile Dust Into Their Holy Land Of Israel!

- And Now - It Was Time To Move On!

- Because Paul Knew That:

- In Order To Keep His Conscience Clear:

- He Had To Also Be:

- Faithful To The Will Of The Lord!

- And So - 18:6 - He States - "From henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles!"

- This Means - That For The Remainder Of His Time In The City Of Corinth:

- The Primary Focus Of His Ministry Would Be The Gentile Population!
 - But - If The Jews Would Not Respond To The Gospel, Would The Gentiles?
- At This Point - Paul Did Not Know!
 - He Would Have Been Uncertain!
 - He Was Still Full Of Weakness & Fear & Trembling!
- But Paul Wanted To Be Faithful:
 - To The Lord & To His Calling:
 - No Matter What!
 - He Wanted To Keep His Conscience Clear!
 - And This Desire Helped Paul Persevere & To “Not Be Weary In Well Doing!”
 - Is This Your Desire Today?
 - Can You Say With Paul From Acts 24:16 - “And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men!”
 - No Matter What Responsibility Or Task The Lord Has Given You:
 - Strive - “Exercise Yourself” - To Keep Your Conscience Clear!
 - Seek To Be Faithful:
 - In Your Own Witness For The Lord:
 - And In The Will Of The Lord For Your Life!
 - And God Himself Will Use This Desire To Help You Persevere!
- “Be Not Weary In Well Doing!”
 - And Keep Your Conscience Clear!

2. ***Keep Your Circumstances In Perspective!***

- See This In 18:7-8 - Because When Paul Left The Synagogue:
 - “He departed thence, and entered into a certain man’s house, named Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue. / And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized!”
 - How Many Times Is Your Energy & Your Emotion Driven By Your Circumstances?
 - **IE:** Just Think About Your Mood Swings When It Comes To The Weather! And - No Matter How Nice - Always Find A Reason To Complain!
 - How Many Times Do The Circumstances Of Your Life:
 - Get In The Way Of Your Honest Desire To Live For & Serve The Lord?
 - What Are These Circumstances?
 - Sometimes:
 - There Is Opposition!
 - Like What We Just Read In The Synagogue:
 - In 18:6 - When The Jews Rejected Paul’s Message!
 - But They Also Rejected Paul As Messenger!
 - How Discouraging This Kind Of Treatment:
 - And Opposition Can Be!
 - And Yet - Whenever We Strive To Live For The Lord In Our Lives:
 - We Can Expect There To Be Opposition!
 - And That Can Quickly & Easily Get Us Down:
 - And Discouraged!
 - But Remember - Even When There Seems To Be Great Opposition - Still:
 - There Is Opportunity!
 - As Soon As Paul Left The Synagogue:
 - He Didn’t Have Far To Go!
 - A Gentile Man Named Justus Opened Up His Home:
 - So That Paul Would Continue To Have A Place For The Newly-Formed Church To Meet!
 - And It Just So Happened:
 - That Justus’ House Was Right Next Door:
 - To The Synagogue!
 - It “Joined Hard!” It Likely Shared A Wall! Perhaps Some Of The Sounds Of Paul’s Preaching Could Still Have Penetrated Those Bricks!
 - Now - From Our Perspective:
 - This Is Funny! What Better Way To Annoy The Jews:

- Than To Be Right Next Door!
 - **IE:** Like Driving Slow On Purpose When Someone Is Tail-Gating You & In A Hurry!
- But - Paul Still Had A Heart For His People!
 - He Didn't Agree to Move In Next Door:
 - Just To Annoy The Jews:
 - But Out Of Love For The Jews!
- And Now - For Both Jews & Gentiles:
 - God Provided A Place For Them All:
 - To "Receive The Engrafted Word, Which Was Able To Save Their Souls!"
 - And This Would Have Given Paul A Great Boost!
 - He Would Have Been Greatly Encouraged!
- There Are Times:
 - When Things Seem To Be Going Our Way!
 - Even In Our Christian Lives!
 - Feel Close To God / Bible Reading / Prayer / Learning / Growing / Witnessing!
 - And These Times Can Be Very Encouraging!
 - But - No Matter What The Circumstance:
 - Need To Remember:
- There Is One Objective!
 - To Continue The Great Mission God Has Given Us!
 - 18:8 - We Find Many In Corinth - Both Jews & Gentiles - Being Saved!
 - Like Crispus - Who Was The "Chief Ruler Of The Synagogue!" - Along With His Family!
 - And Like Many Other "Of The Corinthians!"
 - Who - We Are Told - "Hearing Believed, And Were Baptized!"
 - This Is The Proper Order For Someone When They Are Saved!
 - First - They Need To Hear!
 - Because - Romans 10:17 - "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God!"
 - And This Is Our Responsibility - No Matter What Our Circumstances Are - No Matter The Opposition - No Matter The Opportunity! "Be Instant In Season Out Of Season!" / "Be Ready Always To Give An Answer!"
 - Then - Second - They Need To Believe!
 - Romans 10:9-10 - "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. / For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation!"
 - This Is The Good News!
 - And Then - Third - They Can Be Baptized!
 - As An Expression Of Their Faith In Christ!
 - And This Is How The Church Of Corinth Was Born!
- So - Keep Your Circumstances In Perspective!
 - Someone Once Said:
 - "The Door Of Opportunity Swings On The Hinges Of Opposition!"
 - And No Matter What We Face - God Can & Does "Work All Things Together For The Good" Of His Own Plan & His Own People - "To Them That Love God, To Them Who Are Called According To His Purpose!" (Romans 8:28)
 - Remember This - The Next Time You Feel Like Giving Up:
 - In Your Relationships / In Your Service / In Your Witness For The Lord!
- "Be Not Weary In Well Doing!"
 - And Keep Your Circumstances In Perspective!

