

LESSON #98 – THE FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY OF PAUL

Acts 13-14

Why did Jesus want His disciples to begin the CHURCH? What is the church supposed to do? Remember how Jesus told His disciples that they were to be His witnesses to the far corners of the earth. When the Apostles saw that it was God's plan to save people from all nation and not just the Jews, they knew that they must go out into others places with the Good News about Jesus Christ. In this way the kingdom of God would grow and those who believed in Jesus would be saved as God worked in them by His Holy Spirit. The church decided that they should send out some missionaries to other cities to preach about Jesus. But who would they send? As they were meeting God showed them that He wanted them to send Barnabas and Saul. So these two men were sent out by the church to spread the good news about Jesus and the kingdom of God.

So, the two of them started off on their first missionary journey. They had to walk for there were no cars in those days. It took them many days to travel from one place to another. In some place they would stay only a few days, in other places they might stay a few months and in some places even longer. In all of the cities they began churches where those who believed in Jesus would meet, pray, and worship God. We will learn about a few of the places where they went and how God worked with them to build His church.

Now Saul was also called Paul and is usually known by this name. So from now on we will call him Paul. In some of these places the people did not know anything about the one, true God. In one place, called Antioch, Paul began by telling the people all about God. He told them how God had been with the nation of Israel in Egypt and how He had brought them out of slavery there and had given them a wonderful promised land. He told them about the kings of Israel, especially King David and how the promised Savior, Jesus, was a descendant of King David. Paul told them about John the Baptist and then about Jesus Christ. He told them how Jesus had been crucified and had risen again! And this was the wonderful message: that although they were guilty of sinning against God, if they believed in Jesus Christ; if they believed that He died for their sins, then they would be forgiven by God and receive God's gift of eternal life! When the Jews heard this they were angry because they were selfish and thought that only they should be God's people. They thought that they were better than everyone else. But the Gentiles were happy that God had brought this good and wonderful news to them, too. You must always remember that none of us deserve to be God's people for we have all sinned and done evil in God's sight. We should thank Him if He has given us His Spirit so that we can believe on Jesus and be saved from our sin!

God also gave Paul and Barnabas the ability to do miracles and the Jews hated them just as they had hated Jesus and the Apostles. In a town called Lystra the people thought that Paul and Barnabas were gods. But they told them to believe in Jesus; that it was by HIS power that they could do these things. They told the people not to worship them, but God alone who made all things and who watches over all things. At this pace the Jews became so angry that Paul was stoned and almost died as Stephen had. But God was with him and he was saved by some other believers.

On this first journey Paul and Barnabas stated a number of churches and appointed leasers for them and prayed with them. They told the believers to trust in God even though other people might hate them and hurt them because they believed in Jesus. Finally, they returned to the town of Antioch, a different Antioch than above, where they had begun form and they told the church all that God had done in saving many Gentiles.

Memory Verse: "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." – Matthew 28:19.

Application: Jesus was with these men and He is with all those who serve Him!

LESSON #98 – THE THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY OF PAUL

Acts 18:23-20

Think how God is building His kingdom as the church grows, and more and more people receive Jesus Christ as their Savior from sin. Churches are being started in many different places. Paul and the other Apostles are writing what will become the New Testament part of the Bible so that all believers will be able to read the Word of God. Paul writes in the book of Timothy that every part of the Bible is useful and important for us. The more you learn from the Bible, the more you will know God, and the more you will love Him and want to serve Him.

As we saw at the end of the last lesson, Paul stayed at Corinth for a year and a half. While he was there, Paul wrote two letters to the church in Thessalonica. We have both of these letters in our Bible, I and II Thessalonians. They tell the Christians there and us today how to love God and live for Him. They tell some things about what will happen before Jesus comes back again and what will happen when He returns. As you read these things, God promises to use His Word to make your faith stronger.

This is Paul's last missionary journey. The Jews are getting more and more angry at him, and we will see that God has other plans for Paul. All through his life, the Apostle Paul continued to preach about Jesus and to do signs in His name. He never bragged about himself but always made sure that the people knew that he could only do what he was doing because Jesus was with him. This is the mark of a good Christian. You should never brag about what you can do or how smart you may be. These things are gifts from God, and you should thank Him and let other people know that you believe that it is God who deserves the praise and not you!

After Paul left Corinth, he stopped at Ephesus and then he returned to the church at Antioch in Caesarea. He told the church how God was blessing the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ. After staying there for some time, Paul set out again for his third missionary journey. Why was Paul doing all of this? He was doing it for Jesus Christ. He knew that Jesus is more than just a name. Jesus is a person. He is alive at the right hand of God. He came and died for those who believe. He works in us by His Holy Spirit, and those who are really His people will love Him and want to please Him!

