

# How Paul Started A Church At Corinth

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[ 0 : 00 ] Father, that we may know your presence among us, that we may be very still in our hearts while you minister to the needs of our hearts.

In a way in which you see us and you understand us, we don't often see ourselves or understand ourselves.

We ask that as we confront the person of the Lord Jesus in the scriptures this morning, we may know that we confront one who does know and does understand who we are.

We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Now I want the boys and girls to come back up as they did for Children's Focus because I may need some help from you and I'd rather see what you're doing than guests.

So come on up and sit up here and let me talk to you. A less relaxed posture would be.

[ 1 : 10 ] Come on and sit up way up here if you like. I want to tell you how a particular church was started. And this church was the church in Corinth.

Can you say Corinth? You didn't say it very well. Try again. Can you say Corinth? Corinth. All right. All right. We'll agree that that's what it is. And in this church in Corinth, in chapter 18 of the Acts of the Apostles, Paul goes to Corinth and he's going to start a church there.

There isn't one there and he wants to start it. So the first people he runs into are two people whose names are, now listen, Priscilla and Aquila.

Can you say Priscilla? Come on, you guys. Priscilla and Aquila. Have you ever heard anybody with a name like that?

[ 2 : 10 ] I think Aquila probably wore an eagle's feather in his hat. That's why he was called that. But they were two people and they had a very small factory.

And in their small factory, they made tents. Have you got a tent? That's what they made there. And because Paul was a tent maker, this group down here, you're giving me a lot of competition.

And I don't know what to do about it. So I won't do anything about it. I'll carry on. The Priscilla and Aquila were tent makers.

They were Christians. Paul lived with them. And every Sabbath day, Paul went to the church, which was called a synagogue. Can you try that word?

A synagogue. And this is a synagogue we have here, a place where people gather together. And the scriptures are at the center of our synagogue as we gather together.

[ 3 : 17 ] Now, every Sunday, Paul went and preached. And when he preached, he tried to persuade people that they would be convinced about the truth of what he said.

And he was telling them about Jesus. But people became so interested in what he was preaching about that more people came and more people asked questions.

So do you know what happened then? Two people came to Corinth. And their names were Timothy and Silas. Or, can you say that?

Timothy and Silas. So you have Priscilla and Aquila and their tent factory and the synagogue. And then you have Timothy and Silas coming along.

And you know what happened then? Paul started preaching every day. And as he preached, people became very angry with him. And as they became angrier and angrier, they said terrible things about Paul.

[ 4 : 19 ] This is St. Paul we're talking about. They said awful things about him. They said what a terrible man he was. So do you know what he did? He took off his garment like this and he shook it at them like that and said, All right, I'm leaving.

And he went out of the door of the synagogue and he left. But those who had heard the message went with him. And they went into the house next door, which belonged to a fellow whose name

was Titius Justus.

And they went in there. And he was a Greek, but he worshipped God. And he heard the message that Paul was giving. Others hadn't heard it. And they were angry at him and wanted to stop him doing it.

And so what happened was that Paul started to preach in the house next door. Which was a... And do you know who went with them? The head warden of the synagogue.

He went with them too. His name was Crispus. Can you say Crispus? Have we got all these people in hand? Nora?

[ 5 : 30 ] Have we got them all? There was Aquila and Priscilla and Silas and Timothy and now Crispus.

And they were all together. And do you know what happened? Those that came there with Paul were baptized. That's how they became Christians.

And was it ever hard for them to be baptized? Because when they were baptized in those days, they weren't... Everybody didn't come up and say, Congratulations, how wonderful.

They started to hate and revile them too. And to shake their fists at them and say, Why would you do a thing like that? You're worshipping God in a way which is not according to the law.

And you must not do it. And they became very angry with the people who had been baptized. But Paul settled in and day in and day out, not for one month or two months, but for a year and a half, Paul taught them about the scriptures, about the Lord Jesus, and about God.

