**Unstoppable - wk 30 – The Lord’s Plan**

**Acts is Jesus: The Sequel. Luke Vol 2 – The “what now?”**

**Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”**

**20yrs since Jesus - rose from the Dead. Paul & the A team (Luke, Timothy, Silas) led to Europe by the HS.**

**Driven out of Philippi, Thess, Berea - Paul sales to Athens preaches to anyone who will listen while he waits for his friends.**

**(Map) Acts 18:1 After this Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. (2 day walk)**

**From Athens – The city of idols & philosophy – to**

**CORINTH – The city of sex & indulgence – Think Las Vegas on a beach.**

**Corinth, original sin city. “What happens in Corinth stays in…”**

**Cosmopolitan 2 seaport city. People come party and leave. Big tourist destination.**

**Temple pic - In Corinth they literally worshiped the god of sex – it was the town mascot – the goddess of sex (Aphrodite - Venus)**

**Primary temple at one time had 1000 prostitutes. Having sex w/ them, the goddess would give fertile land, homes, livestock.**

**“Corinthizing” = living wild / Corinthian girl = harlot. To act like a “Corinthian” = meant to live a sexually active life. Ancient plays – depicted them as immoral or the drunks.**

**The city had a reputation unlike any city in the Empire.**

**2 And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. (Chased out by discrimination) And he went to see them, (Why?) 3 and because he was of the same trade he stayed with them and worked, for they were tentmakers by trade. (Leather workers – Stinky smelly – low class job.)**

**He got a job doing what he knows. Modern mission’s call any work a missionary does to support himself on the mission field as tentmaking.**

**Aquila & Priscilla (maybe) not followers of JC yet, but they did became. They welcomed Paul into their home. Their hospitality played a major part in the Corinthian church.**

**Never underestimate the power of Hospitality**

**4 And he reasoned (taught / dialoged) in the synagogue every Sabbath and tried to persuade Jews and Greeks. (As was Jesus’ custom)**

**“Every sabbath” - This serves to show the passing of time.**

**Paul described preaching in Corinth: I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified (1 Co 2:2)**

**5 When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul was occupied with the word, testifying to the Jews that the Christ was Jesus.**

**Other transl. explain at this point he devoted himself to preaching the Word – because support from Philippi arrived – (2 Cor 11:8-9). Before it was Sabbath primarily and now it’s every day. He went part time to full time ministry.**

**Silas and Timothy also came back w/ good news about the health of the Thess. church. Paul writes to them (twice) there.**

**Acts 18:6 And when they opposed and reviled him, (Jewish people who refused the Gospel) he shook out his garments and said to them, “Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.” (I tried to tell you – it’s on your hands now) 7 And he left there and went to the house of a man named Titius Justus, a worshiper of God. His house was next door to the synagogue. (Gentile follower, who lived across from the Jewish teaching hall. He starts a house church / Bible study next door and eventually…)**

**8 Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord, together with his entire household. (Though many said no - the main leader became a follower of Jesus) And many of the Corinthians hearing Paul believed and were baptized. (This was one of the few families Paul personally baptized)**

**Again, we see rejectors, reluctant’s, & acceptors of the Gospel.**

**BTW - Baptism is not salvation but a follow thru of Salvation.**

**It is not optional. It tells thew world. Have you been baptized?**

**Paul personally encouraged by the Lord.**

**Acts 18:9 And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, “Do not be afraid,**

**God was addressing a real issue w/ Paul. Chased out of almost every city – seeing anger from the Jewish people in town – perhaps he hit a wall. Thinking it is time maybe time to quit.**

**9 And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, “Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent, (don’t quit, don’t stop) 10 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.” 11 And he stayed a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.**

**He was driven from a lot of cities and there was resistance among the Jews there – but God later told him – “do not be afraid.” I have purpose for you here. Stay until I say go.**

**v10 “I have many in this City who are mine.” God knows them already, those who will be saved. They are called his people. The elect.**

**Speaks of God’s foreknowledge of the work there and the future.**

**We now know the reason was the harvest of souls that would result. Including several letters that became Bible. (6 letters)**

**Does God still do visions like that? He could - but most likely not. Ask yourself, are you a designated apostle of Jesus? We have the Bible and the HS. Be very cautious of anyone who says Jesus showed up.**

**1.5 yrs - this was a time of evangelism, church planting, and also a time of rest and recuperation. (Corinth beach picks).**

**During his time there he was attacked… that visit from the Lord prepared him – Acts 18:12 But when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews made a united attack on Paul and brought him before the tribunal, 13 saying, “This man is persuading people to worship God contrary to the law.”**

**(Paul clears is throat) 14 But when Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, “If it were a matter of wrongdoing or vicious crime, O Jews, I would have reason to accept your complaint. 15 But since it is a matter of questions about words and names and your own law, see to it yourselves. I refuse to be a judge of these things.” (We have laws like that) 16 And he drove them from the tribunal. (Must be a nice guy.) 17 And they (the Greeks) all seized Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, (The one who brought Paul to court) and beat him in front of the tribunal. But Gallio paid no attention to any of this. (Gallio was not a nice guy.)**

**You have wasted the courts time and money – you were driven out of Italy and you want to bring your issues here.**

**(Map) 18 After this, Paul stayed many days longer (1.5 yrs total - never forced out) and then took leave of the brothers and set sail for Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila. At Cenchreae he had cut his hair, for he was under a vow.**

**He pastored Corinth a 1 ½ year, followed by Apollos. They had a great foundation but struggled to get it together. He later wrote to them 4 times – we have 2 of the letters.**

