

Planting the Corinthian Church Acts 18:1-17

God with Paul in Corinth

Acts 18:1–17

Big Idea: *Faithfulness does not mean the absence of fear; it means continuing to follow Christ in the presence of fear, trusting the God who is with us.*

1. Paul Was Faithful, Pressing Through Fear

Acts 18:1–5; 1 Corinthians 2:3

- *Paul came to Corinth after a difficult season of ministry.*
- *He had experienced rejection, opposition, violence, imprisonment, and persecution.*
- *Paul was not **immune to fear**.*
- *He described himself as being in:*
 - *“weakness”*
 - *“fear”*
 - *“much trembling”*
- *Yet he continued preaching Christ.*
- ***Paul was faithful even when he was afraid.***

2. God Helped Paul in His Fear

Acts 18:9–10 *“Do not be afraid...for I am with you.”*

- *God knew Paul was afraid.*
- *God came to Paul when he needed encouragement.*
- *He didn't tell Paul, “You shouldn't be afraid.”*
- *He told him, “**I am with you.**”*
- *God gave Paul exactly what he needed to continue.*
- ***Paul's strength was not the point—God's faithfulness was.***

3. God's Love Gives Us Courage

1 John 4:18 *“There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear.”*

- *Paul was not serving an indifferent God.*
- *The God who spoke to Paul was the God who loved Paul.*
- *God's love assures us that we are not abandoned or alone.*
- *Fear says, “**You're on your own.**”*
- *God's love says, “**I am with you.**”*
- ***God's faithfulness gives us confidence when fear tells us to quit.***

4. God Helped Paul Keep Going

Acts 18:10–11 *“For I am with you...”*

- *Paul stayed in Corinth.*
- *He continued speaking.*
- *He taught the Word of God for eighteen months.*
- *God didn't simply encourage Paul; **God enabled Paul to continue.***
- *Sometimes God's help looks like giving us strength to take the next step.*
- ***God's faithfulness sustained Paul's faithfulness.***

5. God Was Faithful When Opposition Came

Acts 18:12–17

- *Opposition eventually came again.*
- *Paul was brought before Gallio.*
- *The false charges against him were dismissed.*
- *God had said, “No one will attack you to harm you (in Corinth).”*
- *And God preserved Paul through the situation.*
- ***God did not promise Paul a trouble-free ministry.***
- *He promised, “I am with you.”*

Conclusion: The Faithful God

- Paul's faithfulness comes from God's faithfulness (source).
- Paul pressed through fear because God was near.
- Paul stayed and God sustained him.
- Paul continued speaking as he heard from God who was with him.

You may not be immune to fear. You may become tired. You may become discouraged. You may wonder if you can keep going.

But the question isn't ultimately, “How strong am I?” The question is: “Is God faithful?” And the answer of Acts 18 is yes. “Do not be afraid...for I am with you.”

A Second Possible Outline:

1. God is the hero of Paul's story

Acts 18:1–5; 1 Corinthians 2:3

- Paul arrived in Corinth after significant opposition and suffering.
- Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, and other cities had taken their toll.
- Paul was not immune to the pressures and cruelty of ministry.
- He later described his condition in Corinth:
 - “weakness”
 - “fear”
 - “much trembling”
- Yet Paul continued to work, teach, and preach.
- **Faithful people can often be fearful people.**
- Fear did not stop Paul from doing what God had called him to do.

- **Faithfulness means pressing forward even when fear is present.**

2. God Meets Us in Our Fear

Acts 18:9–10 “Do not be afraid, but go on speaking...”

- God knew exactly what Paul needed to hear.
- He did not promise Paul an absence of trouble.
- He promised Paul **His presence**: “I am with you.”
- Paul's courage was not based on his personality or strength.
- His courage came from knowing **God was with him**.

1 John 4:18 “There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear.”

- God's presence is not merely power beside us; **it is the presence of a God who loves us.**
- Fear tells us, “*You are alone.*”
- God's love tells us, “*I am with you.*”
- **The more deeply we understand God's love, the less control fear has over us.**
- God's love does not necessarily remove every frightening circumstance, but it can remove the fear that we must face those circumstances alone.

3. God's Presence Gives Us Courage to Keep Going

Acts 18:9–11 “Do not be afraid...go on speaking...and do not be silent.”

- God's presence produced action.
- He continued teaching the Word of God.
- He remained there for eighteen months.
- Courage is not always dramatic.
- Sometimes courage simply means **staying and continuing to be faithful.**
- **God's presence turns fear into perseverance.**

4. Opposition Does Not Mean God Has Abandoned Us

Acts 18:12–17

- Opposition eventually came again.
- Paul was brought before Gallio.
- The (false) accusations against him were dismissed.
- God did not prevent opposition, but He preserved Paul through it.
- God's promise was not “**no trouble.**”
- His promise was “**I am with you.**”

5. The Gospel Challenges Us Too

1 Corinthians 1–6; 2 Corinthians

- Paul challenged the culture around him.
- Eventually, he had to challenge the church itself.
- First Corinthian Church struggled with:
 - division
 - pride
 - immaturity
 - sexual sin
 - lawsuits
 - disorderly worship
 - spiritual confusion
- The gospel does not only confront **the world out there**.
- It primarily confronts **the church here**.
- And it confronts **the believer personally**.
- **The gospel refuses to let us become comfortable with sin or spiritual immaturity.**

Conclusion: Keep Pressing Forward

- Paul was not fearless.
- He was faithful.
- He did not keep going because he believed nothing bad would happen.
- He kept going because God was with him.
- And the God who was with Paul was the God who loved Paul.
- “There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear.”

So when fear comes, remember:

- God is with you.
- God loves you.
- Keep listening for God’s voice.
- Keep serving.
- Keep pressing forward.
- Faithfulness is not the absence of fear. Faithfulness is pressing through fear because we know we are loved and we are not alone.