[ 6 : 40 ] And as he taught them, they came to believe that Jesus was the man whom God had sent. That Jesus was the man that told them, by who he was, who God was.

It was very hard for them because it was as though somebody back there in the fourth pew, on the left-hand side, turned out to be God. That's the kind of thing that was hard for them.

That a man could be God. And who was that man that is God? What's his name? That's Jesus. And he told them about them. And when they heard about him, they believed in him.

And when they believed in him, they were baptized. Well, do you know what happened next? Galio, can you say Galio? Galio, who was the governor of Achaia, and we have a new lieutenant governor in British Columbia today, well, this is like David Lamb, right?

And we, we have, this was Galio, who was the governor of the whole province of which Corinth was the capital. Galio was called, and the Jews took Paul before him, and he was to be the judge, and he was to sentence and punish Paul.

[ 8 : 00 ] And they went before Galio, and they said, Galio, do you know what this man is doing right here in Corinth, your capital city? Do you know what he dares to do? He dares to teach us to worship God in a way which is not according to our law.

And do you know what Galio said? Nonsense. You want to fight about that? Go and fight about it. It has nothing to do with me. So do you know what they did?

They took one of the leading men who had gone over to Paul's side, and right in front of Galio, who was the governor, they beat him up publicly.

And Galio ignored them because they knew that they were just playing for the media, so to speak.

And Galio ignored them. And it was then, you see, that Paul had settled in, and for 18 months, day in and day out, he taught the scriptures.

That's why in this church, we want you to learn the scriptures in school, in your church school. And we want your parents to learn them in group Bible studies. And we want them to make a point of learning the scriptures because it is only the scriptures that tell us who Jesus is, and it is only Jesus who tells us who God is.

[ 9 : 18 ] One more thing I want to tell you. Do you know that I have had an operation? Do you want me to show you my operation? Well, I won't, but it goes like I got unzipped all the way down here by a doctor.

Do you know that? He just, that's what he did to me. He just about killed me. But that's what he meant to do. He meant to kill me. I mean, he said, there's something bad going on in there, and I got to get in and try and fix it.

So he cut his way in and did all this damage to me, and he just about killed me, as I said. He stopped my heart beating. He did all sorts of things to me in order to try and put it right.

Well, that's in a sense, my doctor tells me, that that's what doctors do. They intrude into your body. You know, they go into your body to try and put something right that's wrong.

But all they can do is do damage. As I say, they come close to killing you. They can do damage. But once they have dealt with the thing that's wrong in there, and then they sew you all up again and start to look after you and care for you and nurse you, your body begins to repair everything, and you begin to get better again.

[10:41] And soon you feel like eating again, and soon you feel like walking again, and soon you feel all better, and then soon you feel, well, praise the Lord, isn't it wonderful? You just feel very happy because you're all better again inside.

Now, that's what Paul said he did. He went to Corinth, and he intruded on the people of Corinth. And he said, the way you worship is wrong.

The one you worship is wrong. And you have failed to understand who Jesus is. And you must listen to me. Because if you don't listen to me, then what's wrong can't be put right.

And Paul intruded on those people. And they became very angry at the intrusion. They were very bitter and very hostile. But Paul said to them, unless I intrude upon you with this story about Jesus, then the thing that is bad in you will go on and on, and it will never heal.

It will never be made right. And so, as the doctors intruded upon me and made me better, so Paul intruded upon Corinth.

[11:55] And that's what our church is about. That's how we built our church here, is we intrude on people with the gospel of Jesus. And sometimes they get very mad when you intrude upon them.

And they don't like it. And they say, we don't need it. But they do need it. And so, you have to go on intruding. Paul was feeling very badly because he thought, I've split this synagogue.

All these people are unhappy. They're all very hostile. And they're all my friends. And they speak my language. But they don't like me. And so, do you know what happened to Paul? A wonderful thing happened to Paul.

