

“His Promises Never Fail”

Acts 18:9-17

5/24/11

Introduction: There are certain things in life that we are sure about. Every morning we are confident that the sun will rise and there will be oxygen for us to breath. We are told that this happens because of God. He has promised these blessings in our lives and His promises never fail (**Lamentations 3:22-23**). Today we will see this fact demonstrated in Apostle Paul’s life as well. Studying this passage should encourage us that no matter what good or bad we face, we can always be confident that God’s promises for us will never fail.

Verses 9-11

The Message

Here we see the message God had for Paul. The apostle was in the city of Corinth. He faced **opposition** from his own (Jewish) people, which caused him to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles (**18:5-6**). In a vision one night, God informed Paul of a few things. What were they? He was told to fear not, to speak up, God would be with him, and he would be protected. God spoke to Paul and He also speaks to us today. How? This is done through His Word and the Holy Spirit, which **resides** in us. The message Paul heard is the same message that is conveyed to us (**Hebrews 13:5**) (**2 Timothy 1:7**) (**Psalms 91:9-10**) (**Isaiah 54:17**). Remember, God’s promises are equivalent to His presence. The fact that God is encouraging Paul, tells us that God understood his (and our) **limitations** and frailties. He knew Paul was susceptible to fear, being discouraged, feeling lonely, etc., therefore He encouraged the apostle. The Bible clearly states that if anyone understands us, it is the Lord Jesus Christ, who was tried and tempted just as we are (**Hebrews 2:16-17**) (**Hebrews 4:15**). The text tells us that Paul responded in obedience. He stayed and taught the people for a year and six months. Like Paul, when God tell us to do something we should not harden our hearts. Remember, responsibility is responding through our abilities. God wanted Paul to continue in Corinth for a particular reason. We see this in verse 10 (“for I have much people in this city”). There were a number of people in Corinth who had not yet heard the Gospel (**Romans 10:13-15**) (**Acts 13:48**). The effect of Paul’s preaching would be to bring them to the faith. The apostle’s obedience meant that as a Jew he would have to associate with the Gentiles. But he stayed true to his God and his calling (**1 Corinthians 4:16**) (**Galatians 6:9**). He knew trusting God would bring triumph in his life. God doesn’t require us to be **brilliant**, but that we be faithful to the ministry He has given us. Are we as obedient as Paul was?

Verses 12-13

The Malice

These two verses show us the malice of the Jews against the apostle. We are told that when Gallio was the deputy (a Roman official) of Achaia, the apostle was brought in front of the judgment seat. The judgment seat is a large, raised stone platform in the marketplace, situated in front of the residence of the deputy where he would try **public** cases. What were these people accusing the apostle of? In verse 13, it says that Paul was persuading men to worship God contrary to the law. While Judaism was not an official religion, it was officially tolerated in the Roman world, and Christianity was viewed as a sect of Judaism. The Jews in Corinth claimed that Paul's teaching was **contrary** to Judaism and therefore should be banned. Like Paul, all of us have been brought in front of the judgment seat of a Holy God and found guilty of rebellion (sin) against Him (**Isaiah 64:6**). But, when we accept Jesus Christ's sacrifice on the cross on our behalf, God declares us righteous. In other words, Christ's **death** has brought us in right standing with God. Therefore, we can now come boldly, without fear to His throne (**Hebrews 4:16**) (**Hebrews 10:19-20**). So, let's thank God for our salvation! (**Isaiah 61:10**) It is interesting that even though God commanded Paul to speak up and He promised His divine presence, Paul still **experienced** difficulties and oppositions in life. In fact, the Bible teaches that all who live a Godly life will be persecuted (**2 Timothy 3:12**). Like Paul, when we are tried and tested, we are assured of God's presence with us (**Hebrews 13:5**).

Verses 14-17

The Mercy

These verses show us the mercy Paul received. Paul does not have to defend himself. Gallio does it for him. It appears that Gallio was **annoyed** that they would bring any accusation against Paul because he could not see any wrongdoing by Paul. As Christians, we must understand that when the **enemy** is out to get us, he will make up false charges against us (**Revelation 12:10**). Paul could have defended himself if he wanted to because God would have given him the right words to speak at the right time (**Luke 21:15**). But, this time, it was in Paul's best interest not to speak. Sometimes it is better to keep our **mouths** closed and let God deal with the situation. A fish will never get caught if he keeps his mouth closed. Our tongue is small, but it can be deadly (**James 3:6**). Paul did not have to say one word because God had already given him His Word in verse 10. If God said it, that should settle every situation we encounter. Paul received a blessing while the chief ruler of the synagogue gets a "beat down". God kept His promise to Paul. No man in the city was able to hurt him. Whatever condition we find ourselves in, just remember the condition is not our **conclusion** because "His Promises Never Fail".

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