

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JULY 26TH, 2026 // THE BOOK OF ACTS

OPPORTUNITIES (ACTS 18:1–11) OPPORTUNITIES

A decree by Claudius went out around 49–50 A.D., which expelled all Jews from Rome. In Corinth, Paul meets Priscilla and Aquila (Jewish tentmakers). He recognizes that this couple is an opportunity to make disciples. He worked with them while visiting the synagogue and persuading the Jews and Greeks.

- **One of the first steps to disciple-making is having our eyes open to opportunities.** How do we know who to disciple? **Who has God put in your life?**

SUPPORT

After this, Paul's coworkers (Timothy and Silas) come from the north to assist him. His team of three has grown to five. With their support, Paul stops working on tents and devotes himself entirely to teaching and preaching. For a time, Paul had to focus on work (tentmaking) because he had to eat.

- Sometimes, there are seasons in which we pause ministry to meet our needs, but **we must always be ready when opportunities arise.**

FAILED OPPORTUNITIES?

The Jews did not respond well. Luke writes, "they resisted and blasphemed," when Paul called Jesus the Messiah. This is the issue everyone has with the gospel. **Everyone is on board with Heaven and forgiveness, but not when Christ is mentioned.** Many people will mock and reject what Christ has done. This does not mean we stop. God has people waiting for Him, so we cannot let rejection stall us.

- **We cannot give up because some already have.**

ALWAYS SEARCHING

Paul shakes the dust off and announces he is going to the Gentiles. This was common practice for Paul: synagogue, rejection, then Gentiles. Even when met with resistance, Paul is investing in the people the Lord brings into his path. Titius Justus and Crispus are both part of the local community. Crispus is the synagogue leader. **Every person is an opportunity to share Jesus.**

- Are we being intentional with every opportunity?

CHRIST LEADS US

After this, Christ speaks to Paul in a night vision. He is told, **"stay in the area"** and **"do not be afraid."** Paul was afraid, but the words of Christ gave him comfort to continue. Being near to Christ opened Paul's eyes to the many people needing Christ.

- How do we know who to disciple? We don't. **If we are near Christ and listening to Him, God will open our eyes to all the opportunities around us.** Are we asking God for opportunities?

PRESSURE (ACTS 18:12–17) CULTURAL PRESSURE

Luke does a great job recording historical figures. Gallio is a politician and his main responsibility is to keep the peace by handling civic and legal disputes. Gallio has much political power, and with the united attacks against the Jews, Paul is feeling some pressure for his faith.

- There has always been tension when sharing the gospel and stepping on the culture's toes. **We often cave under the pressure.**

THE PRESSURE IS ON

The Jews bring Paul to the tribunal, where they accuse him of breaking the law. As Paul is about to speak, the proconsul dismisses the case. Paul was about to do what we all would do—defend ourselves. God steps in, honoring the protection Paul was told of before, and it's from the most unlikely place: Gallio.

- **God is in control,** and He can rally aid even in places we don't expect. **When the pressure is on, do we trust God is in control?**

TRUST IN GOD

Paul is released, then a group of people go after the new synagogue leader, Sosthenes, and beat him. It's likely Sosthenes is the replacement after Crispus converted. It's a mystery why Sosthenes being beaten is mentioned here with not a lot of detail. We don't know who beat him (the Greeks or Jews) or why. What is for certain is **Paul was rescued and his enemies were taken care of.**

- **How do we grow our faith and trust in God?**

INVESTMENT (ACTS 18:18–23) DISCIPLESHIP IS AN INVESTMENT

We typically see Paul travel again for three reasons: divine redirection, intense persecution, and/or strategic evangelism. This time, Paul brings Aquila and Priscilla along. Paul spent the last two years forming strong bonds and teaching them the gospel.

- **Many of us view discipleship like a sale; discipleship is a lifelong investment.** How much time are we investing into people? Who is investing time in us?

PERSONAL SACRIFICE

When Paul arrives in Cenchreae, he shaves his head to fulfill a vow he had made. This was most likely a Nazirite vow Paul had made earlier in his travels. If Paul is a Christian, why is he making Jewish vows? Paul still considers himself "a Jew to the Jews," and this was an opportunity to be a better missionary for the Jews.

- Are we willing to make sacrifices to reach people around us? Making disciples requires sacrifice.

THE TENSION

Paul makes a pit stop at Ephesus where he, Aquila, and Priscilla all depart. This would have been difficult, but **this was not goodbye.** Paul had plans to visit them again after he completed his mission. He continued entering synagogues, visiting churches, and **strengthening disciples along the way.** Many wanted Paul to stay, but he was focused.

- **Paul felt the tension of investing in people and continuing to make disciples.**

GREAT REWARDS (ACTS 18:24–28) GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

During the time when Paul left Aquila and Priscilla, Luke mentions a new character: Apollos. Apollos was a well-versed, well-spoken, knowledgeable follower of Jesus. Luke mentions that he only knew "John's baptism," which means he was teaching old news. What Apollos lacked was the good news that **Jesus has sent the Holy Spirit to dwell among us.**

- Apollos is a reminder that we all have areas for growth. **Are we humble enough to grow?**

DISCIPLES MAKING DISCIPLES

After hearing Apollos speak at the synagogue, Priscilla and Aquila explain the way of God more to him. They explain Jesus' ministry, all the lessons Paul had taught them, and the experiences they witnessed together in Corinth. **Paul's disciples were now making disciples.** This is the ultimate goal of Christ's disciples—**fulfilling the Great Commission.**

- Who shared the gospel with you? **How did you come to know Christ? Who are you telling?**

OUR REWARD FOR INVESTMENT

With a recommendation letter from Aquila and Priscilla, Apollos is welcomed into the fold of the Believers in Achaia. Apollos would go on to be a great apologist and teacher of Jesus Christ. **We don't know the impact of our obedience, but it's important to be faithful to the commands of Christ.** When we are faithful, our reward is people meeting Christ.

- **There isn't anything we can bring with us to Heaven, but we can invest in people.**

GREAT OPPORTUNITIES

- Every person is an opportunity to share Christ.
- **We cannot force opportunities to happen or manufacture salvation.**
- **We need God to reveal opportunities as we grow closer to Him. Listen to the Spirit, and share the gospel.**

PRESSURE

- We will experience great pressure sharing the gospel and making disciples.
- **Fear usually overcomes our desire to be obedient. How do we overcome this fear?**
- **Place your trust in God. He is in control and has work planned for you. Choosing to trust God is an act of faith.**

INVESTMENT

- Discipleship is an investment, not a sale.
- **Are we willing to make sacrifices for the investment in God's Kingdom?**
- **We must equally be focused on making disciples and developing disciples.**
- **Are you investing in anyone? Who is investing in you?**

GREAT REWARD

- When we come to know Christ, we receive a great reward: His Spirit and mercy.
- **We need His Spirit to fulfill the Great Commission. Are we listening to Him?**
- **We can't bring anything with us, but we can bring people. What greater reward is there than to invest in God's people?**
- *"For who is our hope or joy or crown of boasting in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming? Is it not you? Indeed you are our glory and joy!"* (1 Thessalonians 2:19–20).