



EXPLORE THE BIBLE®

Acts 13 – 26 Sermon Series

Supports Session 8: Together

Sermon Title: “Look at the Big Picture” (Acts 18:1-11)

Connection to Session 8

When we engage people, we can point them to God’s work in the world.

Introduction/Opening

Have you ever gone through a tough time and just wished that tomorrow would be a better day? Annie had her song of hope when she sang “Tomorrow,” and Jiminy Cricket and Pinocchio “wished upon a star.” And let’s face it: we all face discouragement and disappointment. When the circumstances of life distract us, we miss the big picture. Sure, we will see the trees in front of us, but we fail to see the forest. Or we might see the next turn in the road but miss the destination ahead.

We also forget Who is in control. We’ll waste time and energy worried about the immediate and fail to see the purposes of God. We may even go down these endless rabbit trails filled with drama, stress, and even anxiety.

So how do we break that cycle? We run to God! As we do that, we need to ask God what His big picture is for the world, for the gospel, and, yes, for each one of us. Today we’re going to see what Paul did to see the big picture and join God at work.

Outline

To see the big picture, ask:

1. How can God be glorified? (Acts 18:1-4)

- a. Make each day about worship.
 - i. Paul met Priscilla and Aquila who were also tentmakers by trade. Their conversation was no doubt about Jesus Christ.
 - ii. However, tentmaking was not Paul’s main occupation.
 1. His main occupation was to reach people with the gospel of Jesus Christ.
 2. Paul made tents, formed relationships, went to the synagogues, all so people might know that Jesus is the Messiah. His job was not his identity. His identity was a Christ follower.

- iii. Worship is not optional for believers. It is essential for us as we seek to do what God has called us to do.
 - 1. Today, people take worship less seriously than they have in years past.
 - 2. But I am not talking about weekly worship, such as on a Sunday. Obviously, that's important.
 - 3. I'm talking about daily worship with the Lord. A daily time in the Word. A daily time of prayer. A daily time experiencing God's presence and power.
 - 4. Worship is essential, and we see this throughout scripture. It is a time of encouragement and empowerment by the Holy Spirit.
 - a. Acts 2:42
 - b. Hebrews 3:13
 - c. Hebrews 10:24-25
- b. Make each day about the gospel.
 - i. Paul reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, as well as tried to persuade Gentiles.
 - 1. Also: Acts 9:20; 13:14; 14:1; 18:19.
 - 2. Paul did this regularly to meet people, seeking to find common ground. He then sought to show them how Jesus the Messiah had come.
 - ii. Just as Paul did, we're to make each day about the gospel.
 - 1. Each day is a day of being a missionary for Jesus Christ.
 - 2. Everything you do is to be strategic in reaching someone, anyone, with the gospel.
 - 3. Relationships that you form, tasks that you do, and even places that you frequent have a different purpose—to introduce a soul to the gospel.
 - iii. Make each day about the gospel.

2. How can I follow the Spirit? (Acts 18:5-8)

- a. Listen to God's voice (v. 5).
 - i. Be in the Word of God and in prayer.
 - ii. Being in the Word will allow you to see what God's will is and how you can serve Him and bring Him glory.
 - 1. Romans 12:2
 - 2. Ephesians 2:10
 - iii. This is exactly what we see in this passage. Paul is devoted to the Word, he is following the Spirit, and the Spirit is working through him.
- b. Look at God's workings (vv. 6-8).
 - i. After seeing the Jews resistance to the gospel, Paul, being in tune with the Spirit, literally shook his garments and left them.
 - 1. Many of the hearers rejected the gospel.
 - 2. Paul deeply cared for the people, later writing in Romans 11 that he wished that all the Jews would be saved.

3. Paul was open to the leading of the Spirit. Since God was working in the Gentiles and they were open to the gospel, Paul followed God.
- ii. He then went to preach to the Gentiles. And boy, did God work.
 1. Paul, being sensitive to the Spirit's leading, spent time with a Gentile named Titius Justice, who lived next door to the synagogue.
 2. He believed, then a man named Crispus believed, who was the leader of the synagogue. Then many of the Corinthians around him believed.
 3. Because Paul went to the Gentiles, many Jews were reached. Paul could not have planned for that to happen!
- iii. What can we learn from this? Get in the Word, listen to God, and then follow the Spirit. Allow God to do his work through you.

3. How can I advance Christ's Kingdom? (vv. 9-11)

- a. Do not fear opposition.
 - i. Even though there was pushback from unbelievers in the city, Paul did not fear opposition.
 1. Through a vision in the middle of the night, God told Paul not to be afraid.
 2. He reassured Paul that no one would hurt him.
 - ii. People are going to oppose you when you are doing God's work. Sometimes even people who claim to be godly.
 1. Be encouraged: Proverbs 29:25
 2. If you are doing God's work according to God's will and supported by God's Word, then you will have opposition to what you are doing.
 - a. Satan will push your buttons, evil will try to overtake you, and you'll be frustrated by spiritual warfare, but do not fear.
 - b. There's a reason why "fear not" or a form of it appears so many times in scripture.
 - c. Psalm 23:4
 - iii. Don't fear and keep going.
- b. Do keep going.
 - i. The text tells us that Paul spent eighteen months with this church. Later he was in Ephesus for over three years. He did this despite opposition and a corrupt city that he was ministering in.
 - ii. Stay at it. Disciple making takes time and effort. It's hard work.
 - iii. Keep at it.

Conclusion

God has a job for you and your church in your community. His big picture plan is about the gospel. Don't be discouraged! Find ways to see God at work around you and join Him. Glorify God, follow the Spirit, and advance Christ's Kingdom.

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