

Theme: God’s care and protection for his people *today* is rooted in His promise to our forefathers. The savior who we know and proclaim is the perfect fulfillment of that promise.

Background: Corinth – Perfect location for commerce and the spread of the gospel

I. God’s Abundant Provision

A. Paul arrives alone – we have not seen him by himself anywhere before (save in Syria before Barnabas brought him to Antioch)

- Paul travels to Corinth – leaving message in Athens for T & S to follow.

- but not alone – Lord clearly prepares the way.

- soon surrounded by support/friends who would become life-long friends

B. Well supported

1. Paul jumped right into his trade - tentmaking.

a. Meets Aquila and Priscilla from Rome.

- Same trade

- expelled by Claudius Seems there was disorder in the synagogues due to the influence of Christianity (wouldn’t be a surprise.)

- become lifelong friends.

b. Paul the tent-maker “skaenopois”

- Worked with goats’ cloth or leather

- main product of Paul’s native province – cloth of goats’ hair called *cilicium*. Used for cloaks, curtains and other protection against water. Tents would be natural use.

2. His usual means of support

- In Judaism, not considered proper for scribe or Rabbi to be paid for teaching. (So much for a muzzling the ox – a worker is worthy of his wages.) Paul usually earned his living.

- Here in Corinth; In Ephesus (20:34) & Thessalonica (1Thes.2:9)

ASIDE: Functioned as Rabbis and scribes did

C. Well Encouraged

- Silas and Timothy arrive with

1. Good news regarding saints under trial in Thessalonica.

I Thessalonians 3:6-10

2. Financial Support

- Philippians and early missions endeavors. 2 Cor. 11:9;
Philippians 4:16

- Can preach, debate more freely.

D. A Church Established

1. Titius Justus

- Roman citizen, of means, known to us as Gaius (1 Cor.1:15 –
baptized by Paul. Romans 16:23 (host to me and the whole church)

- home next to synagogue

2. Growing Church – gospel is going forth

a. Converts?

- Crispus, head of the synagogue

- many Corinthians

b. Moves from synagogue to the house next door

- Still living with Aquila and Priscilla but is teaching next door
to the synagogue

- Titius Justus – Was this Gaius? (1 Cor.1:14; Rom.16:23)

[Opposition becomes a means of advancement; opposed by the Jews,
goes to the gentiles; much fruit, many believed; Often happens to
Paul (and the church) Still true today? I Think it is.]

II. His Glorious Promise v.9,10

- vision at critically important times/events in his life

- Macedonian call 16:9,10

- on trial in Jerusalem 23:11

- in the storm heading to Rome 27:23,24

A. Tied to ancient promise – “fear not, I am with you”

- every promise to his people is rooted in the promise of His presence; in his covenant promise and faithfulness.
- Paul would have recognized it immediately

See Supplement - Every covenant promise fulfilled in Jesus Life, death and resurrection

B. Personal – no one will attack you to harm you

- forced out of Thessalonica and Berea
- comes to Corinth with “fear and trembling” (1 Cor.2:3)
- doesn't promise there will be no opposition

C. Freed to serve, proclaim, confidently. Promises are freeing! Paul can preach the word joyfully.

III. His Sure/Certain Protection

A. The Attack v.12

1. Not the first time - but definitely

2. A New Approach v.13

- not stirring up the populace, but accusing him before the authorities
- New accusation; but not true
- Trying not just to silence Paul – but the propagation of the gospel!!
- Serious implications

NOTE: Gaius - proconsul of Achaia

- Son of Seneca – famous statesman
- Brother Seneca – well-known (even today) Stoic Philosopher who had position of influence at the imperial court. Strong ties to Rome and the senate

3. A Serious Challenge

- if Gallio (proconsul of Achaia) tries this case and rules that Paul's gospel is not protected as a discussion in Judaism – but is instead, outside of it, a new religion progress of the gospel could have been greatly hindered. It would remove the protections (protected with status of *collegiums licitum*) that the followers of Christ, the Messiah of the Jews, enjoy.
- if that happens, it sets the precedent for other regional judges and rulers to follow suit - and the next 10 years or more would have been very different indeed for the advancement of the gospel.

- the imperial policy toward Christianity wouldn't change until Nero blamed the believers for the fire in Rome in AD 64.

B. The Protection

1. Gaius dismisses the argument – it's their problem, not his. Not fond of the Jews (*drives* them out)
2. Can't turn on Paul so they turn on Sosthenes (new synagogue. ruler) probably an attack on the Jews in Corinth.

SIDE NOTE: Luke continually shows how faith in Christ brings us *under* authority – not in opposition to it. Consistently, Paul and believers are law abiding. Those around him/them are not.

IV. Living in the Promise

God's faithfulness to you, love for you, promise to be with you, command to "fear not" – to be strong and courageous – is all rooted in the promise to redeem us; to make us a people who are restored to him and in him.

A. Able to see God's provision (through difficult as well as easy times)?

B. See promises fulfilled in Christ?

- Same message for you today: In Jesus, what have you to fear? What enemy has power over you
- What promises has God made to us – to you? All bound up in the promise to be your God and to make you his own people.
- Need personal affirmation, confirmation? Read the Word where the Savior is set before you in his suffering, sacrifice and glory.

C. Looking to Jesus for protection from the attacks of this world/life?

- inward and outward? Protection doesn't exclude the trials/testings that require it.
- Promise often revealed through trial
 - Pray for patience? You will be tested
 - Pray for faith? You will be tested
 - Any of the promised "fruit of the Spirit"

D. Want to experience his presence? Abide in him! He does not leave or forsake. But we do!