3. ***Keep Your Confidence In The Lord!***

- Even As The Church Started Growing In House Of Justice:
 - One Night - Paul Was Restless - And Was Trying To Get Some Sleep!
 - Even Though There Was Some Visible Success:
 - It Is Clear That There Was Something Still Troubling Paul!

- Were There Other:
 - Doubts & Discouragements Plaguing Paul's Heart & Mind?
 - We're Not Sure What Paul Was Thinking Or Feeling Or Praying That Night:
 - But We Do Read:
- 18:9-10 - "Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, 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!"
 - Now - If Paul Was Encouraged & Inspired:
 - When Silas & Timothy Finally Came To See Him In Corinth:
 - **How Much More** Encouragement & Inspiration Would Have Filled His Heart:
 - When **Jesus Himself** Visited Him In This Vision!
 - And The Lord Had Some Special Words:
 - Of Encouragement For Paul!
 - Just When He Needed Them The Most!
 - And Doesn't The Lord Do This For Us As Well?
 - He Did This For:
 - The Prophet Elijah:
 - When He Felt Like He Was All Alone In The Service OF The Lord - And Was Discouraged!
 - He Did This For:
 - Joshua:
 - When He Was Overwhelmed With The New Responsibilities He Had To Lead The Children Of Israel!
 - And He Continues To Do This For Us:
 - Through His Word!
 - And We Can Take Comfort In & Be Confident In:
- The Presence Of The Lord!
 - The Lord Knew That Paul Was Afraid:
 - And So - He Says - 18:10 - "I Am With Thee!"
 - Now - I Don't Think This Was Anything New To Paul - But It Was A Fresh Comfort & Encouragement From The Lord!
 - And This Truth Belongs To All Believers!
 - Joshua 1:9 - "Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest!"
 - Isaiah 41:10 - "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness!"
 - Psalm 23:4 - "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me!"
 - Matthew 28:20 - "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world!"
 - No Matter What You Face As A Christian:
 - You Can Persevere Because The Lord Himself Is With You!
 - And Will Never Leave You!
 - Also - Confidence In:
 - The Protection Of The Lord!
 - At Times - Paul Was In Physical Danger:
 - And No Different Here In Corinth - But The Lord Was Not Through With Paul!
 - And So - He Says - "And no man shall set on thee to hurt thee!"
 - Now - We May Not Be Promised Temporal Protection:
 - But We Do Have Eternal Protection!
 - And So - Nothing Should Prevent Us From Serving & Speaking For The Lord!
 - Isaiah 54:17 - "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper!"
 - Romans 8:31 - "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?"
 - No Matter What You Face As A Christian:
 - "We Are Immortal Until Our Work On Earth Is Done!" (George Whitefield)
 - Alive? God Is Not Through With You Yet! Also - Confidence In:
 - The Promise Of The Lord!
 - God Had A Reason For Paul To Be There In Corinth!
 - 18:10 - "For I have much people in this city!"
 - The Lord Knew This & Could Say This - Because In That Profligate City - He Had Personally &

- Graciously Chosen Some To Become A Part Of His Family!
- Matthew Henry - "Yet In That Heap, That Seems To Be All Chaff, There Is Wheat! Yet In That Ore, That Seems To Be All Dross, There Is Gold!"
 - And So Paul Was Given The Encouragement:
 - That There Were "Fish In That Sea!"
 - And This Prospect & Hope Would Help Motivate & Encourage Him To Keep Fishing – For Men! For Souls!
 - And This Promise:
 - Of God's Own Electing Grace:
 - Is A Comfort & And An Encouragement:
 - To Us - As We Seek To Live & Serve & Witness For The Lord Right Where We Are!
 - In Our Church! In Our Community! In Our Families!
 - We May Not Know Them Yet!
 - Even They Themselves May Not Know It Yet!
 - But - 2 Timothy 2:19 - "The Lord knoweth them that are his!"
 - "Paul Knew Them Not, But Jesus Did!" (Hawker)
 - So - The Main Reason For You & For Me:
 - To - "Be Not Weary In Well Doing" Is Because:
 - We Can Have Confidence In The Lord!
 - His Presence!
 - His Protection!
 - His Promise!
 - And Even / Especially His Possession!
 - Of You! You See - Paul Was Also In That City:
 - And He Could Rest Assured That "By Grace Through Faith" He Belonged To The Lord!

Conclusion:

1. And So - With These Fresh Encouragements:
 - 18:11 - "And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them!"
 - His Heart Was Encouraged:
 - And So He Stayed In Corinth:
 - For 18 Months!
 - His Hands Were Encouraged:
 - And So He Worked In Corinth:
 - "Teaching The Word Of God Among Them!"
 - He Kept On Sowing The Good Seed!
 - He Persevered!
 - He Was Not Weary In Well Doing!
2. It Is Easy For Us To Get Down & Discouraged:
 - In Our Lives & Walk With The Lord!
 - But Remember These Things:
 - The Next Time You Are!
 - Keep Your Conscience Clear!
 - Keep Your Circumstances In Perspective!
 - And Keep Your Confidence In The Lord!
 - Because The Lord Himself Is The Power Of Your Perseverance!

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