And you might pray that something like this may sometime happen to you. It says in verse 9, The Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, Paul, don't be afraid.

Speak and do not be silent. For I am with you. And no man shall attack you to harm you. For I have many people in this city. So Paul intruded on the city of Corinth with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

[12:59] And some were angry. And some believed. And that's how the church started. And that's how the church grows. By the preaching of the gospel.

Some are angry at it. Some believe in it. But that's how God establishes his church. And how he heals the thing that's wrong at the center of our lives. Now, boys and girls, that's all for that.

You know now how churches begin. Now I want to tell you how what we're doing today with the gold coins. Hold up your gold coin if you have it, will you please? And if you haven't got one, I hope that I can make sure that you get one.

Is there, are there some more back there? In case, did anybody not get one like this? You must all have one. And when I say you must all have one, I mean all of you out there must have one too.

So if you haven't got one, put up your hand and demand one immediately. Don't take no for an answer. Who needs a gold coin here? We want everybody in the congregation to have a gold coin.

[14:06] Yours is over there, is it? Do you want to go over and get it so you'll have it in your hand? Will you run back and get it very quickly? And then I'll make sure that you have it in your hand.

Now the purpose of this gold coin and this little talk has cost us \$500, I might say. So this is a \$500 talk I'm giving right now.

So it's important that you pay attention. This gold coin is a gift to you. But it's a gift that the only way you can keep it is by investing it in something.

What are you going to do with this coin? It's like, you see, God gives to people gifts. Did you see Alan DeNoyer with those three ropes this morning?

He has a good gift for telling stories and doing tricks, doesn't he? That was very nice and he invested his gift very well in telling you how that illustrates about God.

[15:17] So all of you have gifts and you see all those people out there? They all have gifts. They're not things that they own. They're things that they've been given. And do you know why they've been given these gifts?

Do you know why you each have a gift? Because God said through Paul to the church in Corinth to all the members of the church, he said, you have every gift that's needed.

It belongs to you. And for you to do the work that you're meant to do as a church, then each of you has to invest your gift in the work of the church. And so what we're doing today is we're inviting you

to invest your gift in the work of the church.

Now it may be that you're going to invest it by taking part in your church school class. It may be that you're going to invest it in Monday Church Club. It may be you're going to invest it in the Orff Group or the choir or something like that.

But you can pick one of 50 different things that are listed on a pink sheet which is right there. I'll show you the pink sheet in a minute. It'll appear. I hope.

[ 16 : 23 ] Won't it? Like that pink sheet will tell you all the 50 things that you can do with your investment. And we want everybody to take the gift that they've been given and to invest it, that is to put it into something that you're going to work at during this year as you seek to be a believer, a baptized believer and a disciple of Jesus Christ.

So that's what you're to get, that's what you're to do. Now can I tell you why you're to do it?

Because God has given us the gift of his son, Jesus Christ.

and because we want to say thank you to him, we give back to him the thing that he has given us.

So he gives us these gifts and we give them back to him in serving Jesus Christ.

And the way this works, this church works, is that each of you has a gift and each of you exercises your gift by way of showing your love and care and concern for one another in obedience to Jesus Christ.

Can we bow our heads for a moment? Will you just be quiet where you are and bow your head and close your eyes? Lord Jesus, thank you for every person that's here this morning and thank you that each one has a gift.

[ 17 : 58 ] And help us as we think and plan and pray that we might know how to use this gift that you've given us. Perhaps it's someone we're to love because you love us.

Perhaps it's something we're to do because of what you've done for us. You have a purpose for our lives and that purpose is fulfilled as we give to you what you've given to us.

You've given to us life and you've given to us these gifts and we want to be counted in as your disciples. Lord Jesus, will you count me in and give me the strength to do for you what you want in the exercise of the gift that you've given me.

We ask this, Lord Jesus, in your holy name. Amen.