

Date: 15th April 2007

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Readings: Acts Ch 18 v 9-10
1 Cor Ch 15 v 1-4
2 Cor Ch 5 v 14-21

Acts 18:9,10

This reading relates to Paul's missionary journey's. In his second journey we learn about the guidance of the Lord in the spreading of the Gospel. Paul entered Asia (present day Turkey), Syria then to Lystra where he was joined by Timothy before moving to Galatia.

They wanted to go south but the Holy Spirit prevented them. They proceeded to Troas where Paul saw a vision. The purpose of the vision was to show him that he should be travelling to Macedonia to preach. Then they crossed over to Greece into mainland Europe.

In Philippi the people there responded to the Gospel and a church was established. Another church was also established in Thessalonica before Paul travelled on alone to Athens and Corinth where he resided with a Jewish couple called Priscilla and Aquila who were expelled from Rome because of their faith.

Paul preached the gospel from their house. He was then joined again by Timothy. The Jews rejected the gospel that Paul preached in the synagogue so he began to preach to the Gentiles.

When Paul was converted he received a vision from God telling him how he had been chosen. God tells him not to be afraid but rather to speak because God would be with him. "Don't be afraid but speak. I will be with thee". This is an expression of love and care.

"And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring". (John 10:16). In John 17:20, the Lord said that he was praying "for those who will believe through the word" He loved those for whom He died and people can be called to him through the Gospel message.

Paul preached a message that had power in it, a message he received from God. He was determined to know only Christ and Him crucified. He was faithful in his preaching. He preached the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ.

He could say, "the gospel of Christ..is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom 1:16)

1 Corinthians 15:1-4

Corinth was a city of vice, apathy, religiosity and the answer was the power of the preaching of the Gospel. Paul preached again and many were saved.

In this letter Paul is writing to the church at Corinth to those who received the Gospel. To receive is to believe it utterly and completely. Believe with all your heart. Source of the Gospel is God himself - A message of peace, forgiveness and good news.

Are you saved?

Paul reminded the people that their salvation followed their receiving the Gospel message. Gospel is the power and wisdom of God. He states that the foundation of the Gospel is “Christ died for our sins” (v.3). Peter writes that Christ “Bore our sins in his own body on the tree” (1 Pet 2:24). Isaiah prophesied, that He would “bruised for our iniquities” (Isa 53:5) and that He “shall see of the travail of soul and shall be satisfied” (Isa 53:11). This is thought provoking.

Paul's summary of the Gospel is “Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures”. The death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is the centre of the Gospel.

2 Corinthians 5:14-21

Paul was a minister of reconciliation. We see love shining in the cross work of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the message of love. Paul tells that it was the love of the crucified Christ that constrained him.

Jesus died the death that every believer deserved. - “The soul that sinneth it shall die” (Ezek 18:20)

As a lawbreaker the sinner is condemned but Jesus bore the curse of the broken law for us. “All things are of God”: it does not depend on you or me. God has reconciled us to himself because of Christ.

But being made alive in the Christ brings new life; old things pass away. Memories of their sins and attitude to Gospel and way of life but these things are all gone. God reconciled guilty sinners, enemies of God to himself by Jesus Christ the crucified one. The judgment of their sins was transferred to Jesus. “God made Him to be sin”: the sinless one who knew no sin and could not sin, who challenged men “which of you convicteth me of sin?” (John 8:46).

John reminds us that “If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves” (1 John 1:8). Peter reminds us that we were “redeemed by the blood of Christ” (1 Pet 1:19)

The Lord Jesus Christ was in harmony with God and He knew the cost of atonement. It was so that we might be made the righteousness in Him. “The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin.” (1 John 1:9)

The Corinthians believed they were sinners and that the Lord Jesus Christ gave Himself for them. That He was sacrificed so that they might be saved. Have you had that experience?

Are you saved? Do you believe what God says? God does the saving

He, by His power, brings a repentant person into His family and a new life is seen in the believer.

Come to God recognising your guilt and He does the saving. A divine life is imported, a life that will never be lost.

The promise to Paul was “I have much people in this city”. Do not be silent.