During this journey, Paul wrote some more letters which we have in our Bibles. He wrote two letters to the Corinthians and one letter to the church in Rome called Romans. This is a very important book. In fact, as you grow older you, will be learning about the Heidelberg Catechism, which is a summary of what the Bible teaches. It explains this book of Romans. Paul had never been to Rome so he wrote very clearly in this book about the only way of salvation through Jesus Christ. He told them how all men have sinned and deserve to be punished. Then he told them how God had sent His own Son, Jesus Christ, to take the place of God's chosen people. Finally, he explained to them how those who have been made alive again by the power of God's Word and Spirit will live thanking God every day and trying to please Him.

Paul spent quite a bit of time in the city of Ephesus on this journey. Paul preached first to the Jews, but they would not believe so he preached also to the Gentiles. There were many there who worshipped other gods, and they tried to kill Paul because he taught that there was only one true God! Paul left Ephesus, but after visiting some other places, he called the leaders of the church there to see him, and he encouraged them to trust in God and never to stop believing in Jesus because some teachers would come and lie to them and try to make them stop believing. Paul is warning us, too!

Finally, Paul headed for Jerusalem. The Jews were angry at him for preaching to the Gentiles, and Paul knew that it might be dangerous for him, but he knew that Jesus was with him. Paul had a strong and wonderful faith. God wants you to have the same kind of faith. Try to see God working out things every day. Thank Him for all of His gifts –especially for Jesus!

The Third Missionary Journey (Continued)

Name: _____ Date: _____

MEMORY VERSE

“And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing.” –2 Corinthians 4:3

APPLICATION

The Apostle Paul could have become discouraged when there were not more who believed in his message of salvation through Jesus Christ. We may become discouraged sometimes when those we know do not believe or when the church does not grow faster, but each of you must remember that God is working in you and in the preaching of His Word. You must ask yourself: “What does God want me to do for His kingdom?” If you really ask that question, God will show you ways to serve Him by serving others as Paul did.

QUESTIONS

Fill in the blanks with the words at the bottom.

1. As we read about the journeys of the Apostle Paul, we must remember that it was not Paul but _____ who was building the church.
2. While Paul was at Corinth, he wrote _____ letters to the Thessalonians to tell them about things which would happen before Jesus came and when He came again.
3. God promises to use His Word to make His people’s _____ stronger.
4. One of the marks of a good Christian is never to _____ about things you can do or things you know, but to give the thanks and praises to God.
5. During his third missionary journey, Paul spent much of his time in the city of _____.
6. While all of the books or letters of the Apostle Paul are valuable and important for us, the book of _____ is, perhaps, the most important as Paul explains the Gospel of Jesus.
7. The book of Romans explains that even though all men deserve to be punished for their sins by God, yet God will save those who believe in _____ for the forgiveness of their sins.
8. Those who have been saved by God will live for Him not because they have to but because they are _____.
9. Paul _____ the leaders of the church at Ephesus that some people would try to make them stop believing in Jesus.
10. The Apostle Paul headed for _____ even though he knew it might be dangerous because he trusted in God.

Romans
warned
Jerusalem
Jesus Christ

two
brag
Ephesus

thankful
God
faith

LESSON #98 – THE CONVERSION OF THE APOSTLE PAUL

Read Acts 9:1-31

How powerful is God? Can He really make a difference in a person’s life? Yes, God can do anything He chooses to do. Now we do not know everything that God wants to do. So we are called to be faithful in doing the things which we are commanded to do in His Word to us. Then God promises to bring forth the results. You see, if we do that we never have to worry about anything. WE only do what we believe God wants us to do and leave the rest to Him. That is what faith is all about! You probably know someone whom you would like to see become a Christian. Remember two things: first, you are called to be a witness. Use every opportunity to speak to them about your faith in Jesus and what it means to you and who by your life that you trust Him by not complaining all of the time. Second, pray that God might work in their heart for without His Holy Spirit they will never believe and be changed. But always take heart in your service of the Lord. It is not in vain. It is not useless. God made Saul (his Roman name is Paul) the greatest missionary the church has ever known. Yes, and He can do the same in people today, and will!

QUESTIONS

1. What was Saul on his way to do in Damascus? _____
2. What happened to him as he was almost there? _____
3. A voice spoke from heaven. What did it say? _____
Who was it speaking? _____
4. What did Jesus tell Saul to do? _____
5. What else had happened to Saul when he got up? _____
What did he do in Damascus for the next three days? _____
6. To whom did God speak in Damascus? _____
What did He tell him to do? _____
7. Why didn’t Ananias want to go? _____
8. What did God tell Ananias about Saul? _____
9. What tells you that God knew that Paul would suffer for the Gospel of Jesus Christ? _____
10. What happened after Ananias laid his hands on Saul and spoke to him? _____
11. Then what did Saul do in Damascus? _____
12. What did the Jews now want to do with Saul? _____
How did he escape? _____
13. Where did he go then? _____
Why were the apostles afraid of him at first? _____
14. According to verse 27 what did Saul now do? _____

QUESTION TO THINK ABOUT

Why do you think there does not seem to be as much boldness to speak out for Jesus today?