**\*\* He shaves his head for a vow? A type of offering to the Lord perhaps gratitude to God for his ministry. 30-day Nazarite vow.**

**Still practiced some Jewish traditions – but never forced it…**

**(Map) 19 And they came to Ephesus, and he left them (P&A) there, but he himself went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. 20 When they asked him to stay for a longer period, he declined. 21 But on taking leave of them he said, “I will return to you if God wills,” and he set sail from Ephesus.**

**He briefly stays – preaches the gospel, instructs P&A to stay back and help – and he heads home.**

**22 When he had landed at Caesarea, he went up and greeted the church, (Jerusalem) and then went down to Antioch.**

**Review the trip (map)**

**Ending his 2nd mission, a 3.5 years journey. Ends abruptly.**

**Paul then has a short break and hits the road again- next week.**

**CORINTH – Lessons from Las Corinth.**

**\*\* Work is a blessing not a curse.**

**Gen 2:15 - The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.**

**Working is part of life and God’s purpose. When we don’t, we can sense something is missing. Paul had a day job for a while. You have to do what have you do, even if you’re overqualified.**

**Once he got support from Philippi, he went back to full time ministry work. (1Co 9:7-14, 2Co 11:7-10; Phi 4:15)**

**\*\* Work relationships can be powerful and important.**

**Divine appointment – God ordained relationships (from work)**

**Priscilla & Aquila – Paul lived and worked together with them and ended up traveling together planting and hosting w/ him.**

**P&A were a powerful ministry couple - mentioned in several of Paul’s letters – 1 Cor, Ro, 1 Tim) Paul later called them his fellow workers who had risked their own necks for my life (Romans 16:3-4).**

**One of the more important NT relationships. It all started while working together.**

**\*\*\* Do not feed your fear.**

**Paul needed some encouragement from God – feeling stressed and concerned about his current situation. The Lord shows up.**

**First words from Jesus to Paul – do not be afraid.**

**Feeding his mind with the past conflict and the current threats. God said – do not be afraid, I have a purpose for this and you.**

**\*\*\* God will surprise you with who he uses**

**v.14-16 - God moved on an unbelieving leader’s heart to let Paul go.**

**Never count out who God might use to accomplish his will & plan**

**It is important to know that there were times when Paul was not let go and when he was beaten and left for dead. Eventually beheaded.**

**That could have been Paul beaten again – if Gallio took the case it would have shut down Paul all over Greece.**

**But right at that moment now, God says, not today, not yet. Providential protection. (Paul thinking - finally a break…)**

**\*\*\* God will surprise you with who he saves**

**Crispus – Jewish people tried to stop him - but Crispus (the leader) and family got saved.**

**Sosthenes – who replaced Crispus, tried to get Paul arrested and ended up getting beaten.**

**Interestingly– became later became Christian (1 Cor 1:1)**

**We are not told how- that is an amazing turn of events. That’s the gospel! Don’t give up on that person.**

**Paul Heads Home**

**Acts 18:21 But on taking leave of them he said, “I will return to you if God wills,” and he set sail from Ephesus. 22 When he had landed at Caesarea, he went up and greeted the church, (Jerusalem) and then went down to Antioch.**

**“If the Lord wills” God always answers - Yes, No, and not now.**

**God’s timing is intentional and knowing his will can seem hard.**

**At the end of the day – we pray – your will be done.**

**Four things about knowing God’s will (looking back on this trip) -**

**1. God's will is - not as clear as we think.**

**What we see clearly here, is that God’s will is not always clear**

**An argument with a friend brought a change in direction - road blocks and shut doors - armed with a message and prayer, they just kept going - they did not set out for Europe, but that's where they ended up**

* **He had no clue he would be beaten and running for his life.**
* **He has no idea the people he met along the way (Like Silas, Timothy, Luke and Lydia, Priscilla and Aquila) would make such an impact for his future - and our future.**
* **Had no sign those cities would be our Bible - that Luke would write the gospels - and 2 letters to Timothy would be Bible.**

**Paul wants to reach a few cities... but God wanted to reach the world!**

**2. God’s will is - not always the easiest path, or the most popular**

**The crowds often turned on Paul - It is and will become more and more unpopular to stand for Jesus and to stand for his Word.**

**He was accepted, rejected, renounced, welcomed, attacked and defended. Good days and bad days – God’s will looks like that.**

**3. …is - more about who we are becoming than what we are doing**

**(More about who we are, than where we are)**

**It is not about a job or where you live... but who you're becoming.**

**Our destiny / purpose is to become more like Jesus.**

**Romans 8:29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.**

**Here is God's G.P.S. - God's Plan Simplified - you ready?**

**Marry who you want - take whatever job you want - live where you want Jesus simply says - as you do this - walk with me, love me with all your heart, obey my commands... that's my will for you. If you do that your choices will reflect me. We make it so difficult...**

**Issue is we want the visions, the voices, the hand in the sky – God says look at the prophets and apostles – look to my word.**

**Which leads to the last thing…**

**4. God's will is - all about obedience in the little things**

**We think God's will always brings a pay off, a blessing, or success**

**Nope - God's will might bring you a dungeon, chains, beatings, and earthquakes.**

**But Paul’s peace and joy was doing God's will.**

**That was the only reason they could sing after all they were in chains, pray when they were beaten, and step forward when there was resistance… they knew God was in control.**

**Years later Paul was able to look back and understand it, but all he had then was God your will be done – I will not be afraid.**

**Acts 18:8 Crispus, the synagogue leader, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard Paul believed and were baptized.**

**They heard the gospel, believed, and were baptized...?**

**How about you?**